

Honduran President Touts New Report on Economic Growth, Announces Major Credit Initiative



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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Jan. 4, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández touted a new Central Bank of Honduras report showing that the Honduran economy grew between 4.3 percent and 4.5 percent in 2017.

"The Honduran economy is strong and continues to grow," President Hernández said. "My administration will keep working to create new jobs and business opportunities for all Hondurans."



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In a January 2 press conference, Central Bank President Manuel de Jesús Bautista said, "For the first time in a long time, we have managed to close the year with all sectors showing positive balances." Last year was the first since 2009 that all sectors of the economy grew. Bautista attributed a significant portion of Honduras's growth to increases in foreign investment and a 21 percent jump in exports, compared to 2016.

President Hernández also announced on January 2 that he is sending a plan to the Honduran National Congress to reform Honduras's credit system. The reform would provide 8 billion lempiras -- more than \$339 million -- in low-interest loans for Honduran small businesses, with particular emphasis on agriculture, housing, and tourism.

"Economic growth is encouraging," President Hernández said. "But it is not enough to simply grow. We need the benefits of economic growth to be transferred to the middle class."

In recent months, Honduras has received international recognition for its investment potential and economic stability. In a report published on November 21, 2017, the International Monetary Fund concluded that the Honduran government has "successfully stabilized the economy, restored confidence, and paved the way for accelerating growth and reducing poverty." Last year, Moody's and S&P both raised Honduras's sovereign credit rating.

Media Contact:

Andrew Grafton

188294@email4pr.com

(202)-471-4228 ext. 119

www.keybridgecommunications.com

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Honduras Announces Homicide Rate Dipped 25 Percent, Pledges to Keep Fighting Crime



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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Jan. 3, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- This week, Honduran law enforcement officials announced that that Honduras's homicide rate dipped by more than 25 percent in 2017.

"We are winning the fight against transnational organized crime, but our work is not finished," President Juan Orlando Hernández said. "Over the course of my second term, we'll continue to make Honduras a safer place for every Honduran."



Honduras Announces Homicide Rate Dipped 25 Percent, Pledges to Keep Fighting Crime

According to the latest figures, Honduras had 3,761 homicides in 2017, 1,359 fewer than in 2016. That represents a rate of 42.8 homicides per 100,000 residents, compared to 86.5 per 100,000 residents in 2011.

"Opportunities for economic growth, which translate into jobs, which translate into more income opportunities, are vital to stemming violence," President Hernández said. "What will give us a safer country in the long term is to work with children, with the family, and with the churches to generate more and better economic opportunities."

To that end, President Hernández emphasized Honduras's new national education model, designed in coordination with the Global Partnership for Education. Unveiled before the World Bank last September, the model strives to prevent gang activity by providing children with quality education.

"Well-educated children who lead healthy lifestyles become productive citizens," President Hernández said.

The president also said that he is working with leaders from the United States and Colombia to curb transnational drug trafficking, which accounts for 80 percent of all criminal activity in Honduras.

"There is no place for drug lords or organized crime in Honduras," he said. "I will do everything in my power to keep Honduras peaceful and secure."

Media Contact:

Andrew Grafton

188238@email4pr.com

(202)-471-4228 ext. 119

www.keybridgecommunications.com

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