

January 2007 – Travel Advisory for Mexico Downgraded

Oaxaca, the second poorest of the 31 Mexican States, is home to two CFHI program sites: **Cultural Crossroads in Health** and **Tropical Medicine** in Puerto Escondido, on the Mexican coast.

Since May of 2006, there have been a number of protests—some turning violent—due to social unrest and political infighting. These tensions resulted in a Public Announcement being issued from the U.S. State Department on November 15, 2006. Then in December, the Mexican Government sent in federal troops to restore order; although, at no time was a travel warning issued.

As of January 18, 2007, this Travel Advisory has been downgraded—with tourists advised to take caution—to reflect the return to normalcy. This Public Announcement expires in turn on March 29, 2007.

A CFHI program team traveled to Oaxaca City in January to assess the situation, returning on January 15 having found the city to be once again at peace. People have returned to their daily routines, and the team experienced no problems moving around the city. Also, the clean-up operation has been in full swing, with graffiti from protesters removed. The Zocalo, or town square, which had been taken over by the organizers of the protests during the height of the demonstrations, is now witness to couples strolling hand in hand and children playing with their balloons.

A new coat of paint may not erase all the painful memories, but to anyone who knows Oaxaca, it feels like the city has got its soul back. By evening too, the CFHI team found the Zocalo vibrant: full of people on a Saturday night, involved in a variety of music, celebrations, and eating at the many busy outdoor restaurants. .

CFHI will continue to hold its programs in beautiful, colonial Oaxaca...a city that has shown it can rise to take its rightful place as one of the most magical and safest of cities in Mexico.