

Partnership for Central America Secures New Commitments for Honduras with President Castro, Under Secretary Fernandez

Partnership for Central America convened a delegation with executives with Honduran President Castro and Under-Secretary Fernandez

TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS, March 20, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In partnership with the U.S. Under-Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment Jose W. Fernandez, the [Partnership for Central America](#) convened a business delegation with executives from Microsoft, Mastercard, CARE, Cargill, and Weber Shandwick to meet with President Xiomara Castro, Minister of Economic Development Pedro Barquero, Minister of Health Jose Manuel Matheu, and Minister of Investment Miguel Medina of Honduras. The delegation discussed opportunities for private sector investment to support inclusive economic development and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Honduras. In the meeting, the corporate delegation affirmed commitments to Honduras made in support of Vice President Harris's Call to Action for Central America. For example, Microsoft committed to train 290,000 people in Honduras by 2026 in critical digital skills.



Partnership for Central America Business Delegation Meeting with President Castro: Jack Leslie, Darren Ware, Laura Cruz, Under Secretary Jose Fernandez, President Xiomara Castro, Kate Behncken, Jonathan Fantini-Porter, Robert Ivanschitz, Martha Brooks, Ma

Following Vice President Harris's visit to Tegucigalpa for President Castro's inauguration in January, the delegation's convening marked an important milestone in this new era of diplomatic relations between the United States and President Castro's administration - one characterized by a commitment to transparency, accountability and democracy. Notably, Minister Barquero recently signed an agreement allowing CNA Financial Corporation to audit the ministry with full transparency. This signals the Castro Administration's commitment to facilitating and supporting

new investment opportunities. Jonathan Fantini-Porter, Executive Director of the Partnership, highlighted this unique opportunity: “Our success in mobilizing investments for the Vice President’s Call to Action in Central America depends on a systemic approach across our public and private sector partners. We are grateful to President Castro and her Administration, Under-Secretary Fernandez, and our private sector partners for coming together today around a common vision to create opportunities for the people of Honduras.”

Broad-based, inclusive economic growth in Honduras will require strong collaboration between the public and private sectors in order to effectively deploy private investment. The Partnership for Central America aims to address this challenge by focusing on market-oriented solutions and multilateral partnerships across government, the private sector, civil society and local industries. “Microsoft is committed to promoting economic opportunity in Honduras by increasing access to broadband and providing digital skilling opportunities, and I thank President Castro for the productive dialogue today on how we can maximize our collective impact,” said Kate Behncken, Vice President and Lead of Microsoft Philanthropies, and Member of the Advisory Board for the Partnership. “Together with the Partnership for Central America and others in the private sector we can mobilize investments that help the region thrive.”

In response to Vice President Kamala Harris’s May 27th Call to Action, the Partnership has mobilized over \$1.2B in private sector investment in the region. Partnership members have made significant commitments to support job creation and skill-building initiatives and aim to leverage the recent diplomatic progress to expand opportunities across the country:

- + Microsoft has helped provide broadband connectivity to 205,000 people in Honduras and is on track to extend access to 1 million people by 2025. Microsoft has also helped Hondurans learn digital skills through its Global Skills Initiative, committing to training 290,000 people in Honduras by 2026.

- + Mastercard has committed to investing \$100 million to bring 5 million people in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala into the formal economy and to digitize 1 million micro and small businesses. This investment is intended to drive transformational financial inclusion as part of their work with the financial industry, government, and ecosystem players to increase transparency and support economic development.

- + Based on their impactful programs and strong partnerships in the region and as a global leader in Gender Equality, CARE is establishing the Center for Gender Equality for Central America. The Center focuses on creating and implementing solutions for the economic and social development of women. It aims to reach 500,00 women and their families, totaling over 2 million people, in a 5-year strategy.

- + Cargill has operated in Central America for more than 50 years, with 10,000 employees working in the region. As part of the Call to Action, Cargill will invest an additional \$150 million over the next five years with the intention of improving farmer livelihoods and building economic

resilience in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The company's investments will aim to create jobs and support producers as well as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the protein and animal nutrition supply chains. Cargill will also contribute at least \$10 million over three years to partnerships that directly support farmers and farm communities, and improve food security through community nutrition and school meal programs. Cargill's new commercial and philanthropic efforts will expand support for more than 19,000 farmers, 52,000 MSMEs, and more than 25,000 children and community members in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This includes support for USAID's Guatemala Entrepreneurship and Development Innovation (GEDI) Initiative for small businesses owners, which the Vice President announced in June.

The Partnership for Central America is the coordinating body for Vice President Harris's Call to Action to Deepen Private Sector Investment in the Northern Triangle. The Partnership aims to facilitate and support practical solutions to advance economic opportunity, address urgent climate, education and health challenges, and promote long-term investments and workforce capability in support of a vision of hope for Central America. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to support@centampartnership.org.

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