



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)**

***Call to Action: Private Sector Investment in the Northern Triangle and its Impact on Homeland Security***

**February 17, 2022**

We are here today to acknowledge the investments committed by the private sector to the Northern Triangle in response to Vice President Harris's *Call to Action*. I want to thank Chairman Correa and Ranking Member Meijer for holding today's hearing, as we continue to support the Vice President's efforts addressing the conditions in Central America that push migrants to the U.S. southern border.

The COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather conditions have exacerbated the root causes of migration – which include corruption, violence, and poverty in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. These communities have been faced with difficult decisions to either flee their homes or stay in harm's way. To remain at home is to endure an environment where there is limited economic opportunity to meet essential needs, including food and shelter.

Nearly 1 million Salvadorans, 3.1 million Hondurans, and 3.7 million Guatemalans are contending with crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. Sustainable, long-term development of the region will require a significant commitment of resources. Last March, my colleagues and I passed the American Rescue Plan Act, which provided \$10.8 billion to respond to COVID-19 globally, including in Central America.

The Biden Administration's 2022 budget request includes almost \$861 million to Central America to address the root causes of irregular migration. However, U.S. backing alone will not be enough to achieve sustainable outcomes. As Vice President Harris has renewed engagement with Central America, she has called on the private sector to make commitments to support inclusive economic growth in the Northern Triangle by launching the *Call to Action*.

The *Call to Action* aims to generate new commitments from businesses and organizations to address the root causes of migration. Increasing collaboration with companies that advance economic opportunity and address urgent climate, education, and health challenges in Central America sends a signal of hope to the region. Private sector investment through the *Call to Action* has the potential to outlast shifts in policy and government aid between administrations.

Over time, promoting economic opportunity in the Northern Triangle will reduce the motivations for migrations to make the often-dangerous journey to the U.S. border. Although motives vary by individual, socioeconomic and security conditions are decision drivers of economic migrants and asylum-seekers.

The *Call to Action* is one component of the Administration's comprehensive, long-term strategy to address barriers to investing in the region. Together, the government and private sector can tackle obstacles to promoting economic opportunity and supporting long-term development.

I look forward to hearing more from our witnesses today on the investments their companies are making to bring hope and stability to those in Central America and, in turn, strengthen homeland security.

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