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# Latam Daily: Mexican Unemployment and International Trade

- **Mexico: In February, the unemployment rate fell to 2.6% while the labour force participation rate rose to 59.0%; Foreign trade rebounded in February, with exports increasing by 15.8% and imports by 20.8%**

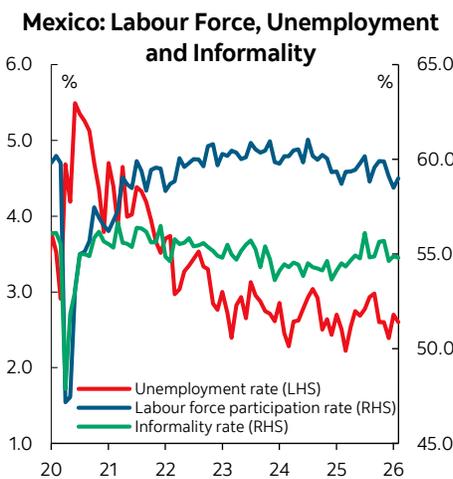
**MEXICO: IN FEBRUARY, THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FELL TO 2.6% WHILE THE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE ROSE TO 59.0%**

In February, the unemployment rate edged down to 2.6% from the previous 2.7% (chart 1). In contrast, the labour force participation rate increased to 59.0% (vs. 58.5% previously). As a result, the economically active population totaled 61.9 million people during the period. Additionally, the underemployment rate—that is, the percentage of people seeking to work more hours—stood at 7.0%, above the previous 6.1%. Meanwhile, the informality rate reached 54.8% (vs. 54.9% previously), in line with the weakness observed in recent months in the creation of jobs and firms affiliated with the IMSS.

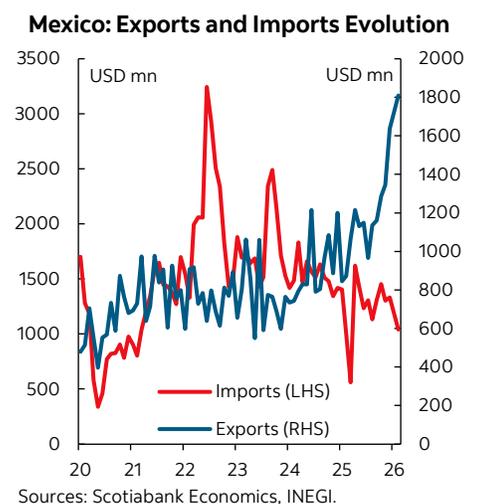
**FOREIGN TRADE REBOUNDED IN FEBRUARY, WITH EXPORTS INCREASING BY 15.8% AND IMPORTS BY 20.8%**

In February, the trade balance posted a slight deficit of USD 462 million (chart 2), with notable rebounds in both exports and imports. On the export side, shipments rose 15.8% to USD 56.85 billion from 8.1% previously, mainly driven by a sharp increase (26.7%) in non-automotive manufacturing exports, while automotive exports declined by 3.4%. In addition, oil exports fell again, this time by 24.2%. Meanwhile, imports also rebounded strongly, rising 20.8% from 9.8% previously, totaling USD 57.31 billion. Within imports, intermediate goods continued to lead growth at 27.2%, followed by consumer goods at 5.2%, while capital goods remained in negative territory at -8.1%, extending the downtrend observed since January a year earlier.

**Chart 1**



**Chart 2**



—Rodolfo Mitchell, Miguel Saldaña & Martha Cordova

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