



**Remarks of Larry W. Walther  
Director, U.S. Trade and Development Agency  
El Salvador Grant Signing Event  
Los Angeles, California  
April 30, 2008**

Buenos tardes. Thank you for that kind introduction. It is a great pleasure to be here to join in rededicating and expanding our mutual commitment to El Salvador's development. I also want to thank Consul General Herrera for serving as our host and Vice Minister Escobar, President Cabrales, and Board Member de Barraza for being here. Your presence underscores the importance of this event.

I would also like to recognize and thank Ambassador Danilovich and Executive Vice President Simon from the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. At USTDA, we have worked closely with both of these agencies to create a real partnership among U.S. Government programs in El Salvador. By coordinating our efforts, we hope to increase the effectiveness of each of our individual programs in order to energize private investment. The grant agreements that we will sign here tonight, and the one I had the privilege of signing on Monday in Chalatenango, truly reflect the ongoing efforts in the U.S. Government to promote El Salvador's development.

It was indeed an honor for me to travel to El Salvador this week in my new role as Director of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. Having only recently arrived at the Agency, I enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity to make El Salvador my first stop in Latin America because of the special bond that exists between our two countries. Our relationship is rooted in our common democracies and our economic ties were cemented in DR-CAFTA. Through this historic agreement, we have instituted the policies to facilitate the trade and investment that President Saca established as the centerpiece of El Salvador's development plan. Recognizing that the private sector requires infrastructure to sustain businesses and move goods to markets, the Millennium Challenge Corporation is funding essential infrastructure for our economic partnership to succeed.

During my visit to El Salvador, I got a glimpse of the dynamic growth that is taking place. I was particularly impressed with our visit to Chalatenango, where I signed a \$500,000 grant agreement to support the development of municipal infrastructure and a plan for commercial activities along the road infrastructure that is being implemented by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. While there, I was particularly impressed with

the efforts underway to attract investment and to promote trade. The Municipality is clearly committed to doing its part to benefit fully from the MCC investments in roads and other infrastructure. The Mayor and other officials with whom we met have a clear vision for trade to be an engine of growth and job creation in improving standards of living and changing lives. We enthusiastically responded to the opportunity to support them in their efforts.

As a further indication of our commitment to the Northern Zone's development, we will award two additional USTDA grants tonight. Under the first grant, we will provide \$345,000 to the National Development Commission to establish a roadmap to ensure the coordination, support and success of development plans and programs across the Northern Zone. This assistance will review all active development assistance plans and programs in the Northern Zone, identify any gaps, and use these findings to establish a comprehensive development and commercial plan for the Northern Zone.

Through a separate \$285,000 grant to the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development, we will fund the development of an Internet portal devoted exclusively to trade and investment opportunities in the Northern Zone. This portal will provide a window to tell the world that the Northern Zone is open for business and an attractive environment for trade and commercial development. To further facilitate this message, we will also organize three business roundtables on the portal and specific projects.

From my visit this week, I can see the enthusiasm, dedication and professionalism with which El Salvador's development is being pursued. We are excited about the potential that we see for El Salvador's future and, working together, we are pleased to be a partner in this endeavor. We look forward to seeing the results of our efforts and to additional opportunities to build upon our mutual success in the future.