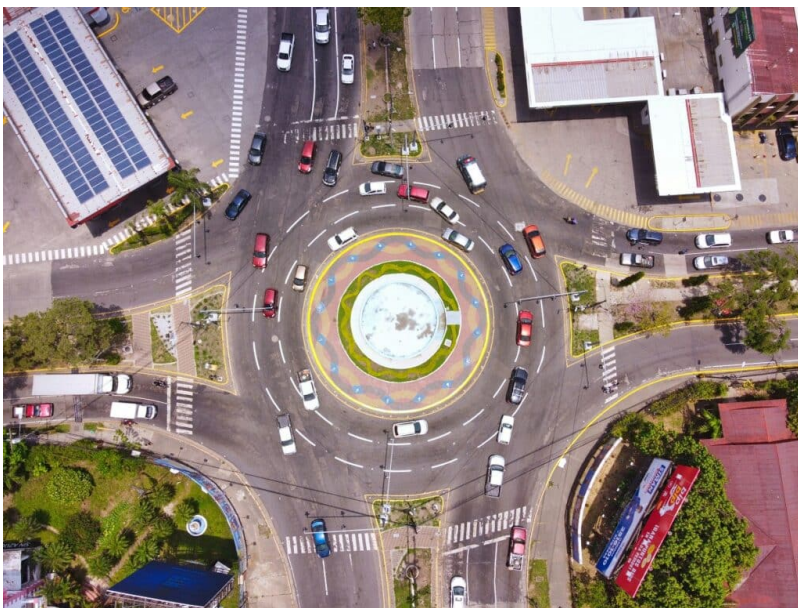


Minister Hussen announces a total of \$41.15 million in funding for projects in Guatemala and Honduras and attends Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity meeting in Washington, D.C.

July 23, 2024



From July 14 to 16, 2024, the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of International Development, visited Central America and announced \$35.75 million in development funding and \$5.4 million in humanitarian funding, met with counterparts and saw first-hand the impact of Canadian development projects in Guatemala and Honduras.

Minister Hussen began his program in Guatemala with a visit to a migrant and refugee assistance centre, where he heard from representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Guatemalan Red Cross and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), as well as from local authorities and migrants about the challenges migrants face in their journeys. These partners protect and improve the living conditions of women and girls affected by migration and forced displacement, through services ranging from immediate health and protection services to help for starting local businesses.

At Guatemala City's San Juan de Dios Hospital, accompanied by representatives of Guatemala's Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance and the Tula Foundation, Minister Hussen saw Tula's Kawok digital health platform in action. Kawok supports community health workers, nurses, doctors, supervisors and epidemiologists in their daily work. The Tula Kawok digital health platform provides community-level care in remote regions and monitors thousands of pregnant women and children to ensure they receive timely and appropriate care and counselling.

As part of the development funding for Central America, Minister Hussen announced \$6.15 million in support for Empowering Indigenous Adolescents and Women for Equitable Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Guatemala, a project led by the Tula Foundation that supports the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance to reduce the rates of teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality among the country's Indigenous population.

The Minister also met the President of Guatemala, Bernardo Arévalo, as well as Vice-President Karin Herrera and Secretary of Planning and Programming Carlos Mendoza, reaffirming Canada's support for Guatemala's development priorities and its efforts to mitigate irregular migration.

On July 16, Minister Hussen travelled to Honduras, where he met with Gerardo Torres Zelaya, Vice-minister of External Relations and Cindy Rodriguez, Vice-minister of Cooperation, underlining the importance of continuing high-level bilateral engagement. They discussed ongoing collaboration on fighting climate change and empowering women entrepreneurs, as well as Canada's potential contributions to Honduran priorities for development assistance and the promotion of democratic values.

Minister Hussen also met with representatives of the UN, IOM, UNHCR and the United States Agency for International Development and discussed the current context of irregular migration and strengthening collaboration between partners and governments.

In Tegucigalpa, Honduras, local entrepreneurs welcomed Minister Hussen, where he announced \$10.7 million in development funding for Sabores de Honduras [tastes of Honduras]: Empowering Women and Youths in Coffee and Honey Value Chains, a project that will enable the Canadian Cooperation Society for International Development, a Government of Canada partner, to contribute to the financial empowerment of women and young people.

During his trip, Minister Hussen strengthened Canada's bilateral relations with both Guatemala and Honduras and exchanged views on issues including migration, inclusive economic growth, women's empowerment and the needs of Indigenous populations and of at-risk youths. These issues inform the core objectives of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, which aims to empower women and girls and promote gender equality, human dignity and inclusive governance.

While in the region, the Minister also announced:

- \$5 million for the Inclusive Economic Development project, which aims to increase the economic empowerment of women and youths in Guatemala
- an extension of \$5 million in funding for the Justice, Governance and Fight Against Impunity in Honduras project, to increase the access to justice of vulnerable populations, especially women
- \$3.9 million for the project Feminist Partnerships to Strengthen the Agenda for Gender Equality to improve responses to threats against women's rights and gender equality, particularly in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
- \$5 million for the project Improving Livestock Sustainability and Climate Adaptation, to empower members of cattle ranching families, particularly women, youths and Indigenous Peoples

In addition to this development funding, the Minister announced \$5.4 million in humanitarian assistance funding to provide emergency food assistance, health and protection services to the most vulnerable people in the region.

On July 17 and 18, Minister Hussen travelled to Washington, D.C., to attend the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity (APEP) foreign affairs ministerial meeting, where he reaffirmed Canada's commitment to ongoing collaboration with APEP's 12 member countries to fulfill the Americas' potential to foster inclusive, sustainable and shared prosperity for all.

During APEP, members reviewed the progress on commitments made by leaders at the inaugural APEP Summit, held in 2023, and identified opportunities to build on the initiative's early successes. This includes expanding entrepreneurship to foster greater innovation, broadening access to training in the digital economy, advancing clean energy and decarbonization goals, bolstering the rule of law and strengthening food security and sustainable food production.

Ahmed Hussen, Minister of International Development, said: "Women and girls are powerful agents of change for development and economic growth. That is why Canada will continue to support projects in Central America that empower them to reach their full potential, access education and skills training, and participate fully in the inclusive, green economy of today and tomorrow."