

# **Labor rights risks in supply chains in Mexico ahead of the 2026 Men's FIFA World Cup and leveraging the USMCA's protection framework**

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## **Abstract**

*In 2026, Mexico will host the FIFA Men's World Cup under intense pressure to deliver a tightly scheduled event with unprecedented global viewership. While mega-sporting events are often portrayed as catalysts of development, they carry significant labor rights risks. These are especially salient in countries like Mexico, where long-standing structural conditions, such as widespread informality, subcontracting, insecurity, and limited capacity, can deepen workers' vulnerability.*

*Given that the event will be held across the three countries that are parties to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), there is an opportunity to examine whether its labor provisions and enforcement mechanism, can serve as a pathway for protecting workers' rights in the event's supply chain, including construction, hospitality, apparel and sporting goods, food and beverage, transport, and technology, where labor violations may occur before, during, or after the event.*

*This paper argues that while the USMCA represents a valuable tool to enforce labor rights, its impact is uneven, notably due to significant gaps in transparency, enforceability, and corporate responsibility, which reduce its ability to effectively improve workers' conditions. As such, the*

*agreement may offer an important but ultimately partial tool for labor protection in the context of the 2026 tournament.*