

**Free Trade Agreement between the
Dominican Republic-Central America-United States
(CAFTA-DR)**

Ninth Meeting of the Environmental Affairs Council

Guatemala City, Guatemala

July 9 - 10, 2015

Joint Communiqué

The Environmental Affairs Council (Council) established pursuant to the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) held its ninth meeting on July 9 and 10 in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The Council meets annually to oversee implementation of and review progress under Chapter 17 (Environment) of CAFTA-DR.

During the meeting on July 9, Council Members provided an update on their countries progress in implementing the Chapter and principal challenges in environmental law enforcement.

The Council received reports from the principal implementing partners of the CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program and reviewed accomplishments and next steps in the implementation of environmental cooperation. To date \$87.2 million has been invested and accomplishments include:

- Improving over 203 environmental laws or regulations;
- Training over 66,000 people in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation;
- Saving of nearly \$3 million through the application of private sector practices that reduce energy and water consumption;
- Certifying more than 2,000 farms and training over 30,000 people in sustainable agricultural practices.

The Council also received an update from the Secretariat for Environmental Matters (Secretariat) and recognized the high number of public submissions as a positive demonstration of increased public participation and environmental awareness. Since 2007, the Secretariat has received 33 submissions regarding effective enforcement of environmental laws.

The Secretariat also summarized its outreach activities, including dissemination of information about the submission mechanism to approximately 3,270 people from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, the private sector, and governments.

The Council received an update from the Organization of American States (OAS) on progress and accomplishments in environmental protection activities and also received an update on the preparation of the fifth monitoring report on the Environmental Cooperation Program and results of the communications and social outreach plan.

The Council held a public session on July 10 at the *Universidad del Valle de Guatemala* to share information and exchange views on implementation of the Chapter and Environmental Cooperation Program. Approximately 150 people from non-governmental and international organizations, the private sector, and academia attended the meeting.

In both meetings the Council reiterated the importance of ensuring high levels of environmental protection and effective enforcement of environmental laws.

Additional Resources

Secretariat for Environmental Matters (Secretariat) <http://www.saa-sem.org/>

CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation <http://www.caftadr-environment.org/>