

First LD-Write thru: Mexico urged to ensure Chinese firms' rights, interests

BEIJING, Feb. 2 (Xinhua) -- China on Monday urged Mexico to ensure legal rights and interests of Chinese enterprises after the Mexican government suspended a high-speed railway project, in which a Chinese-led consortium was a bidder.

"We noticed the Mexican government's decision. China hopes the Mexican government can properly deal with subsequent problems, and ensure the Chinese enterprises' legal rights and interests with concrete measures," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei.

A spokesperson from the National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic planner, said early Monday that China regretted Mexico's decision.

The spokesperson said the Chinese enterprises had invested huge manpower and money in the project bid, and China hoped the Mexican government can properly deal with the consequences of the suspension.

The new line, which was expected to cost 3.75 billion U.S. dollars to build, would have connected Mexico City with the central state of Queretaro. The bid for the project was won by a group including the China Railway Construction Corporation in November, but it was soon canceled by the Mexican government for domestic reasons. Another bidding for the high-speed railway project was reopened last month.

Mexico's finance minister on Friday announced the project's "indefinite" suspension, as well as canceling a proposed trans-peninsular rail line, after the government's budget cuts for this year.

Hong Lei said Chinese enterprises are globally competitive in high speed rail technology and operation, and are increasingly going global.

The Chinese government will continue to encourage and support enterprises in this drive, he told a regular press briefing in Beijing.

The spokesman also said that cooperation between China and Mexico is in the interests of the two countries, and expressed hope that the two sides can cooperate more in future.