

**Free Trade Agreement between the  
Dominican Republic-Central America-United States  
(CAFTA-DR)  
Tenth Meeting of the Environmental Affairs Council  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
July 7 - 8, 2016**

**Joint Communiqué**

In commemoration of the tenth anniversary of CAFTA-DR, the Environmental Affairs Council met on July 7 and 8 in San Salvador, El Salvador, to oversee implementation of and review progress under the Environment Chapter.

CAFTA-DR is one of the first trade agreements in the region to include such an environment chapter. Under the theme “United Protecting the Environment,” government and civil society representatives, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia, and members of the general public, highlighted ten years of accomplishments and charted a course for the future.

Examples of these accomplishments include training over 120,000 people in the implementation of environmental laws, bringing more than 1.3 million hectares of land under improved natural resource management, saving 8,800 endangered animals through wildlife rescue centers, and helping 714 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) adopt cleaner production practices. Other important milestones include the successful establishment of the Secretariat for Environmental Matters (SEM), a regional mechanism that promotes compliance with environmental laws and public participation, and the Central American Wildlife Enforcement Network (CAWEN), as well as the certification of four national wastewater reference laboratories and one regional reference laboratory.

During the July 7 session, Council members representing the governments of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the United States participated in a lively exchange on environmental successes and remaining challenges. The Council discussed topics ranging from institutional strengthening, including the implementation of wildlife legislation and regional cooperation, to public participation in environmental decision-making, private sector engagement, and natural resources management. The Organization of American States also presented the Council with a summary of the “CAFTA-DR 6<sup>th</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Report.” Council members pledged to continue working together to solve pressing environmental challenges facing the region, with particular focus on solid waste management; air pollution and water resources management; the illegal trade of wildlife, including marine resources, and the conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems, among others.

The Council held a public session on July 8 at the Hotel Sheraton Presidente in San Salvador to share information and exchange views on implementation of the Environment Chapter and environmental cooperation in the region. The CAFTA-DR countries supported several side events and an environmental cooperation expo to highlight the many achievements of environmental cooperation programs over the past ten years, including work with the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, U.S. Agency for International Development, Helvetas-Guatemala, Central American Secretariat for Economic Integration, Central American Commission for Environment and Development, Organization of American States, World Environment Center, and Humane Society International, among others.

Lina Pohl, Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) and Council Member for El Salvador, reiterated the importance of promoting the participation of all sectors and the general public in environmental issues. Minister Pohl expressed that CAFTA-DR “has enhanced institutional capacities for protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development while strengthening trade and investment ties.”

The Council also adopted the “San Salvador Declaration: United Protecting the Environment,” noting that “despite various geographical, social, and economic differences among the seven CAFTA-DR countries, we all have achieved significant progress in improving institutional capacity and in developing and implementing legislative frameworks and sustainable environmental policies.” The Council likewise emphasized the importance of active participation of all actors, government and civil society representatives, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia, and members of the general public in the creation and implementation of sound environmental practices that advance the well-being of all.

#### Additional Resources

CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation <http://www.caftadr-environment.org/>  
Secretariat for Environmental Matters (Secretariat) <http://www.saa-sem.org/>