

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC-CENTRAL AMERICA-UNITED STATES  
FREE TRADE AGREEMENT  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

**DECLARATION**

**“UNITED PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT”**

(Approved at the Tenth Meeting of the Environmental Affairs Council, held on July 7, 2016)

**We**, the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) Environmental Affairs Council, composed of Ministers of Environment and representatives of the governments of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the United States, gathered in the city of San Salvador, El Salvador, July 7, 2016, commemorating the CAFTA-DR Tenth Anniversary,

**Reaffirm** our common commitment to promote sound environmental policies that ensure high levels of environmental protection and to encourage trade and investment that is in line with such policies;

**Recognize** that the Tenth Anniversary of CAFTA-DR marks a crucial milestone for trade-related environmental cooperation in the region;

**Recall** the commitments adopted by our governments in Chapter 17 of CAFTA-DR and its associated Environmental Cooperation Agreement, signed at Washington on February 18, 2005;

**Recognize** that the CAFTA-DR countries face similar challenges associated with, among others, the degradation of natural resources, the management of water resources, the enforcement of environmental laws, the illegal trade of wildlife, including marine resources, and the conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems that call for the promotion of regional initiatives that enhance our national capacities to address these challenges;

**Note** 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;

**Celebrate** the many accomplishments of CAFTA-DR environmental cooperation, including improving over 203 environmental laws or regulations, training over 120,000 people in natural resources management and biodiversity conservation, combating illegal trade in wildlife through the Central America Wildlife Enforcement Network (ROAVIS-CAWEN), and saving nearly US\$3 million through the implementation of private sector best practices to reduce energy and water consumption, as well as the certification of four national wastewater reference laboratories and one regional reference laboratory;

**Reaffirm** the need for joint participation of all actors, particularly governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, communities, and individuals in the creation and implementation of sound environmental practices that advance the well-being of all;

**Note** with satisfaction the work of the CAFTA-DR Secretariat for Environmental Matters (SEM), an innovative mechanism for public participation and transparency, and seek to encourage greater public knowledge of and participation in this mechanism;

**Seek to promote** greater inter-institutional exchange and technical cooperation in strategic areas as defined by the CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program (ECP), including institutional strengthening, effective enforcement of environmental laws, biodiversity and conservation, market-based conservation, and private sector environmental performance;

**Recognize** the important contribution of the Organization of American States (OAS) with regard to the monitoring and evaluation of the CAFTA-DR ECP over the past ten years and welcome the 6<sup>th</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Report; and

**Highlight the importance of this declaration** and designate it the “San Salvador Declaration: United Protecting the Environment” in honor of the city of San Salvador, El Salvador, host of the Tenth Anniversary Meeting of the CAFTA-DR Environmental Affairs Council.