



**Remarks of Larry W. Walther  
Director, U.S. Trade and Development Agency  
Municipality of Chalatenango Grant Signing  
Chalatenango, El Salvador  
April 28, 2008**

Buenos Dias. Thank you for that kind introduction, Ambassador Glazer. It is a great pleasure to be here. I would like to begin by thanking Vice President de Escobar, Vice Minister Escobar, and Mayor Mejía for the generous hospitality that you have extended to us during our visit. You have made us feel very welcome. Moreover, your presence here today underscores the importance of this gathering.

I would also like to recognize and thank the representatives of the Millennium Challenge Corporation and U.S. Embassy who have joined us. As you know, the MCC is funding essential infrastructure for trade here in the Northern Zone and represents an important player in the partnership of the U.S. Government's efforts in El Salvador.

It is indeed an honor for me to be here in my new role as Director of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. Having only recently arrived at the Agency, I welcomed the opportunity to make El Salvador my first visit in Latin America because of the special bond that exists between our two countries. Our relationship is rooted in our common democratic traditions and our economic ties were cemented in DR-CAFTA. Through this historic trade agreement, we have established the policies that will foster the trade and investment that are the centerpiece of your development plan.

I am especially grateful for the opportunity to hear about the plans for private sector investment and trade to serve as a catalyst for Chalatenango's growth. From my short time here, I can already see the enthusiasm, dedication and the professionalism with which this endeavor is being pursued.

We are excited about the potential that we see for El Salvador's future. Chalatenango is well-positioned to play a central role in El Salvador's development and is a leader among municipalities in the Northern Zone.

Today, we will solidify our partnership in a grant designed to further your economic development priorities. Under the grant agreement that we will sign in a few moments, USTDA will provide \$500,000 to the Municipality of Chalatenango to support your plans to develop the necessary municipal infrastructure to foster commercial activities. This assistance is intended to help promote growth, create jobs and literally change lives. Let me commend you, Mayor Mejía, for providing leadership in this process.

As a further indication of our commitment to the Northern Zone's development, I will be traveling to Los Angeles with Vice Minister Escobar this week where we will meet with the Salvadoran community to sign two additional grants. Under the first grant, we will provide \$345,000 to the National Development Commission to create a framework for strategic commercial opportunities in the Northern Zone. This study 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. The second grant of \$285,000 to the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development, will fund the development of an Internet portal devoted exclusively to trade and investment opportunities in the Northern Zone.

Like the assistance we are providing here in Chalatenango, these grants will establish a roadmap to ensure the coordination, support and success of development plans and programs across the Northern Zone.

USTDA, together with all of our fellow U.S. Government agencies, is committed to working with you and supporting your efforts to foster partnerships in El Salvador's development and economic growth. Let me commend you, Vice Minister Escobar, for your leadership as we work to implement effective programs that support your priorities. We look forward to seeing the results of our efforts today and to additional opportunities to build upon our mutual success in the future.

And lastly, thank you for the opportunity to visit your beautiful country to see firsthand the growth taking place here in El Salvador.