



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **HANDICRAFT FESTIVAL INAUGURATED AT HIPER PAIZ**

**SAN SALVADOR**– The U.S. Embassy, through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Artisan Development Program, and Hiper Paiz stores owner La Fragua, inaugurated a handicraft festival today at Hiper Paiz Las Cascadas.

The handicraft festival will remain open to the public until May 24, 2007 in six Hiper Paiz stores in Guatemala and two stores in El Salvador. Over 55 handicraft producers will exhibit and sell their original designs. In El Salvador, handicraft sales to Hiper Paiz through this festival amount to \$71,000.

The inauguration ceremony was presided over Lawrence Rubey, Director of USAID Economic Growth Office; Angel Alvarado, General Manager of Wal-Mart El Salvador; Ana Rosa Selva, Director of the USAID Artisan Development Program; and artisan Edgar González, owner of Alejandro's Cerámica workshop.

The festival objective is to promote Salvadoran and Guatemalan handicrafts and generate new income for the producers. Through this activity in El Salvador, cumulative sales in 2006 and 2007 exceed \$110,000.

"Salvadoran artisans play an important role in job and income creation. For that reason, the U.S. government supports the artisan sector so that it achieves greater competitiveness," said Lawrence Rubey at the inauguration ceremony.

To date, over 4,700 small and medium enterprises have expanded their business capacity, generating 4,800 new jobs, creating over 3,000 new products, carrying out 128 training workshops, and generating local and international sales of over \$3 million.

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