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GUATEMALA

SNAPSHOT

Judging the Future of the Environment

The war on climate change gains momentum as legal professionals learn how to utilize the law to protect their country from its impacts.



*Featured guests at the inaugural lecture of the program, attended by more than 200 participants.
Photo: USAID PRS Project*

Guatemalan Lawyers Bar Association and San Carlos University develop a diploma program on environmental legislation and climate change for 68 law enforcement professionals to strengthen public and private capabilities to improve compliance with DR-Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Guatemala is home to the largest forested area in Mesoamerica. It is a beautiful country with plentiful natural resources. However, enforcement and compliance with existing environmental laws is weak. The Government of Guatemala recognizes that the future well-being of rural producers and communities depends on the way biodiversity and natural resources are managed and protected today. Therefore, strengthening public private capabilities to improve compliance with the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) and improve capacities to address climate change are a high priority to promote sustainable economic growth.

To support the Government of Guatemala's efforts to improve compliance with environmental laws, the USAID Policy Regulatory Support for Economic Growth (PRS) Project supported the Guatemalan Bar Association of Lawyers and Notaries in the development of an innovative diploma program in Latin America entitled "Challenges of Environmental Law to Combat Climate Change." The program combines knowledge of environmental legislation and its application for meeting the requirements as set forth in DR-CAFTA. More than 68 legal professionals (37 women and 31 men) have already received training, including the legal advisers of public and private judges, prosecutors, and academics. Another benefit of receiving this diploma is that the Guatemala Lawyers Bar Association, Faculty of Law and University of San Carlos of Guatemala have agreed that the diploma can be applied towards Master's level graduate academic credits.

In Guatemala, licensing for legal professionals is compulsory, so the PRS Project's work creating this diploma will elevate the importance of environmental legislation and ensure that future legal professionals are educated in environmental law and apply what they have learned to the responsible development of the country. This effort is part of Government of Guatemala's response to develop and implement strategies for increasing economic growth while also addressing the threats of global climate change.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>