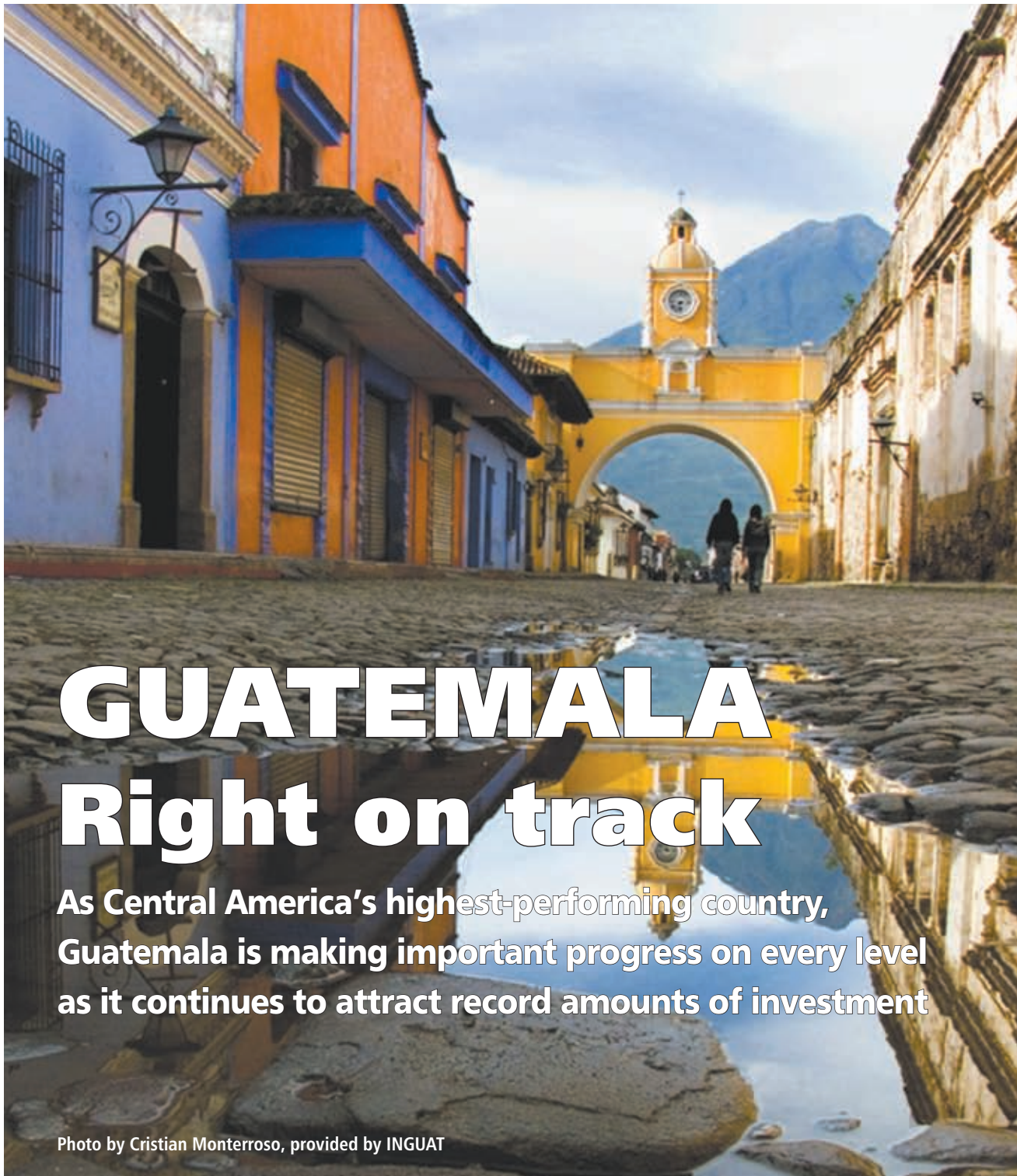


PANORAMA

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GUATEMALA Right on track

As Central America's highest-performing country, Guatemala is making important progress on every level as it continues to attract record amounts of investment

Photo by Cristian Monterroso, provided by INGUAT

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Growing all areas

Guatemala is using incentives to lift people out of poverty

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World buyers wake up to Guatemala's superior brew

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Regional transshipment

Port of Miami plays pivotal role in Guatemala's trading activities

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Growth with a social conscience

Guatemalan industry is developing at speed, and so are people-oriented initiatives

With a privileged strategic position between two great oceans, the Republic of Guatemala is recognized as the gateway to Central America and is attracting substantial levels of fresh foreign direct investment (FDI) from the U.S. and around the world.

Rich in natural resources and human capital, thanks to its young population, Guatemala's economy shrugged off the global financial crisis to record a 0.6% year-on-year rise in GDP to U.S.\$38.1 billion (equivalent to U.S.\$68 million in terms of Purchasing Power Parity) in 2009. Earlier this year, its credit rating was raised by Moody's from Ba2 to Ba1.

Reforms and legislation introduced by the business-friendly government of President Álvaro Colom has generated a confident and thriving commercial climate that has been praised by respected global financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The proactive, center-left government is working with the World Bank on three key issues to make the country's huge potential a reality, namely: legitimacy, transparency and efficiency of public institutions; investing in basic social and economic sectors; and promoting more inclusive trade and private-sector-led growth.

Wealth of opportunities

Guatemala offers investors a wealth of opportunities in a diverse economy that comprises large manufacturing, agricultural, tourism, business process outsourcing (BPO) and commercial sectors.

The changing face of Guatemala's economy can be seen by its export figures. In 1986, for example, two thirds of exports were traditional products like coffee, sugar, bananas and cardamom. Today, these commodities account for less than 40% of total exports, with non-traditional goods such as



President Álvaro Colom delivers a speech to the U.N. Millennium Development Goals summit in New York

textiles, handicrafts, manufacturing, vegetables and fruit, taking a larger stake.

In addition to forecast local investment of U.S.\$10.6 billion, government officials expect foreign investors to pump U.S.\$1.5 billion of FDI into the country by 2013 in

as part of a drive towards sustainable energy programs in the solar, wind, hydro-electric and geothermal energy sectors.

"We are focused on fiscal reforms and security. I believe that our economic growth for 2010 will be between 2% and

"Guatemala offers investors the option to participate in many productive sectors."

a clear sign of the progress being made by Central America's most beautiful and ambitious nation.

Just three hours' flight time from Miami, the country of 13.5 million people enjoys solid bilateral relations with the U.S. government, while the Port of Miami is the leading destination for exports transported by cargo ship. The U.S. is also helping develop renewable energies in Guatemala

2.5%," says President Colom, a successful businessman who took office in January 2008 after leading the National Unity of Hope party to election victory.

"Thanks to political and economic stability, Guatemala is a country that offers small, medium and large investors the option to participate in many productive sectors that guarantee high returns in the short, medium and long term."

Guatemala's government comprises executive, judicial and legislative branches, with the latter represented by the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala which has 158 congress members who are elected every four years.

Under the careful stewardship of Congress President, José Roberto Alejos, the administrative body has built on work carried out over the past two decades to develop a true democracy based on the rule of law.

An astute politician who studied business administration and law in the U.S., Alejos noted the importance of press freedom, transparency and democracy for accountability when he attended the third World Conference of Speakers of Parliament at the United Nations (U.N.) office in Geneva earlier this year.

"I wish to stress the importance of the fact that during this term, the agreements on crucial aspects of Guatemalan democracy have been realized with numerous and comprehensive political and social dialog which shows that our people are mobilized with their institutions to defend and secure the values of coexistence, democracy, justice and peace."

Americas Conference

Guatemalan officials were among the delegates who traveled to Miami in September for the Americas Conference, an event that acts as a high-profile platform for governments and business executives from Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss regional issues.

As a leading grower and exporter of coffee, they would have been delighted with one of the forecasts made by the speakers. Augusto de la Torre, World Bank chief economist for Latin America and the Caribbean, predicted that higher commodities prices for goods like coffee would fuel



President Álvaro Colom and First Lady Sandra Torres de Colom take an active part in the 189th anniversary of independence celebrations on September 15



"We are focused on fiscal reforms and security. I believe our economic growth for 2010 will be between 2% and 2.5%."

Álvaro Colom
President of Guatemala

strong growth of up to 6% this year. De la Torre told delegates at the two-day event: "The opportunities have presented themselves and the stars have aligned in a way we haven't seen in 50 years."

That news was a double celebration for Guatemala as on September 15 the country celebrated its Independence Day. National festivities were also held thousands of miles away in China at Shanghai Expo 2010 where the country's rich culture and excellent natural produce were showcased to large crowds.

Strong U.S. bilateral Relations

Ahead of the Independence Day celebrations, U.S. President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton congratulated the people of Guatemala on the 189th anniversary of independence from Spanish rule.

"I've enjoyed the warmth and generosity of the Guatemalan people on each of my visits, and the Guatemalan community

in the U.S. has made great contributions to our nation," Secretary Clinton stated. "These deep connections between our people reinforce our close partnership and I look forward to continuing the partnership between our countries as we work to build a better world for our children."

Secretary Clinton added: "On my trip to your country in March, President Colom and I affirmed our commitment to work together on expanding economic growth, improving transparency and accountability, and increasing access to health care and education.

"Through our Pathways to Prosperity initiative and the Central American Regional Security Initiative, we are working together to widen the circle of opportunity for our citizens and promote stability throughout our hemisphere."

Secretary Clinton's visit to Guatemala City earlier this year followed productive talks with President Colom in Washington D.C. during the 59-year-old's visit to Guatemala's key trade, political and social development partner.

This bilateral strength was clearly illustrated by figures that showed that following the signing of a major free trade agreement in 2006, U.S. investment in Guatemala jumped 22% in three years to 2009 as U.S. investors took advantage of a range of generous fiscal incentives from the Guatemalan government.

In addition to full repatriation of capital and dividends, foreign investors now benefit from greater transparency levels throughout the public sector and economic

sphere in the wake of a nationwide clampdown spearheaded by President Colom and his government.

Clinton visit

During her visit to Guatemala City, Secretary Clinton noted: "The U.S. supports fiscal reform based on a broad consensus to increase transparency in public spending and to strengthen enforcement of tax laws. We want to work with partners like Guatemala to pursue these reforms for the benefit of all citizens.

"We strongly support the tax reform efforts being discussed, as Guatemala deserves better investment in public institutions like education, health and housing. Transparency and enforcement of tax laws are essential for the future prosperity and progress of the Guatemalan people."

One of President Colom's key priorities since taking up his position has been driving improvements and developments in the health and education sectors to boost living standards for millions of Guatemalans, especially those living in rural areas.

With the help of First Lady Sandra Torres de Colom, the President established several government agencies and organizations to oversee projects and programs that have dramatically improved citizens' living conditions and employment prospects.

The Social Cohesion Council (Consejo de Cohesion Social) has played a major role in the achievement of this aim as, together with sister agencies, it constructs new housing, schools and hospitals across the country.

The current administration has also funded a series of major projects that have resulted in the building of more than 20,000 homes as well as more than 5,000 schools and associated facilities.

Speaking at an official ceremony on September 18 during which around 2,600 grateful families—many of whom were badly affected by previous tropical storms—were handed the keys and full ownership rights to their new homes, President Colom said: "We offered to give the less fortunate housing as soon we could. I know some have had to wait more than 15 years for the legalization of their land, but their dream is now reality."

Literacy rates rise

This impressive drive to improve social conditions extends to the education sector where the National Committee for Teaching Literacy (Comité Nacional de Alfabetización) stands at the forefront of the government's campaign to boost literacy rates in children, young people and adults.

The principal entity for teaching literacy and basic education, the NCTL coordinates reading and writing projects and ensures greater access to educational materials and literature.

In addition to its immediate benefits, officials hope such efforts will, in time, ensure more teenagers attend university. Currently, only four out of every 100 young people are in a position to take undergraduate courses.

Led by the Ministry of Education, the NCTL is supported by ministries like the



President Álvaro Colom and First Lady Sandra Torres de Colom support community education projects



The President meets people affected by storms earlier this year

Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance, Ministry of Culture and Sports, and the Ministry of Employment and Social Provision.

With a 73.2% literacy rate, Guatemala has a strong education system—particularly in the main urban areas—that provides older students with a broad range of technical degrees as well as graduate, master and post-graduate degrees.

Efforts by non-governmental organizations are reinforced by the practical help and advice given to the National Committee for Teaching Literacy by many private sector schools, colleges and universities.

Since its formation a decade ago, the National Committee for Teaching Literacy has helped hundreds of thousands of chil-

dren and adults learn valuable life skills such as reading, writing and mathematics.

Thousands of new schools

“Guatemala’s education system is improving and expanding and our children receive a better education,” said President Colom during a speech to teachers in September.

“My government has created 5,100 new centers of education for children and young people and I am especially pleased with the fact that we have opened more than 800 new schools that cater for very young children.”

Officials believe that such investment in current and future generations will pay rich dividends and encourage foreign investors to make the most of Guatemala’s

human capital and its vast economically active population.

More than eight out of every 10 people in this group are aged under 45, and seven out of every 10 are aged under 30. With a university-level population of over 200,000 students, the Demographic Center of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELADE) forecast that by 2020, the republic will have the largest number of inhabitants in the productive age range.

This pool of talented workers is undoubtedly rich in untapped potential and will play a crucial role in ensuring Guatemala continues to attract FDI and achieve its socioeconomic development goals.

Combined with modern infrastructure and advanced and reliable Information and Communications Technology (ICT) networks, Guatemala has established a proud reputation as the leading regional provider of call centers and BPO services.

Competitive labor costs, high industry standards and hard-working, skilled bilingual staff are all contributing to make Guatemala stand out as one of the most popular destinations in Latin America for this high-tech type of work.

Millennium development goals

Higher literacy rates also form a crucial part of Guatemala’s work towards its Millennium Development Goals.

The brainchild of the U.N., the program aims to achieve universal primary education, reduce poverty and child mortality rates, and promote gender equality and environmental sustainability by 2015.

During a speech to world leaders at the U.N. headquarters in New York on September 20, President Colom outlined the solid progress Guatemala has made to reduce poverty, fight disease, combat hunger, protect the environment and improve education standards.

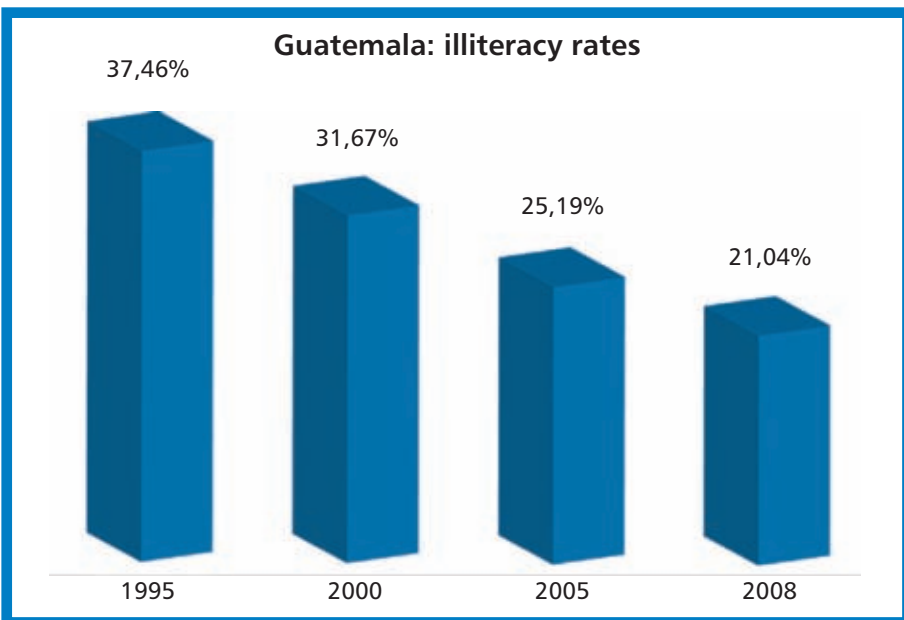
“Guatemala’s education system has advanced greatly in the past year—a historical achievement that means up to 40% more children now receive education,” he said. “Thanks to the projects and programs managed by organizations such as the Social Cohesion Council, thousands more children and young people across Guatemala are exercising their rights to education.”

Reflecting on his country’s work towards the Millennium Development Goals, President Colom added: “We should congratulate ourselves on the positive progress made in 29 of the 49 indicators while redoubling our efforts on the other 20 indicators in order to achieve similar success.”

While President Colom was attending the U.N. summit in the U.S., the First Lady was meeting thousands of families in rural areas who qualify for food packages as part of a successful social program.

Through the provision of free food, families are able to invest the money in their children’s education and their homes in order to improve general living conditions.

“We have a lot of work to do but the changes have started,” she said. “Guatemala’s many social programs do not have political interests, they only see the people and their needs.”



Waking up to smell the coffee

Guatemalan officials are doing all they can to improve and protect this lucrative crop

Often referred to as the “Land of Eternal Spring” due to its excellent year-round climate, Guatemala is rich in natural resources and boasts an extensive agricultural sector that covers a broad range of fruits, vegetables and flowers.

The country’s fertile soil, high altitude farms and ideal weather patterns have resulted in the export-oriented nation gaining an outstanding international reputation for superior quality bananas, tropical fruit, sugar, rum and coffee.

The world’s fifth largest sugar exporter, Guatemalan sugar is used in the production of food, candy and drinks in scores of factories across the country, wider region and beyond.

Growers of cash crops benefit from more than 360 microclimates and President Álvaro Colom and his government are seeking to attract fresh FDI throughout the entire agribusiness industry.

This hugely important sector, which includes forestry, hunting and fishing, generated about 15% of national GDP in 2009, third only to the manufacturing and services sectors, which comprised 20% and 17% respectively.

“Guatemala’s climate, skilled labor and geographical position makes it the main Central American destination for investment in agribusiness,” Virgilio Córdón, executive director of government investment agency, Invest In Guatemala, says.

“The country’s geographical proximity to the U.S., Mexico and South America makes Guatemala a natural platform for the production and export of agribusiness products, providing customs tariffs that are as low as 0%.

“The agribusiness sector is one of the sectors with the greatest development and competitive feasibility for Guatemala at a global level, with a range of related industries that contribute to the productivity of different industry branches.”

Guatemala’s distinct microclimates and traditional processing methods make its coffee unique, with its wonderful flavor



Guatemala is Central America’s second-largest coffee producer and a leading supplier for Starbucks and other coffee chains.

and strong characteristics meaning the country’s premium coffee beans are in demand around the world.

As the “Heart of Central America”, the country is one of the world’s leading growers, with the labor-intensive industry employing thousands of people and generating massive export revenues.

The resource-rich republic is Central America’s second-largest coffee producer (after Mexico) and leading supplier to U.S. coffee giant Starbucks and other major coffee chains in Europe and Asia.

Shade lights the way

With rainforests covering more than a third of Guatemala, nearly all of the country’s coffee is “shade grown” which means the coffee trees are extremely well protected from the elements.

A time-honored and artisan trade, coffee growing and processing has been passed down through the generations, with around 80% of coffee production based on small and medium-sized farms in high altitude zones.

The vast industry, which is spread across eight regions, is such a vital feature of the Guatemalan landscape that only three of the nation’s 22 geographical departments



Ricardo Villanueva
President, Anacafé

“The “Guatemalan Coffees” brand is renowned and valued by the most demanding markets around the world.”

do not produce coffee. The majority of farms use their own wet processing mill so the product is handled exclusively from harvest to bag by a single farm.

Thousands of farms and an increasing number of cooperatives now export under their own registered trademarks. According to industry association Anacafé (the Guatemalan National Coffee Association), the “Guatemalan Coffees” brand is “renowned and valued by the most demanding markets around the world.”

This non-profit organization, which represents the interests of more than 90,000 coffee producers, is the leading promoter of the country’s specialty coffees that take

their name from the region in which they are grown.

Coffee fuels export activity

Marketed under the “Rainbow of Choices” slogan, the eight brands are: Acatenango Valley, Antigua Coffee, Traditional Atitlán, Rainforest Cobán, Fraijanes Plateau, Highland Huehue, New Oriente and Volcanic San Marcos.

Statistics compiled by Anacafé reveal that about half of Guatemala’s annual coffee production is exported to the U.S., with European countries accounting for a further 25% and Japan about 13%.

Total coffee exports in the 2008-2009 period reached U.S.\$561.4 million as the country reinforced its reputation as the world’s fifth largest coffee exporting nation by value and volume.

Guatemalan coffee companies and officials frequently visit global trade shows and conferences to spread the word about the excellent taste of their coffee.

In April of this year, a group of such representatives traveled to Anaheim, California, for the 22nd edition of the “Speciality Coffee Event of the Year” at which they showcased various brands to more than 8,000 guests.



Guatemala's fertile soil, high altitude farms and ideal weather patterns have resulted in the export-oriented nation gaining an outstanding international reputation for superior quality coffee and other produce.

During the Expo, the president of Anacafé, Ricardo Villanueva, launched the innovative online "Guatemalan Coffees Coffee Search System" that allows buyers around the world to quickly and efficiently find the exact type of coffee they want by viewing farms online from the comfort of their own office.

The state-of-the-art application—available at coffeesearchsystem.com—means users can identify individual farms or groups of farms at the click of a mouse. Results are presented in list format and on a map so that buyers can access and learn important information about the location of the farms and the relevant contact details.

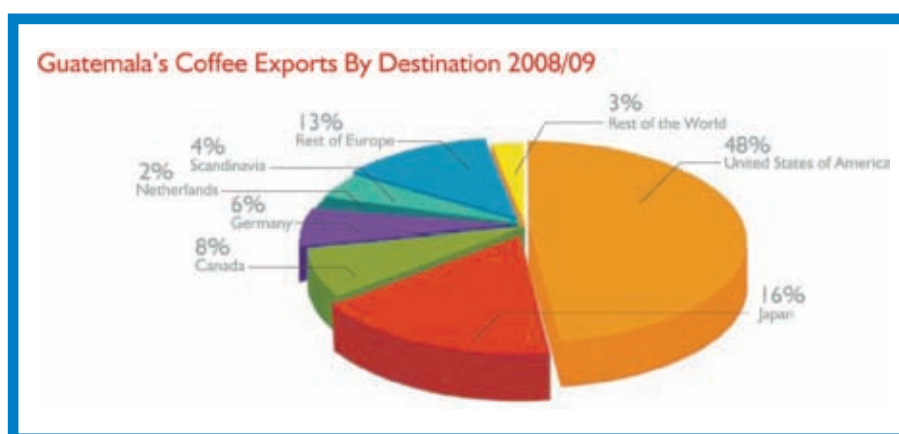
National Coffee Congress

In July of this year, Anacafé celebrated its 50th anniversary during a series of special events at the National Coffee Congress in Guatemala City.

Attended by hundreds of coffee growers and industry executives, the two-day conference was officially opened by the Vice-President of Guatemala, Rafael Espada, and Ricardo Villanueva of Anacafé.

National and international coffee experts gave a series of presentations and talks about the future development of the sector and the sort of challenges it faces.

Topics discussed at length included the current state of the U.S. market for specialty coffees, and the potential hurdles that climate change may create for the Guatemalan and the global coffee industry as a whole over the coming years.



The decision a few years ago by Guatemalan coffee growers to focus on high quality beans has certainly paid rich dividends; although total coffee production has stayed at a similar level for several years, the sector's financial security remains strong and is more robust than ever before.

Statistics compiled by the International Coffee Organization (ICO) show that Guatemala produced 3.5 million bags of coffee in 2009. In May of this year, a report from the Global Agricultural Information Network (part of the U.S. Development Agency's foreign agricultural service) predicted that figure would rise to 4 million bags in 2010, and remain at around the same level in 2011.

Strong strategic alliances have been established to increase production and boost export levels, while domestic consumption has doubled over the past five years, thanks to a series of successful marketing campaigns and increased levels of disposable income.

Guatemala has also performed consistently well in the innovative Cup of Excellence (COE) online coffee auction contest that was launched a decade ago to recognize and reward the best coffee producers in the world.

As part of the COE program, the best coffee produced in a particular country during the year is reviewed and rated by a panel of esteemed judges and coffee connoisseurs. The final winners are awarded coveted COE status and sold to the highest auction bidder.

In July 2010, 28 farms in Guatemala were designated as COE winners in recognition of their outstanding coffee. In addition to reaping financial windfalls from increased sales, winning farms are often visited by international buyers seeking more quality coffee for their businesses.

Auction money is frequently reinvested into the farm, with new equipment helping drive future growth. Farmers may also spend their higher earnings on family edu-

cation that could change their long-term economic outlook and help reduce poverty.

World Coffee Conference

Guatemala's impressive reputation as a premier producer of quality coffee was sealed earlier this year when Guatemala City successfully hosted the third meeting of the World Coffee Conference.

The February 26-28 event was inaugurated and chaired by Guatemalan President Álvaro Colom and attended by representatives from more than 75 countries who discussed the many issues and challenges facing the global industry.

Organized by Anacafé and the ICO, the high-profile meeting took the theme "Coffee for the future: Towards a sustainable coffee sector". The World Coffee Conference—which is only held every four or five years—brought together more than 1,400 coffee growers, government officials, international agencies and private sector representatives.

International experts gave speeches on issues that focused on economic, environmental and social sustainability. Climate change, pests and disease, supply chains, changes in consumption habits and new technologies and transportation methods were among the many topics covered.

Informative tours of coffee farms and processing facilities were organized for delegates so they could view and experience at first hand the rare microclimates that play such a crucial part in the continuous and enviable success of the Guatemalan coffee industry.



The decision by Guatemalan coffee growers to focus on high quality beans has paid rich dividends, as the sector's financial security remains strong and is more robust than ever before

During a keynote speech to guests, Wayne Nilsestuen, mission director for Guatemala at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), highlighted the crop's importance to farmers and people living in rural areas.

"USAID has been supporting coffee-producing countries in the Americas, Africa and Asia to become more sustainable, competitive, and profitable suppliers of coffee," Nilsestuen said. "We are committed to improving the lives of the farmers who depend upon this important cash crop, and are investing our resources in areas where we can make a difference.

"USAID is assisting producers to improve the quality and marketing of their coffee, to help ensure that they capture the highest possible price for their product and thereby become more competitive and sustainable.

"The agency supports small and medium-sized producers to properly process and grade their coffee to ensure that the beans are of the highest quality. We are creating new market information systems that are providing local producers with critical information on coffee pricing."

Advanced coffee technology

This technology-based approach was illustrated by USAID's funding of the Guatemalan Coffee Search System project launched earlier this year.

During his final-day address to delegates, Nilsestuen said his agency's cooperative agreement with Anacafé means USAID provides technical assistance and training

to small coffee producers in rural areas, so they can improve coffee quality, technology and agriculture practices to raise their yields.

"We also provide assistance in production, milling and management," he stated. "Our current project is working with nearly 70 coffee cooperatives, supporting about 7,000 rural households and benefiting 35,000 people."

Acknowledging the many challenges that must be overcome in order for farmers and their families to earn a respectable

living from producing coffee, Nilsestuen said companies and individuals throughout the industry had a vital role to play in the pursuit of this goal.

"It is imperative companies pay a fair price for beans. We need to work with producers to strengthen their bargaining position and negotiation skills to demand a fair market value for their product," he said.

"Working together with the private sector in various parts of the world, we have come up with innovative and transparent market-based solutions to getting premium prices for quality coffee which benefits the producers."

The Guatemalan government's determination to improve social conditions for

people living and working in rural areas has inspired organizations and associations of all sizes to find solutions to many of the socioeconomic challenges facing the nation.

Coffee growers in social care spotlight

Given the coffee industry's huge importance to farming communities and the national economy, groups like Anacafé also help ensure the rights of coffee industry workers employed throughout the supply chain are respected and upheld.

"We are creating new market information systems that inform producers on coffee pricing."

Established in 1994, the Foundation of Coffee Growers for Rural Development (Fundación de la Caficultura para el Desarrollo Rural) is a private organization focused of the human and social development of coffee industry workers, their families and the areas in which coffee farms are located.

With a mission to be regarded as the social arm of the Guatemalan coffee growing sector, the foundation is ensuring better standards of—and greater access to—vital social services such as health and education facilities.

The industry group also offers coffee farmers and workers important nutritional advice and strategic support aimed at

ensuring a more economically competitive environment.

The foundation's work also extends to trying to change social attitudes, such as the role of women in the workplace and rural areas.

Socially oriented organizations such as the Guatemala Association of Women in Coffee (Mujeres en Café Guatemala) have been formed in order to address any inequality and to offer help and support to women coffee growers so that they can succeed in the local, regional and international marketplace.

The association, which works closely with Anacafé, is not just focused on women working in rural areas, but also those that perform activities in other areas of the supply chain across the country. They include female employees of export companies or women who work as roasters, baristas or cuppers.

The association supports and advises women throughout the country and according to statistics compiled by the group in 2007, there are nearly 3,000 women-owned farms in Guatemala, of which the vast majority—nearly nine out of ten—were inherited.

In September, the dynamic Anacafé also organized a workshop on the impact of climate change on the coffee sector for 40 representatives from the agricultural sector, in collaboration with the German Society for Technical Cooperation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and Central America's Regional Unit for Technical Assistance.

Ports are the gateways to trade

The Port of Miami plays a pivotal role in Guatemala's sea trading activities

Blessed with a strategic geographical position at the heart of Latin America and located between two vast oceans, Guatemala has invested heavily in modern and efficient logistics infrastructure and is the region's leading transshipment hub.

Through an extensive shoreline and network of ports on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, Guatemala is considered the gateway to other markets across Central America, with the republic's ports used for the transportation of nearly 80% of total foreign trade.

Taking advantage of this privileged positions are dozens of international shipping companies, such as Maersk Line, Nedlloyd and Cropa Panalpina, who provide a wide range of shipping services to major ports in Latin America, Europe and Asia.

"Guatemala's strategic location is the perfect platform to the world's largest markets. We have privileged access to both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, facilitating direct commerce with Asia, North America and Europe through modern ports," says Virgilio Cordón, executive director of government investment agency Invest In Guatemala.

"Guatemala is presently the only country of the CAFTA-DR jurisdiction with seaport infrastructure on both the Pacific and the Atlantic coasts. Its international airports also ensure and facilitate the marketing of perishable products."

The Atlantic Coast ports of Santo Tomás de Castilla and Puerto Barrios are situated 300 kilometers from Guatemala City and serve the southern and eastern U.S., Europe and Africa, while the Pacific Coast container hubs of San José, Champerico and Quetzal act as the main arrival and departure points for cargo ships serving the U.S. west coast and cities in Asia.

The ports offer access to conventional, container, roll on-roll off, refrigerated bulk (solid and liquid) cargo ships, as well as berthing facilities for large cruise liners managed by major international cruise ship operators.



Guatemala officials are eager for the country to attract new overseas investment in container, cruise, refrigerated cargo and dredge terminals.

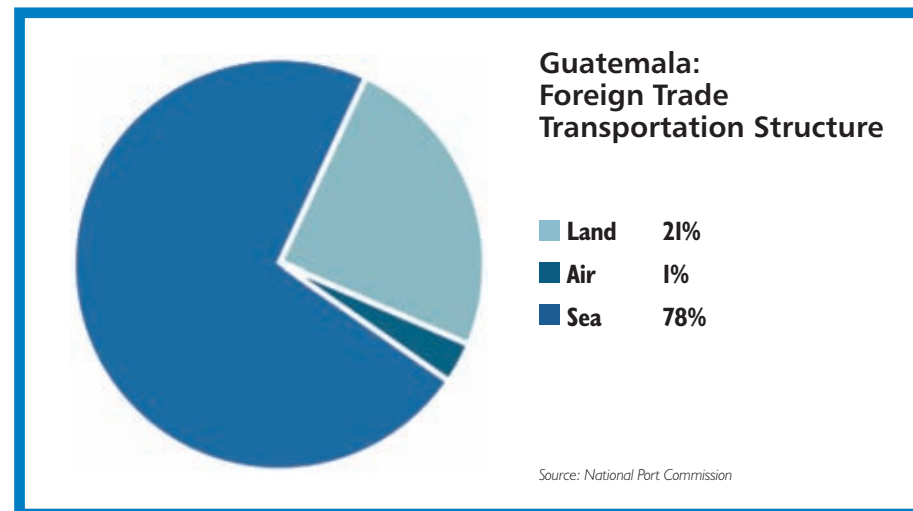
"All five ports are linked through the national highways network, which means the ports are connected by land through a well-maintained infrastructure that means a traveling distance of only 420 kilometers from seaport to seaport," Cordón adds. "Ocean freight carrier costs to main ports around the world are competitive, thanks to the proximity and easy access to important markets worldwide from the Guatemalan seaports."

Overseas investment sought

Invest in Guatemala and public and private sector trade chiefs are eager for the country to attract new overseas investment in container, cruise, refrigerated cargo and dredge terminals. The injection of fresh FDI will not only improve the handling of commercial cargo and freight, but also enhance cruise passengers' vacation experience.

Only three days' sailing time from Guatemala's east coast, the city of Miami remains the leading destination for Guatemalan exports transported by cargo ship, as well as the main departure point for imports moved by sea.

Figures released in September 2010 by the National Port Commission of Guatemala (Comisión Portuaria Nacional) show



that in 2009, the Port of Miami handled a quarter of all sea cargo imports and exports related to the Central American country.

As well as being the main shipping gateway to the vast U.S. market for thousands of Guatemalan-produced goods, the Port of Miami is a leading transshipment hub for Guatemalan cargo destined for other countries around the world.

According to National Port Commission director, Rolando Rousselin, 4.1 million metric tons of Guatemalan cargo passed through Miami in 2009, which represented

more than 25% of the 16 million metric tons that passed through Guatemala's ports the same year.

In addition, the Port of Miami handled 80% of all Guatemalan imports during the same period, with observers citing the number of local companies with offices in the U.S. city as a key reason behind the figures. The second most important port for Guatemala is Los Angeles, which handled 2.4 million metric tons, followed by two ports in the Far East that between them handled 1.4 million metric tons. **P**