

## Canada–Central America Relations

- Canada's relations with Central America have evolved considerably over the past decade. During the armed conflicts in Central America in the 1980s, Canada concentrated its regional efforts on promoting political stability. During this period, Canada's regional development assistance was channelled through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which remain important partners in aid delivery. Central America has made significant strides in consolidating its democratic institutions and overcoming the legacy of the past, and Canada is firmly committed to assisting these countries maximize the political and economic gains they have made over the past decade.
- Today, the governments of Canada and Central America have regular and productive discussions on a wide range of issues affecting country-to-country relations and hemispheric initiatives, including human rights, democratic consolidation, environmental awareness and the promotion of regional trade.
- Canada's principal activities in the region focus on democratic development, natural resource development and economic modernization. It advances its goals in the region through country-to-country consultations and through its membership in organizations such as the Organization of American States and the United Nations.
- Prime Minister Chrétien hosted the Central American leaders in Canada in 1996, following the 1995 Heads of Government Meeting in Costa Rica. The next meeting takes place in Guatemala on Sept. 27 and 28, 2000.
- Central America has played an important role in developing Canada's human security agenda. In addition to peacebuilding, the countries of the region have been important partners on issues such as co-operation among indigenous peoples and the elimination of landmines. All countries in Central America have ratified the international treaty banning landmines, and Canada is currently funding socio-economic rehabilitation programs for landmine survivors in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.
- Canada has been active in the Central American Peace Process since 1989, when it played a role in the Esquipulas Accords involving Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Canada was one of the first nations to support Guatemala's Commission for Historical Memory, which is helping that country come to terms with its past. Canada provided a grant of \$600,000 for the work of the commission and earmarked a further \$21,000 to allow Guatemalans living in Canada to testify.