

Ambassador Peter Cianchette
Departure Message to the Press and Costa Rican Public

As my term of office officially comes to an end on June 19, 2009, the time has come for me to step down as U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica and return to my hometown in Maine. My family and I want to thank the wonderful people of Costa Rica – as well as those in the American and international communities – who graciously welcomed us and helped to make our stay here a memorable and fulfilling one.

It has been the highest honor for me to represent the United States and our principles of freedom and democracy as Ambassador to Costa Rica. The U.S. and Costa Rica are strong partners and share a deep respect for fundamental values including equality, liberty, rule of law and respect for human rights. I have personally borne witness to the power of partnership and I am gratified by what we have been able to accomplish together.

In reflecting on the last year, some of my most memorable experiences have come as a direct result of partnerships between Costa Rica and the United States, and include the humanitarian, medical and disaster relief efforts we jointly undertook to provide care to communities in need. On the economic front, Costa Rica and the United States partnered on finalizing CAFTA and spent the last year seeing it come to fruition. Through the Merida Initiative, the United States has worked closely with Costa Rican law enforcement to provide security assistance and make Costa Rica a safer place for families. Educational and exchange programs have contributed to greater cultural interaction between Americans and Costa Ricans of all ages, and more opportunities for young Costa Ricans to learn English and study in the United States. And of course, there was the recent visit of United States Vice President Joe Biden, who traveled to Costa Rica during his first trip to Latin America to attend the bilateral meeting with Central American Presidents, hosted by President Oscar Arias. It has certainly been an exciting year!

On a personal note, my family and I are grateful for the hospitality we have received in Costa Rica and will always look upon this time in our lives with fond memories. Not only has it been my privilege, but truly a pleasure to spend the last year in Costa Rica as U.S. Ambassador.

In looking ahead, I have no doubt that my successor will continue the work that remains to be done between our two countries. When two nations come together and are committed to change for the better, the possibilities are endless.

Peter Cianchette
Ambassador