



FACT SHEET: AMERICAS COMPETITIVENESS FORUM

The Americas Competitiveness Forum (ACF) is the preeminent economic and commercial event in the Western Hemisphere that brings together private sector and government leaders from the region to share best practices for enhancing the competitiveness, innovation, and prosperity of the region. The purpose of the ACF is to encourage the region's government leaders to work in partnership with the private sector, academia, and civil society to improve the economic prosperity of their own countries, grow our economies, increase two-way and regional trade, and ensure a brighter future for the people of the region.

The ACF typically attracts 1,000 attendees, including heads of state; ministers of commerce, economy, trade, and education; academic leaders; and senior business executives throughout the region. Since the U.S. Department of Commerce developed and hosted the first ACF in 2007, the Forum has emerged as one of the Hemisphere's largest public-private policy dialogue and business events. The ACF was hosted in Atlanta, Georgia in 2007, 2008, and 2010. Chile hosted the 2009 ACF, and in 2011 it was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The sixth ACF will be hosted in Cali, Colombia, on October 24-26, 2012.

Themes from previous ACFs have included innovation, renewable energy and green technologies, education and workforce development, entrepreneurship and small business development, supply chain logistics, travel and tourism, public-private partnerships, and regional trade and integration.

Benefits of the ACF:

- The ACF delivers a unique opportunity for the United States to engage with the countries of the Western Hemisphere on issues pertaining to improving competitiveness, innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth issues that are of critical importance to the economic well being and recovery of the United States and of the region.
- The ACF provides a venue for companies to explore growing markets and industries across the hemisphere, a market that includes approximately 900 million inhabitants and accounts for \$1.5 trillion in trade in goods and services.
- The Forum also affords the business community and members of academia the opportunity to share their thoughts and perspectives on the future of competitiveness with many of the hemisphere's senior government leaders. Opportunities abound for both government-to-government meetings and business-to-government meetings.

- Participating in the ACF furthers the pledge made by President Obama during the April 2009 Summit of the Americas to seek an equal partnership with the countries of the Hemisphere based on mutual respect, common interests, and shared values.
- Through the ACF, a number of hemispheric fora have been established such as the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC), which is composed of government and private sector representatives throughout the hemisphere. The RIAC is responsible for fostering a high-level dialogue on the exchange of experiences and best practices, facilitating regional cooperation, and the adoption of joint initiatives to strengthen and promote competitiveness in the Americas. Through the RIAC, a Santo Domingo Consensus was agreed upon at last year's ACF whereby the member governments have agreed upon benchmarks and core objectives for competitiveness goals in the region.
- The ACF has also been melded with the Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas, an initiative which links Western Hemisphere countries committed to democracy and open markets in an effort to promote inclusive growth, prosperity, and social justice. Specifically, Pathways promotes increasing public-private partnerships; economic competitiveness moves beyond borders; modern, well-maintained infrastructure; and open, transparent and fair trade.
- The overriding goal of the ACF is to inspire programs, policies, and partnerships that will improve economic prosperity at local, national, and regional levels and ensure a brighter future for all the people of the region.