

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE
ANNE SLAUGHTER ANDREW
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

December 1, 2009

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica. I am grateful to President Obama for his faith in me and I greatly appreciate Secretary of State Clinton's support for my nomination.

I want to express my appreciation to Indiana's esteemed Senators; Senator Bayh for his generous remarks on my behalf and Senator Lugar for his support during this process. I am also grateful for the support and advice from one of our country's most respected voices on foreign policy, the former Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Policy, Indiana Congressman Lee Hamilton.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the members of my family who are here today...

The United States has no more principled partner in Central America than Costa Rica. As the oldest and most stable democracy in Central America, Costa Rica is a country that has embraced peaceful prosperity and become a model for Latin American democracy. From its diversified economy to its Nobel Laureate President, the aspirations and successes of this modest-sized country are an inspiration throughout the Americas. This is particularly true with regard to Costa Rica's commitment to the environment. Since the 1960s, Costa Rica has established a conservation system that places more than 25 percent of the country into nature preserves;

setting aside this small fraction of the earth's surface protects five percent of the bio-diversity in the world. Today, Costa Rica is a global model for reforestation and tropical conservation. This conservation success, which has established Costa Rica as one of the eco-tourism destinations in the world, has anchored the Costa Rican economy and enhanced the stability of its democratic political system.

I have long admired the leadership of Costa Rica on conservation matters and the concomitant flourishing of democratic ideals, and I believe my background has prepared me well, if confirmed, to serve as the U.S. representative to this stable beacon of democracy in Central America.

I have been engaged in Environmental Conservation and Clean Energy initiatives for more than 25 years, as a lawyer, a business leader, an NGO leader, and a Law School professor. I have had the opportunity to address these complex and vital issues from a multi-faceted perspective, chairing the Environmental Practice Group of a leading Midwestern Law Firm; serving as an Adjunct Professor of Environmental Law at Indiana University; serving in the NGO community as Special Counsel to The Nature Conservancy's past president and on The Nature Conservancy's President's Advisory Council.

As the current principal of New Energy Nexus, a strategic consulting company that represents companies and entrepreneurs at the cutting edge of the new Clean Energy Economy, and formerly as a founding partner of a biotech consulting company, I appreciate not only the challenges to sustaining conservation, but also the opportunities presented by the Clean Energy Economy. Costa Rica, which already generates more than 90 percent of its electricity from sustainable sources, is stepping up to lead once again as one of the first countries to commit to being carbon neutral by 2021.

My experiences in designing and executing collaborative and effective strategies in the marketplace will serve me well, if confirmed, as the United States looks to partner with Costa Rica in its green economy aspirations.

In my professional endeavors, from business deals to community-based development projects, I have had the privilege of leading and managing diverse teams. I have gained an appreciation for the value that each team member brings to the effort and the value of a team that can work in concert towards a common goal. If confirmed, I look forward to bringing my experiences in law, business, and conservation, as well as my leadership and management skills to the success of the mission in Costa Rica.

President Obama has made it clear that one of the most important jobs of a United States ambassador is to take care of our diplomatic personnel and our United States citizens in the country. An estimated one million U.S. tourists visit Costa Rica annually, and there are over 50,000 U.S. citizens living there. If confirmed, I will make the safety of U.S. citizens in Costa Rica a priority at all levels of the Mission.

The United States and Costa Rica share a common interest in the growing threats to public safety and security arising from the Latin American drug trade. Costa Rica has not been immune to this violent scourge, serving as a transit point and warehouse for an expanding regional drug trade.

The Merida Initiative, commenced with bipartisan support in 2007 under President Bush, is a multi-year, multi-agency program that focuses on building greater regional capacity among the Central American countries to combat the drug trafficking by organized criminals and gangs operating throughout this region. For Costa Rica, which successfully interdicted over 14.7 metric tons of cocaine in 2009, Merida will provide not only new

maritime equipment and training to enhance Costa Rica's maritime interdiction efforts, but also a broad array of training and capacity building programs. If confirmed, I will work diligently with the Congress and this Administration to advance the goals of Merida and to partnering with Costa Rica to advance the strategic implementation of Merida in Costa Rica and the region.

Beyond security, the United States and Costa Rica have begun a new era in trade under the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), which entered into force for Costa Rica in January 2009. I greatly appreciate the opportunity presented to the United States and to our Central American neighbors by CAFTA-DR and, if confirmed, I will be committed to promoting its implementation.

Measuring the direct impact of CAFTA-DR on Costa Rican trade to date is complicated by the world-wide economic down-turn; however, there are indicators of early success. As recently reported in the Costa Rican media, CAFTA-DR has opened up Costa Rica's telecommunications market and now companies, including U.S. companies, are vying to offer wireless services and the related hardware for such services. The United States remains Costa Rica's largest trading partner, and, as this economic relationship strengthens under CAFTA-DR, so does the economic and political stability in Costa Rica.

In June, Secretary Clinton reaffirmed this Administration's commitment to the Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas Initiative, through which we are working with our partners – the Pathways countries, each committed to democracy and open markets – to extend the benefits of economic recovery and growth to even the most vulnerable in society; as the Secretary stated, “trade that is free and fair coupled with greater inclusion

benefits us all.” Pathways provides the platform for the next stage of dialogue in Central America on economic development, trade and social inclusion, as even Costa Rica, which has the highest per capita income in the region faces a growing number of people who sit at the margins of economic growth and prosperity. Costa Rica, building on the foundations of a committed democracy and one of the highest literacy rates in Latin America ,is advancing programs for greater trade and social inclusion. Indeed, Costa Rica has been an active and creative participant in the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative and will host the third Ministerial meeting in San Jose next year. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with Costa Rica to advance the opportunities presented by the Pathways Initiative.

When President Obama addressed the Summit of the Americas early in his Administration and pledged the commitment of this Administration to a strong partnership with the Americas, he stated that, “Our success must be measured by the ability of people to live their dreams.”

In closing, I share with you that when I was 16 years old, I spent a summer in Central America helping to distribute medicine and food in isolated communities. When I left there, I was determined to return one day to Central America in the service of my country. If I am confirmed, it will be my greatest honor to serve and I will look forward to working closely with you and your colleagues in the Congress to address the challenges and opportunities ahead.

I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.