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Central American Ministers Adopt Energy Efficient Lighting Strategy

Over US\$1 billion in electricity costs would be saved with a transition to efficient lighting in the region

Panama City, Panama, 6 December 2013 – Ministers of Energy from across Central America have adopted the energy efficient lighting strategy for the region. The strategy includes the gradual phase-out of inefficient incandescent lamps in the region by the end of 2016.

During the course of the meeting, Ms. Maria Guzman, Deputy Minister of Energy and Environmental Management of Costa Rica, a country that holds the rotating presidency of the Mesoamerica Project said, "The Central American efficient lighting strategy will result in a series of environmental, energy and social benefits of great importance for the region, which will be obtained as soon as the phase out of incandescent light bulbs begins in the next three years."

The Minister of Energy and Mines of Nicaragua, Mr. Emilio Rappaccioli, stressed the need to "be more efficient and to use less energy." According to Mr. Rappaccioli, the signatories to the strategy will continue to work in the upcoming months to finish defining the steps for the transition to more efficient lighting.

Technical regulations will be developed following an integrated policy approach to phase-out inefficient incandescent and halogen lamps. This includes implementing minimum energy performance standards and environmentally sound management activities, such as collection and recycling. Maximum mercury content limit will also be defined that is aligned with the recently adopted Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The project is being coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) *en.lighten initiative* and Proyecto Mesoamérica (Mesoamerica Project), in cooperation with UNEP's Regional Gateway for Technology Transfer and Climate Change Action in Latin America and the Caribbean (REGATTA).

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“The harmonization of standards to increase efficiency and quality of lighting products will lead to the expansion of trade between countries and, ultimately, lower cost products for end users,” said Margarita Astrálaga, Regional Director and Representative of UNEP for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Launched in October 2012, the strategy involves eight countries: Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Colombia and Mexico provide technical and policy support as a result of their efforts of having already developed a strategy to phase out inefficient incandescent lamps.

The Ambassador of Mexico to Panama, Hon. Alejandra Bologna stated that, "Mexico will continue to support the energy efficiency efforts in Central America, based on our experience in this area at the national level."

According to Proyecto Mesoamerica, by implementing the regional strategy to transition to more efficient lighting the region will accrue aggregated energy savings of over \$1 billion. Electricity use will be reduced by over 2,400 GWh per year with estimated savings of US\$ 530 million annually in fuel consumption. Together, Central American countries will lower CO₂ emissions by almost 2 million tons per year and avoid US\$ 660 million in investments in new power generation.

The regional strategy calls for the development of an agreement to ensure that there is a take back system for used lighting products. A regionally coordinated approach will also ensure that lighting products comply with quality and performance requirements to guarantee that only safe and compliant products are sold to consumers.

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About the UNEP en.lighten initiative

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) en.lighten initiative has been established to address the challenge of accelerating global market transformation to environmentally sustainable lighting technologies by developing a coordinated global strategy and providing technical support for the gradual phase-out of inefficient lighting. Fifty-five countries have already joined the en.lighten Global Efficient Lighting Partnership Programme to phase-out inefficient incandescent lamps by the end of 2016.

About Proyecto Mesoamerica

The [Proyecto Mesoamerica \(Mesoamerica Project\)](#) is a high-level political organization that promotes cooperation and development for ten countries (Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Dominican Republic). It is directly involved in the management and execution of projects aimed at

improving the quality of life for the people of Mesoamerica.

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