

SPECIAL REPORT

SECURING NORTH AMERICA'S FUTURE

BY



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FOUNDATION



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Introduction

On April 23, 2025, the inaugural *North Capital Meridian Diplomacy Forum* convened a dynamic and diverse network of leaders at the Meridian International Center in Washington, DC. Born from the strategic merger of the *North Capital Forum* and the *Meridian Diplomacy Forum*, this invitation-only gathering—co-hosted by the U.S.-Mexico Foundation and Meridian International Center—marked a milestone in trilateral dialogue across North America.

Set against the backdrop of shifting political landscapes and an approaching USMCA review, the forum offered a timely platform for addressing the region's most pressing challenges. From economic and food security to labor mobility, supply chain resilience, cybersecurity, and trade policy, the day's agenda prioritized both urgent concerns and long-term opportunities for collaboration.

This white paper captures key insights from the forum's discussions—offering a roadmap for stakeholders committed to advancing a more integrated, secure, and prosperous North American region. As this critical dialogue continues, the ideas and relationships forged represent a foundation for shared leadership and regional innovation in the years ahead.

A special thank you to our sponsors:



A large-scale photograph of an offshore wind farm. Numerous white wind turbines with three blades each are visible, extending from the foreground into the distance across a vast expanse of blue ocean. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The text "TECH, ENERGY, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters in the upper-middle portion of the image.

TECH, ENERGY, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Beyond Borders: Strengthening North America's Health Security Through Supply Chains and Innovation

Affiliate: Milken Institute



Ensuring health access and security for our patients and communities across North America requires a resilient and coordinated approach to pharmaceutical and medical product supply chains, regulatory cooperation, and technological innovation. The region faces pressing challenges, from securing the steady supply of medicines and critical healthcare products to facilitating efficient technology transfer and regulatory alignment across borders. As global supply chains become more fragmented, it is essential that North America partners work together to bolster the region's health security, reduce vulnerabilities by strengthening collaboration in research, manufacturing and policy.

About 90% of US prescriptions are filled with generics, most of which are imported; India is the largest source of finished generic drugs, while China supplies a sizable share of the chemical building blocks. Moreover, Asia supplies the great majority of printed circuit boards used in North American medical electronics. This global interdependence of one region strains response capabilities during geopolitical tensions, natural disasters, pandemics, and other times of crisis. Even during times of steady state, the risk of counterfeit drugs and essential medicine shortages remains.

Recommendations

Strengthen Regional Manufacturing Capabilities and Dual Sourcing

Years of offshoring and cost-driven global sourcing have weakened North America's manufacturing base—revitalizing it is vital to ensure supply chain resilience and economic security. This is especially important as North American populations continue to age and become more reliant on health interventions. The US, Mexico, and Canada should invest in dual sourcing strategies and regionalize supply chains for essential health products, such as APIs and medical device components. A “twin plant” model—where manufacturing is split between neighboring countries and supported by public-private partnerships via incentives including tax relief, land grants, and retirement fund investments, can help alleviate the current strain on overstretched supply chains.

Align Procurement Practices to Reward Resilient Supply Chains

The current procurement model prioritizes the lowest bidder, which undermines supply chain resilience. Instead, hospitals, healthcare systems, and other major purchasers should adjust their contracting practices to require suppliers to demonstrate redundancy, multi-sourcing, and stable supply commitments. Paying a premium for resilience is a key private-sector action that could

drive structural change. Resilience begins with market signals that put patients and communities first. When hospitals and other private-sector leaders are willing to pay more for resilient supply chains—and partner with public agencies to embed these standards—they help create a more stable, responsive system without waiting for crisis-driven regulatory intervention.

Expand Supply Chain Transparency and Counterfeit Detection Efforts

To address the rising threat of counterfeit medicines, additional efforts should be made to

expand technologies that can authenticate products at the point of sale, such as barcode scanning tools already being deployed to pharmacies. Increasing transparency, improving communication among supply chain actors, and developing simple, user-friendly verification technologies are critical steps. Building these technologies and making them widely available—especially at no cost to smaller actors—is essential to safeguarding public health and maintaining trust across the pharmaceutical supply chain.

Powering the Future: North America's Energy Landscape & Opportunities

Affiliate: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Amid the rapidly growing energy demands of the 21st century —driven by AI data centers and other emerging technologies—there is a critical need to expand all forms of energy production and prioritize infrastructure investment across North America. The fragility of the region's energy grid coupled with the urgent need for reforms to modernize and centralize grid management, make investments essential. However, ongoing political and economic uncertainty has stalled many key energy projects, which require long-term planning and large-scale investment.

Recommendations

Coordination Through USMCA Modernization

Collaboration between the United States, Mexico and Canada can be essential for achieving energy security and independence. A formal dialogue within the USMCA framework —focused on supply chain capabilities, energy independence, and critical minerals— would provide a platform for ongoing collaboration and policy alignment. This could streamline regulatory processes and enhance investment opportunities across the region.

Enhance Energy Integration

Greater cross-border energy integration, supported by public-private partnerships and coordinated regulatory actions, should be pursued to ensure reliable energy flow and regional resilience. Initiatives, such as Mexico exporting LNG to the Atlantic, the U.S. export expansion on the Pacific, and Canada

building LNG capacity for Pacific markets would boost North American energy security, reduce costs, and foster trust among regional partners.

Rethink North American Energy

Policymakers must shift from national energy dominance to a shared vision of North American energy independence. This approach would promote collaboration to optimize regional energy resources, ensuring all partners benefit from collective growth and stability. Confidence and trust are essential for long-term energy investment, and aligning policy around regional priorities will provide the continuity that private sector actors seek. By viewing North America as a unified energy powerhouse, stakeholders can leverage Mexico's manufacturing strength, Canada's resource wealth, and the United States' technological leadership to build a more resilient and integrated energy network



Feeding the World: North America's Role in Global Food Security

*Affiliates: Consejo Nacional Agropecuario,
Corn Refiners Association,
Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance*

As global food demand rises, North America plays a critical role in ensuring a stable and sustainable agricultural supply. This often-overlooked sector has strategic importance as a cornerstone of regional economic integration, food security, and sustainability; and agreements like USMCA have enabled year-round, affordable access to nutritious food across borders, even amid global disruptions.

Agriculture is a vital source of employment, supporting four times as many jobs as the auto sector and as an engine for growth in high-value industries. As threats such as labor mobility, climate adaptation, and trade instability continue, coordinated regional collaboration will be critical to address these challenges. Currently, six million agriculture professionals are responsible for feeding North America's nearly 600 million residents.

Therefore, labor shortage in farming communities was identified as a growing concern, closely linked to migration dynamics and rural security. As North America prepares to feed a growing population over the next 20 to 50 years, there is an urgency to invest in agricultural technologies and regional cooperation to build a food system that is affordable and resilient. Agriculture must be treated as a strategic pillar of regional economic development and national security.

Recommendations

Leverage Existing Frameworks to Maintain Stability

The USMCA provides over 20 technical



committees for expert-level discourse. This existing structure should be used to its maximum potential to ensure trade rules remain transparent, predictable, and supportive of long-term food security. Free trade is essential in keeping food products accessible and affordable, and to avoid trade barriers that may raise consumer prices and fuel inflation.

Address Agricultural Labor Concerns and Looming Shortages

The safety and stability of food systems are closely tied to the reliability of the agricultural labor force, making coordinated action essential to address this complex challenge holistically. This includes developing policies that support secure and legal labor migration to meet growing agricultural demands, while also investing in rural infrastructure and community safety to retain and support a stable farming workforce.

Collaboration on Water Sustainability

As growing demand and climate change intensify pressure on water resources, disputes over water rights and distribution are likely to escalate globally—including across North America. Strengthening trilateral cooperation on water access and quality, particularly through existing frameworks such as the International Boundary and Water Commission, should be an urgent priority to promote long-term sustainability and regional resilience.

Strengthening Cybersecurity Across North America: Building Digital Resilience to Protect Future Growth

Affiliates: InCyber and Public Private Strategies Institute

Enhancing North American competitiveness requires coordinated investment in cyber infrastructure, supply chain security, and workforce development. Cybersecurity is no longer just an IT concern; it is an enterprise-wide issue and a strategic imperative for governments and businesses alike. As cyber threats evolve and the surface area for attacks expands, strengthening cybersecurity becomes essential for both national security, and to safeguard future economic growth, innovation, and public trust. To properly face this mounting economic and security threat, key challenges including fragmented regulations, talent shortages, and the rising costs of cyber incidents must be addressed.

Recommendations

Develop a Trilateral Cybersecurity Framework for North America

This group would be tasked with preparing the North American Cybersecurity Principles Agreement; a framework on interoperable cyber standards, incident response coordination, shared cyber threat intelligence protocols, and baseline

cybersecurity requirements for critical infrastructure.

Launch a North American Cyber Workforce Initiative

Establish a trilateral public-private program to train and certify cybersecurity professionals, with a focus on mutual recognition of cyber certifications across borders, expanding access to cyber training for underserved and rural populations, and promoting regionally diverse representation in the cyber workforce. The program could leverage partnerships with academic institutions, tech firms, and workforce agencies across all three countries.

Create a Cross-Border Digital Trust and Privacy Taskforce

Form a regional task force to align on privacy protections, AI governance, and data trust standards. This group would map out conflicting regulatory environments and propose harmonization pathways; develop joint principles on digital identity, consent, and data portability; and engage civil society and private sector stakeholders to build public trust. This would support secure cross-border data flows and foster trust in digital ecosystems.



About the North Capital Meridian Diplomacy Forum

The North Capital Meridian Diplomacy Forum, a collaboration between the US-Mexico Foundation and Meridian International Center, merges the North Capital Forum and the Meridian Diplomacy Forum into a single, invitation-only event.

With shifting priorities across North America, diplomats, business leaders, and policymakers tackle actionable solutions for regional security, inspire innovation, and ensure North America's long-term success in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

About US-Mexico Foundation

The U.S. Mexico Foundation (USMF) is a binational non-profit, non-partisan, organization dedicated to fostering cooperation and bilateral understanding between the United States and Mexico. Rooted in the North America Free Trade Agreement, the organization was founded in 2001 and began operations in 2004 with seed capital from the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, Carnegie Corporation and FUNDEMEX. The USMF is governed by a binational board consisting of business and civic leaders, with extensive networks in the U.S. and Mexico. The USMF embarked on a new chapter in 2018, with a compelling agenda that prioritizes policy and advocacy. The organization is focused on creating new strategic alliances, educating important stakeholders, and providing a voice on the most relevant issues concerning the U.S.-Mexico relationship.

About Meridian International Center

Meridian is a nonpartisan center for diplomacy founded in 1960 and headquartered on a historic campus in Washington, DC. Our mission is to empower the next era of leaders to advance diplomacy for a better future. Our programs strengthen American leadership by accelerating collaboration on shared challenges, increasing economic competitiveness, and building geopolitical resilience. We equip leaders from business, science and technology, cities and states, culture and sports with insights, networks, and resources to navigate a complex world.

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