



**CAFTA-DR: 10 Years of Environmental Cooperation:  
What Have We Learned?**

**Remarks of Terry F. Yosie, President & CEO  
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Before the  
Organization of American States  
Washington, D.C.  
May 5, 2016**

Introductory Comments

I am delighted to be here to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CAFTA-Dr Environmental Cooperation. This very important milestone provides an opportunity for both rigorous assessment and future planning. I want to especially acknowledge the great leadership provided by the US Department of State and its Bureau for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES); environmental, economic and other ministries represented in OAS member countries in the CAFTA-DR region; and the many participating small businesses, entrepreneurs, universities, local partners and other stakeholders that have dedicated themselves to achieving important successes.

The World Environment Center (WEC) has been a major partner of the US Department of State and other nations in implementing both public and private sector and university cleaner production partnerships in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua beginning in 2008 and continuing to the present time. There were several key factors for success that served us and our partners well in the region. They include:

- Strong support from government and business leaders.
- Our non-profit status that made it possible to work with a variety of regional and local partners without concerns over advocacy or policy agendas.
- The importance of having on-the-ground implementation capabilities that were grounded in strong local technical skills, cultures and relationships.
- The ability to integrate environmental, energy, climate and other objectives with economics so that tangible results could be both measured and achieved, and incentivized further.
- The application of private sector skills and knowledge to small enterprises and universities that provided economic insights to the advancement of societies.

In all of these countries, we have achieved a set of documented results that demonstrate the wisdom of capacity building investments in both projects and people. Showing a small business how to reduce

costs while improving performance and competitiveness is a powerful motivator for sustainable development. Providing faculty and students with a direct understanding of the key skills and experiences that will be needed in the marketplace generate both hope and opportunity.

### **What Have We Learned? What Is the Private Sector's Role in Solving Sustainability Challenges?**

Our work in CAFTA-DR implementation during most of the past decade has yielded several important types of learning that provided important insights on how the role of the private sector can best be leveraged for societal advancement. They include:

1. ***Designing capacity building and economic development programs should include all relevant aspects of sustainability development.*** As our work in the CAFTA-DR region advanced, we continued to expand our boundaries so that not only environmental, energy or economic factors were addressed but, also, important issues such as women's empowerment and preparing students to become more successful in the marketplace. The integration of these various aspects of sustainability established both more powerful motivation among our local partners and generated greater innovation and creativity among participating organizations.
2. ***Applying collaboration skills has emerged as an important field of both study and practice.*** Collaboration requires, at its foundation, a recognition that no one organization can be successful in achieving its objectives without the participation of other parties that also have important knowledge and capacities. We found large numbers of people who desired to work together to solve common problems and create opportunities, and who embraced transparent decision making and information sharing. As collaboration experiences have advanced, more rigorous practices are developed which sets the stage for further advances.
3. ***Marrying knowledge platforms with economic incentives provides a powerful motivator for positive change.*** One of the professional challenges we all face is to make available knowledge that exists in specialized pockets to broader groups of professionals—in business, universities, non-government organizations and government ministries. A key factor to success in our work has been to determine how best to liberate specialized information so that intelligent and motivated people have greater ability to make better choices. We utilized various mechanisms to make this information available—on line communication of data bases, person-to-person technical assistance, joint workshops that promote information sharing, and tracking cost savings of different alternatives for improving environmental protection. The more we systematize these approaches, the greater our successes will become.
4. ***Engaging young people and private businesses for mutual advantage.*** Traditionally, students attend their universities and then search for employment after completing their studies. Many

companies wait until students graduate before evaluating whether to hire them. This is the old model, and it doesn't work very well. Our objective in the CAFTA-DR region is to advance and accelerate communications and interactions among students, faculty and businesses at a much earlier stage. Through this approach, students can learn the realities of the marketplace and acquire important skills and insights before they even seek employment. Businesses can identify talented future employees and invest in their future before they hire them, thereby strengthening their access to talent and building their future competitiveness. This newer model of engagement requires more strategic thinking and collaboration by all the parties involved, but we at the World Environment Center see more and more evidence of its success in the various regions of the work where we work.

### **Planning for the Future**

I'd like to close with two additional observations to apply what we've learned with what we need to do in the future.

During the 10 years of CAFTA-DR implementation, there is ample evidence that the design of targeted projects can achieve success. We've seen this in the accumulated data for energy and water savings, reductions in solid waste and wastewater discharges, decreases in greenhouse gas emissions, cost savings and investments made from those cost savings.

We need to build on these localized successes by raising our sights beyond individual projects and apply the concept of "design for scale." This refers to the idea of applying all of the tools we use—environmental assessment, financial management, technical assistance, private sector investment, monitoring and evaluation—to achieve much greater levels of positive impacts. Design for scale is a concept that is being embraced by organizations as diverse as Unilever, Bill Gates Foundation, implementation strategies for the climate change agreement reached in Paris and many others.

Second, the adoption in September 2015 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals now provides a coherent global framework to link reporting by individual businesses and other organizations to the Global 2030 agenda. The World Environment Center's work in CAFTA-DR implementation provides ample evidence that such a global reporting framework has direct relevance to even the most local projects. WEC commends this to your attention.

Thank you.