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Global Environmental Change and Environmental-Induced Migration

Prof. Dr. Úrsula Oswald **Spring
CRIM-UNAM, RETAC-CONACYT**

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1. Research questions

- What are the possible linkages and feedbacks between the factors of global environmental change along with the neo-liberal model of socio-economic development of massive food imports, climate change and their impacts on the local level for Mexican peasant families losing their livelihood?
- How does environmental-induced migration become a coping strategy for communities, families, or individuals facing GEC and who suffer a higher degree of social vulnerability and stress due to the outcomes of this migration?

2. Definition



The *International Organization on Migration* defines **environmentally forced migrants** as “persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive **changes in the environment** that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are **obliged to leave their habitual homes**, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad”

(IOM, MC/INF/288, 2007: 2).

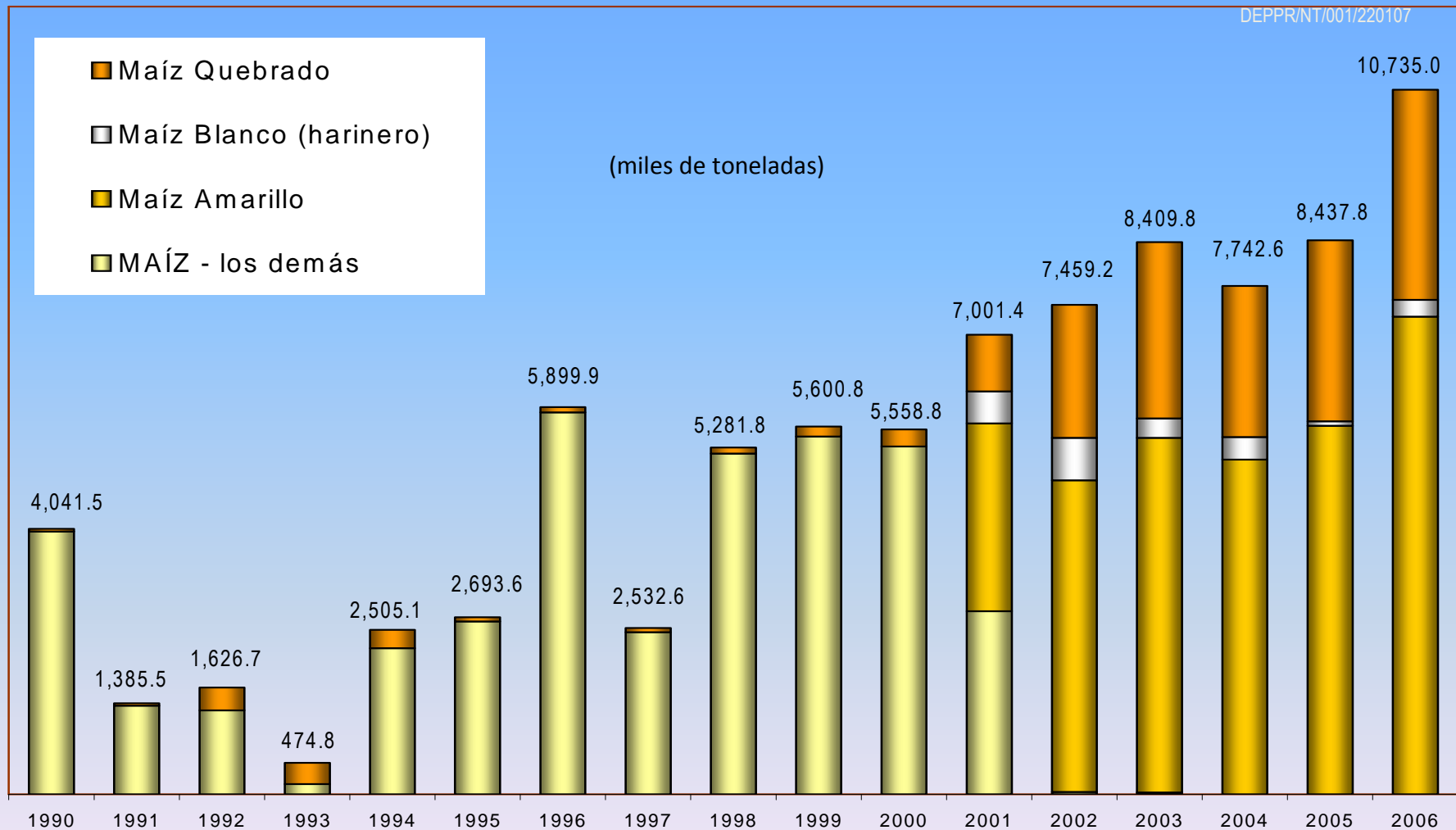


3. Neoliberal rural policy in Mexico

Synthesis of rural crisis

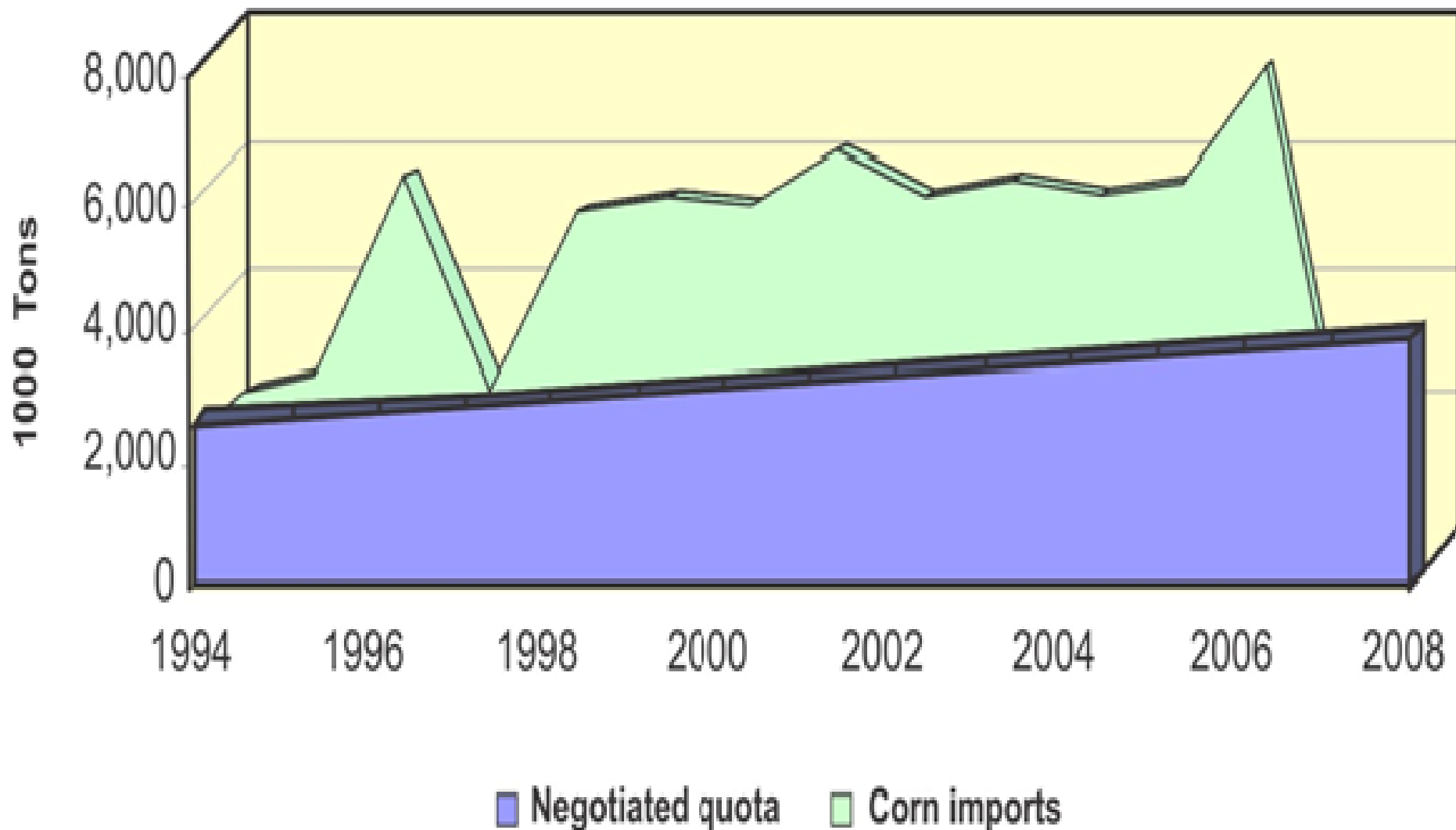
- Economic crises: 1976, 1982, 1988, **1994**, 2006-12
- 1982-84: drastic IMF's Structural Adjustment Program
- 1994: signature of NAFTA with USA, Canada and Mexico
- Indiscriminate and subsidized imports of basic grain from 0.47 t to 16 mio t
- From 2000-2010: food import US\$ 150 billion dollars, deficit of agricultural balance of US\$4.328 billion in 2011 (INEGI, 2012)
- International corn price reduction: -64% due to US subsidies, but tortilla increased+279% (SAGARPA 2008)
- Lack of adaptation and support for affected farmers
- Lack of rural investment in water and infrastructure
- Lack of long-term credits
- Unwillingness to charge the surplus taxes on corn importation of US\$ 27 billion until 2008
- Decrease of agricultural GDP to 3.39% of global GCP but 27% of workers
- 2008: price hike in food prices
- Contention of salaries: maquila economy with low labor costs
- 2012 worst drought in 78 years: no prevention, no resilience, hunger and poverty

Import of maize



Fuente: Elaborado con información de la Secretaría de Economía (1990 – 1998) y del SIAP / SAGARPA (1999 – 2006)

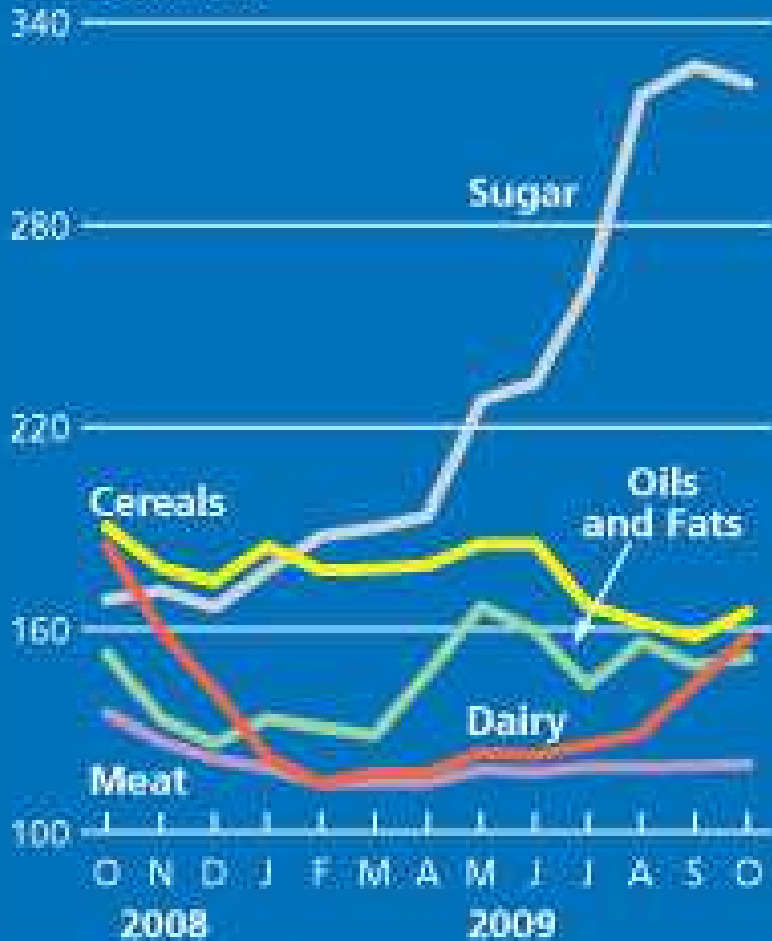
Import of corn from USA and negotiated surplus for adaptation of peasants



Price hikes. Nov. 2009- March 2011

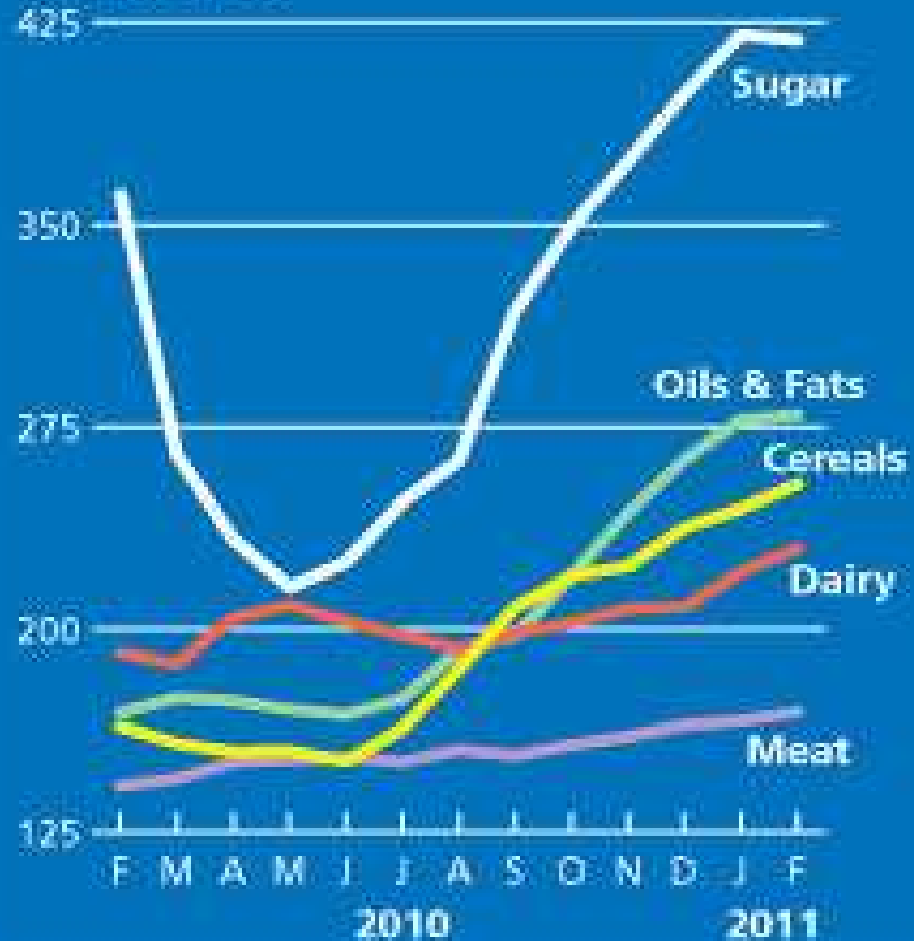
Food Commodity Price Indices

2002-2004=100

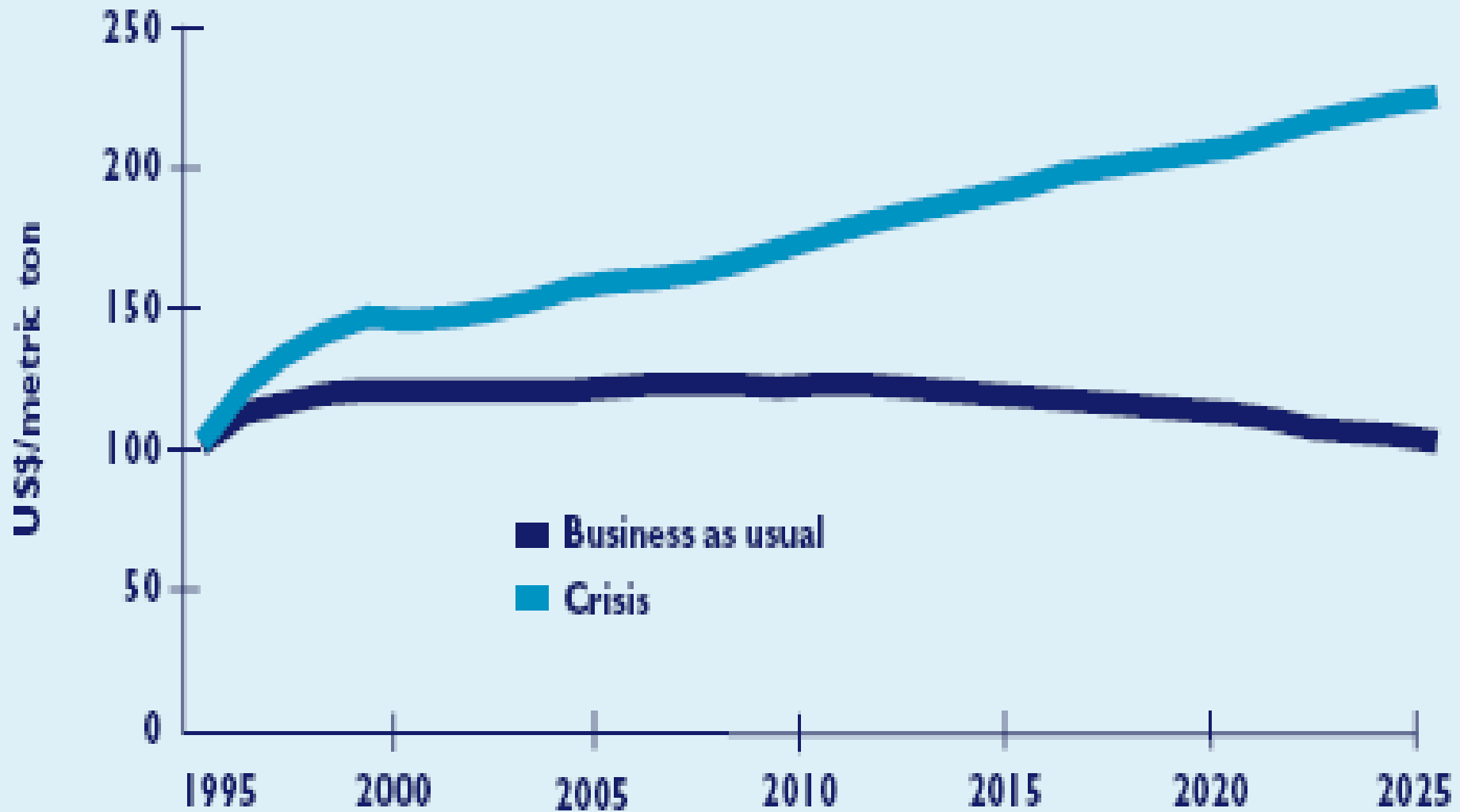


Food Commodity Price Indices

2002-2004=100



International Corn Prices



Drought 2012

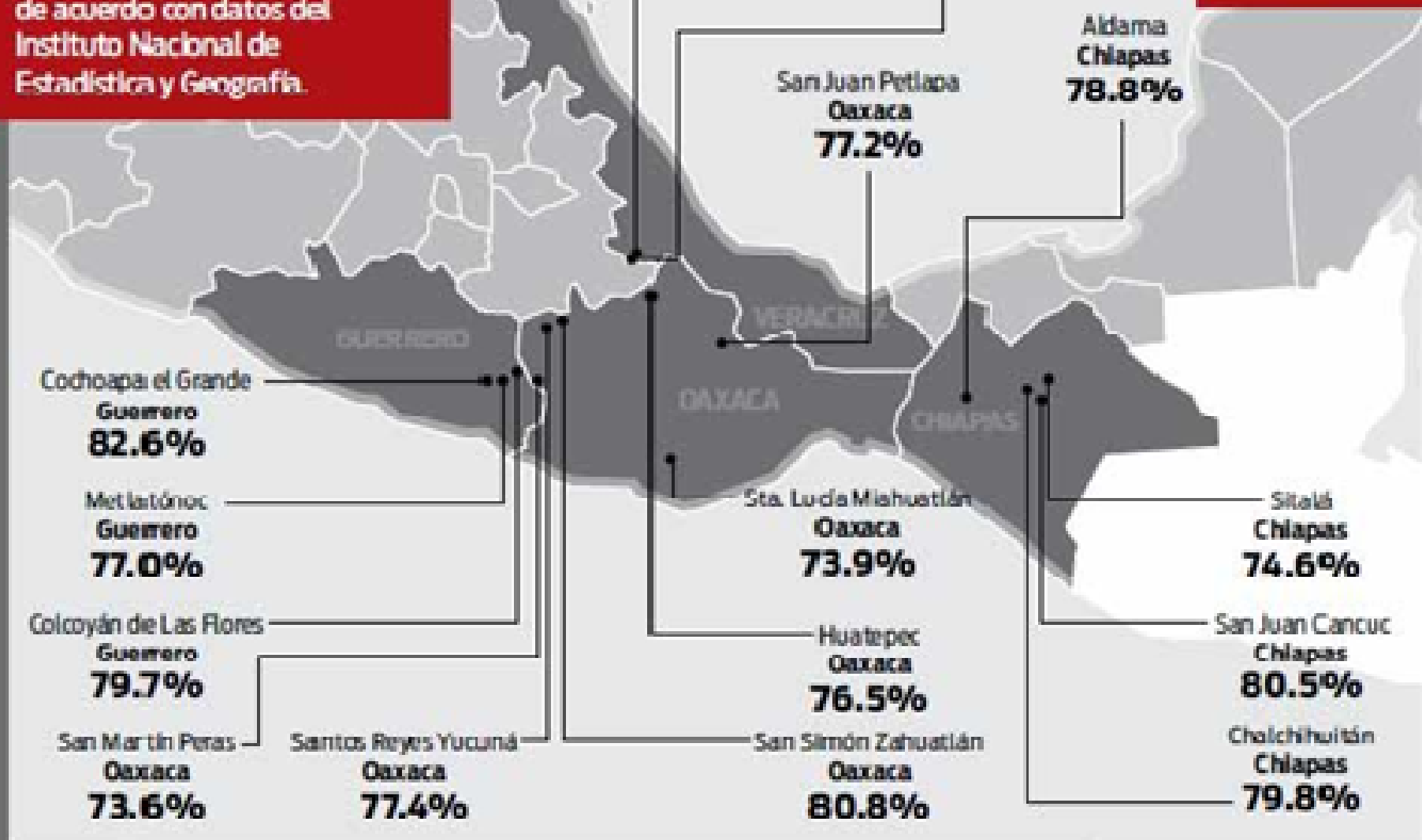
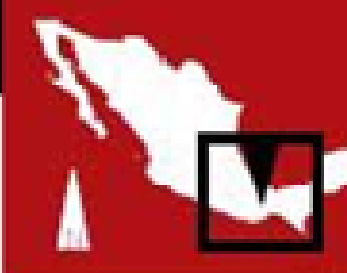
- Until March 2012, 389 municipalities affected, destruction of livelihood and productive capacity of peasants without irrigation.
- 67 mil people without food and water during the next 3 months (J. A. Nevares M., delegate Conagua).
- Fiscal and audit on public spending 2010 (16-2-2011): Inefficient management of rural support and poverty alleviation
- Special program of Food Aid (PESA) supported in 2010: 185,000 people, only **10.1%** of 1.8 millions inhabitants that required urgent food aid and 1.649 million without support
- Only **1.1%** of 17 millions of extreme poor Mexicans unable to buy the basic food basket.

International evaluation: ECLAC

- **Mexico:** 2000-2010: 85,343 people died due to hunger (Fuentes, 2012, INEGI, 2012), higher than 49,804 people killed during drug war
- food prices hike from 2008 hindered people to buy their necessary food.
- Mexico from 2000 -2011 six basic food staples increased by 24.4 percent
- 17 million Mexicans in 339 municipalities are indigents: 12 million more poor people in 5 years (Coneval, 2012)
- 2012: 52 million or 46.2% of Mexicans are considered poor: rate of increase from 2008 by 3.2%
- **Latin America:** 2003 – 2008: average 5% of GDP growth; surplus of 0.4% in public budget
- Reduction of 15% of public debts
- Reduction of rate of poverty and extreme poverty by 3.8 %percent per year (CEPAL, 2012).
- Only Mexico and Honduras increased poor and extremely poor people

Mapa de la pobreza extrema

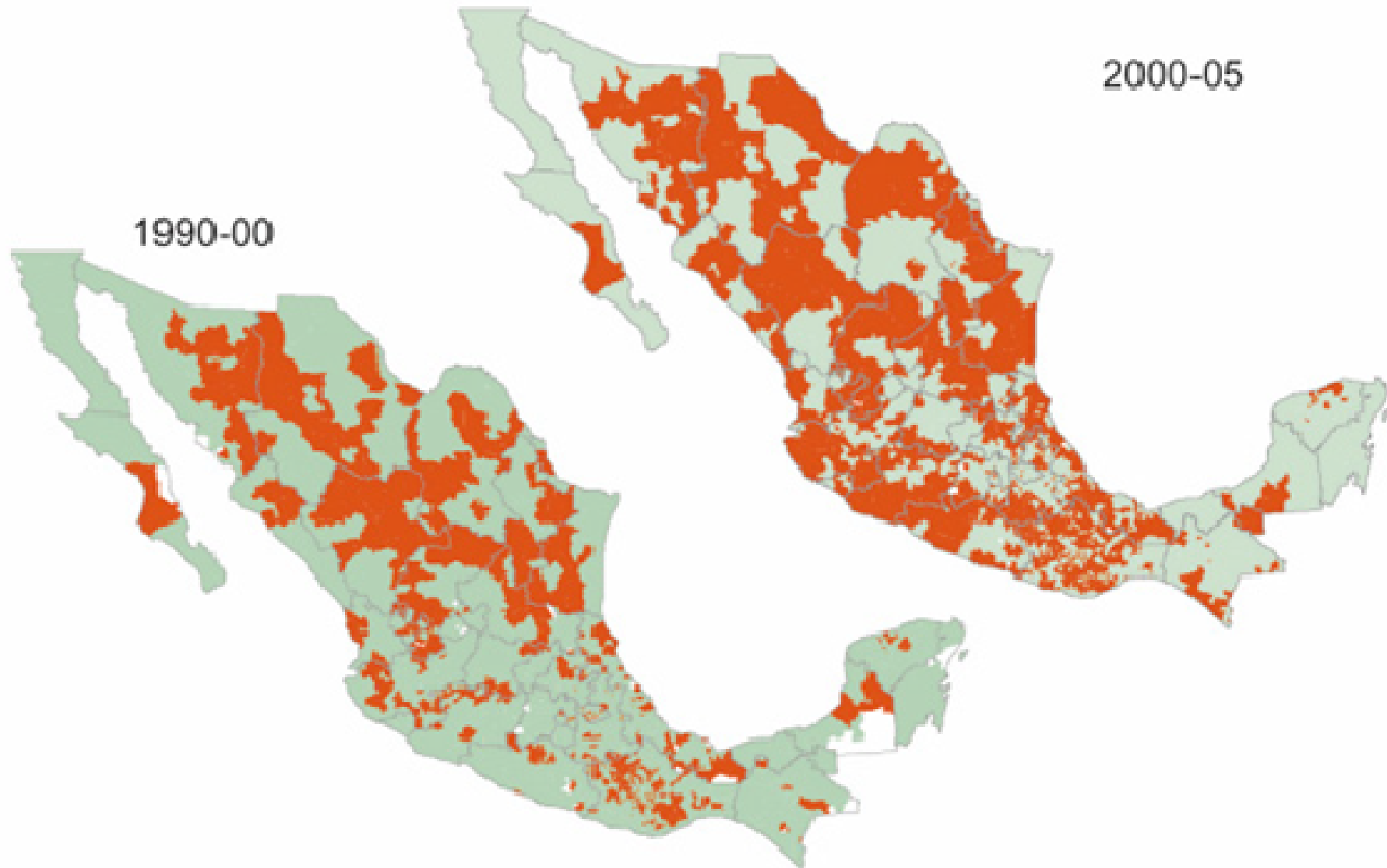
Éstos son algunos de los municipios con mayor población en extrema pobreza en el país, de acuerdo con datos del Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía.


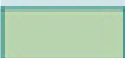




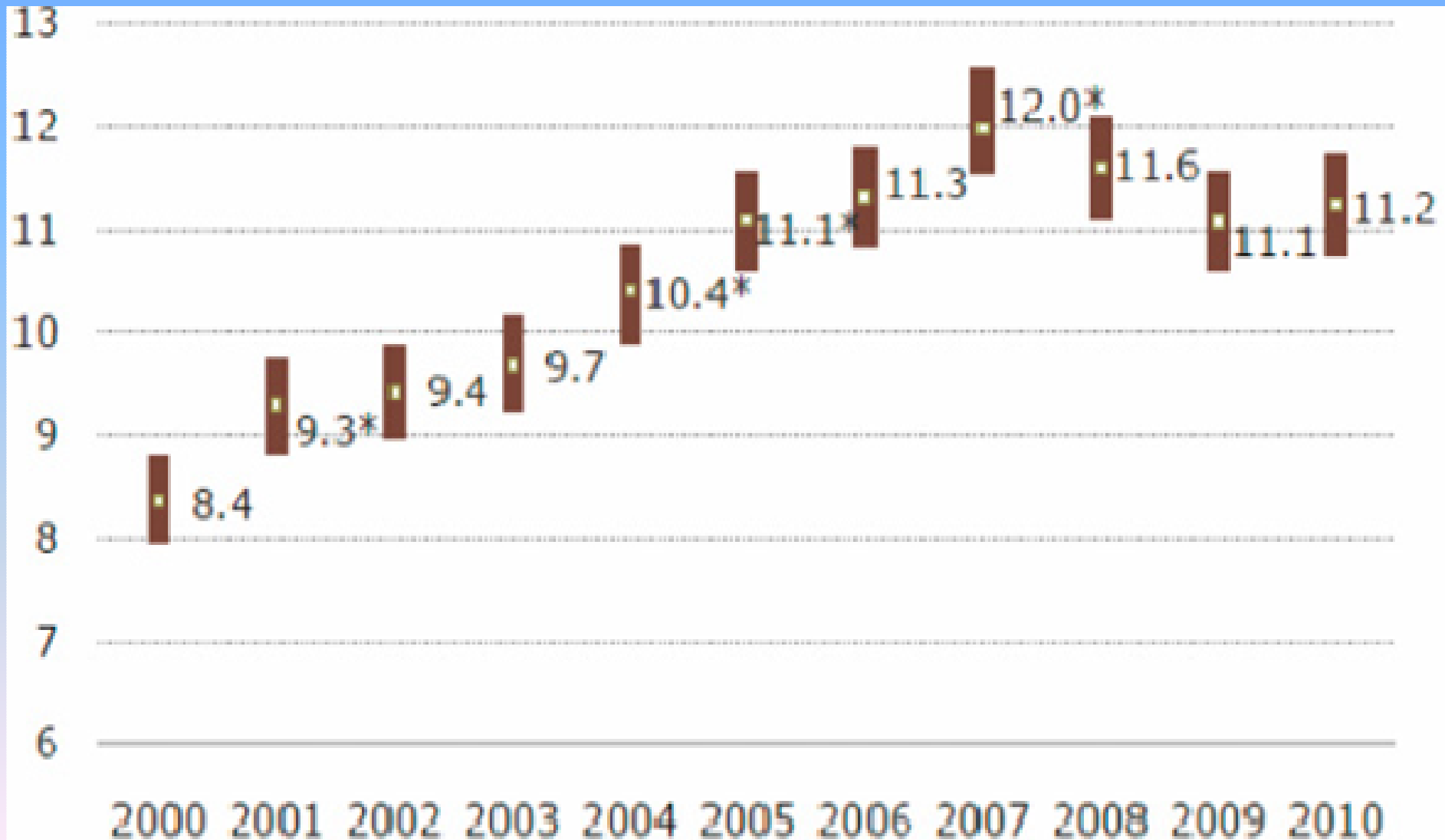
4. Migration especially from the drylands to the USA

Population movement



-  Municipalities with loss of population
-  Municipalities with increase of population

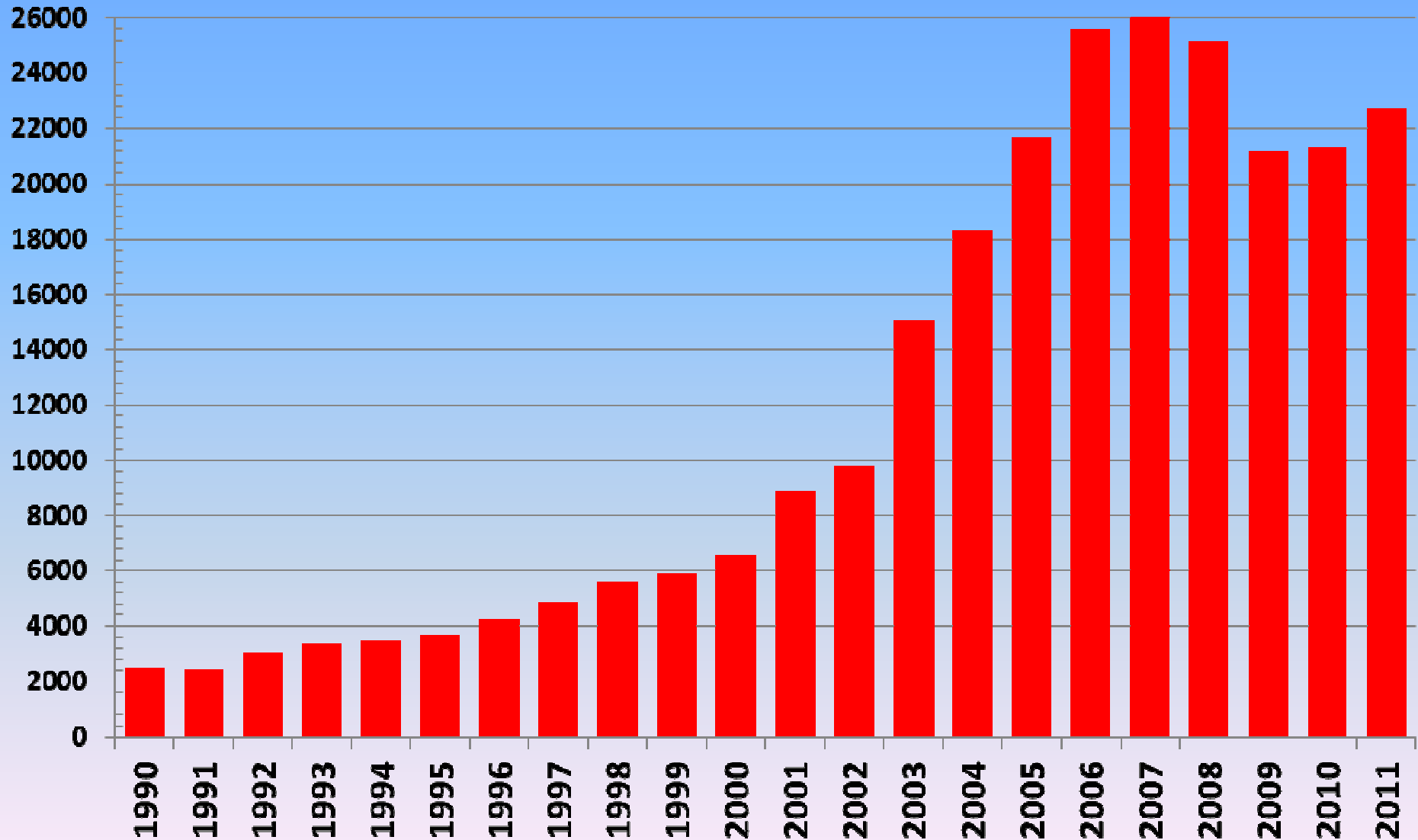
Mexican Immigration to the USA



A photograph showing a group of people, likely in a community setting. A woman in the foreground is wearing a vibrant purple shawl. Other individuals are visible in the background, some wearing traditional or colorful clothing. The scene appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor gathering.

5. Social and gender vulnerability in Mexico

Remittances 1990-2010, Million US \$



Remittances crucial for survival

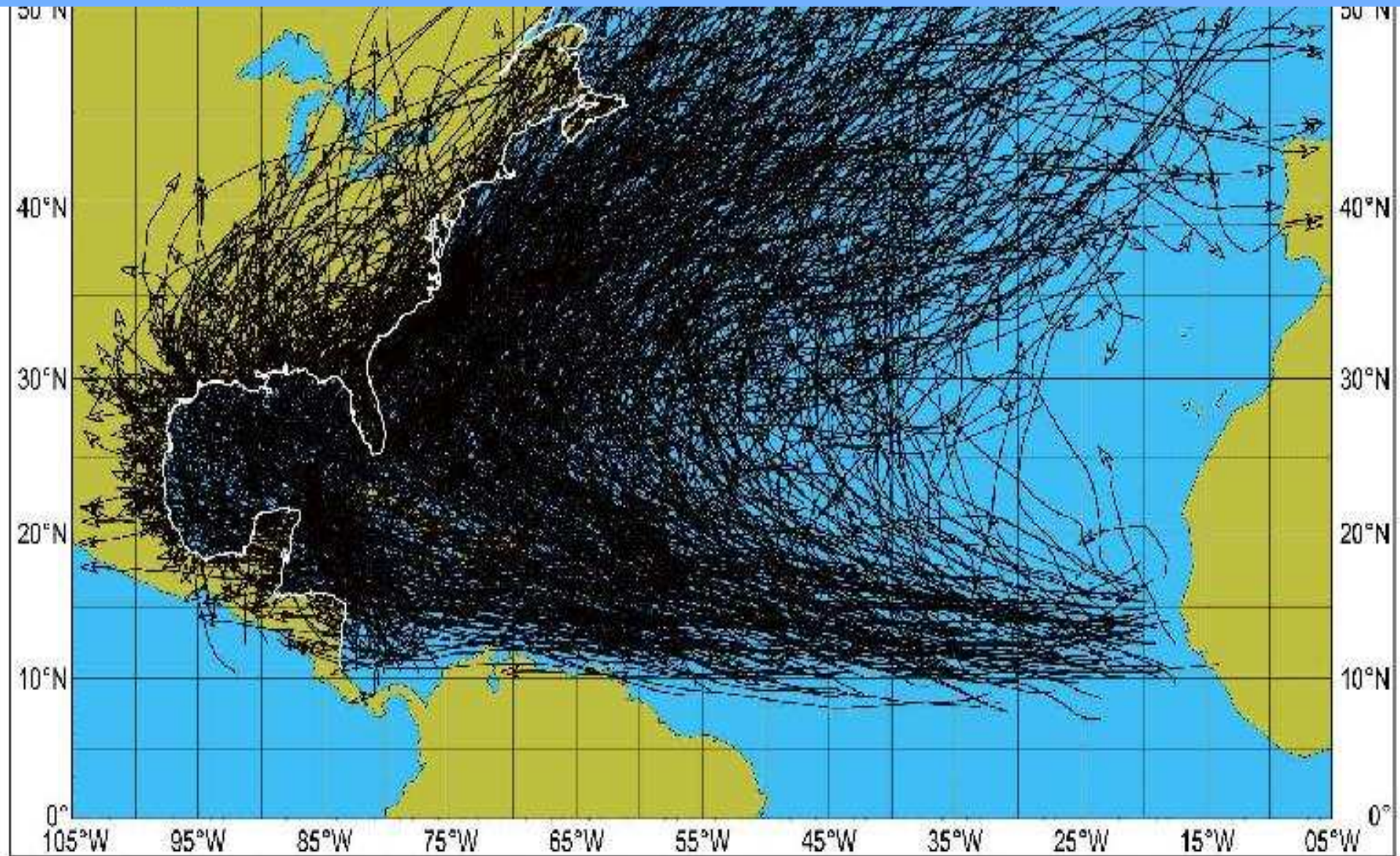
- Remittances crucial for poor people and rural regions
- lack of governmental support for mitigating crises and environmental threats
- second largest source of foreign currency in Mexico, just behind income from oil exports and higher direct foreign investments.
- In 2000 they amounted to US\$ 7.24 billion
- 2008 they rose to US\$ 25.145 billion
- 2009 – due to the global financial and economic crisis and the high unemployment rates – they dropped by 15 per cent to US\$ 21.181 billion
- 2010 to US\$ 22.311 billion
- 2011 increased 6.8% (Bank of Mexico, 2012).



Environmental Vulnerability

- climate change: stronger and more frequent hurricanes, intensive rainfalls, flash floods, and longer and more severe droughts
- Deterioration of quality of soils (soil erosion, loss of soil fertility, desertification, and pollution of soils with agrochemicals)
- salinization (overexploitation of aquifers) due to intensive agriculture and livestock practices
- Biodiversity loss, deforestation and change in land use
- pollution of water are
- drylands the higher temperature, higher variability and reduction in precipitation, longer midsummer (inter-aestival) droughts, and insufficient availability of water and its pollution are key factors for climate-induced threats and environmental security risks.
- Desertification and land degradation 58 % of the country: key drivers of cross-national and internal rural-urban migration have been the loss of soil fertility
- Insecure land and water rights have also generated conflicts and produced “complex emergencies” (Oswald/Brauch, 2009) within communities
- physical insecurity, violence, environmental threats and social vulnerability are producing highly stressful life conditions for women head of household

Paths of hurricanes during the 21st century



6. Some conclusive comments



- Environmentally-induced migration is a **complex, multi-causal, and interactive** phenomenon, often with **negative outcomes** that may destroy both family and community networks, and increase the **social vulnerability of women**.
- Change in **scientific thinking and political action** is also relevant for the analysis of climate-induced migrants.
- The **human, gender and environmental (HUGE) security** approach (Oswald Spring, 2009) offers a change in the focus of the referent object, while the necessary new paradigm of **sustainability** requires a fundamental shift in the means of addressing both climate-induced phenomena from national and homeland security perspectives.
- **New mindset** is needed **away from fences, walls, sensors,** and other observation techniques, not to mention prisons and deportations, and towards **strategies of sustainable rural development**, in order to address the very causes and triggers of **why poor rural people have been forced** to leave their rural livelihoods.

- Thus, a human, gender and environmental (a HUGE) security perspective for analyzing climate-induced migration permits **fundamental changes in scientific world views and political mindsets**
- shift the focus away from the **effects** (migration as an adaptation and survival strategy) towards the **anthropogenic environmental as well as socio-economic causes**, triggers, multipliers, and intensifiers that have forced affected people to be on the move.



**Thank you for
your attention**