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Honduras Fights Deforestation and Climate Change with *Vida Mejor* Program

President Juan Orlando and First Lady Ana Garcia Hernandez employ state program to benefit the people and environment of Honduras

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez and First Lady Ana Garcia Hernandez have continued their commitment to preserving the Honduran environment and helping lift their people out of poverty through their ongoing fight against deforestation, pollution, and climate change. One of the main focuses of their efforts has been the successful implementation of the *Vida Mejor* program, which is committed to delivering safe medicine, water filters, home gardens, cement floors and *plancha* clean cookstoves to many of the poorest families in Honduras. In providing these benefits they are delivering on promises made before taking office, and investing in the future prosperity of Honduras.

At the 2014 Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves annual conference, President Orlando noted that Honduras is one of the five most vulnerable countries in the world for risk of deforestation. At the time, President Orlando estimated that 70,000 hectares of forest were cut down in Honduras every year, much of it for fuel for cooking daily meals with inefficient, traditional *plancha* stoves. The clean-cookstoves that are provided to the Honduran people as part of the *Vida Mejor* program were developed in partnership with Envirofit International – a social enterprise that innovates and sells affordable, high-quality clean cookstoves – and help curb deforestation by reducing fuel use by 60%. The stove, called the *Ecofogon Ahorrador*, cooks meals faster and is the first portable, modern firewood *plancha* stove appliance that requires no bricks or mortar for quick installation in under 1 hour and features a built-in chimney for venting smoke outside the home.

President Orlando intends to deliver 300,000 *Ecofogon Ahorrador* stoves over the next 3 years. These stoves will significantly decrease deforestation, reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions by over 2.7 million tonnes over a 5 year period, and lower exposure to the toxic smoke and chemicals emitted by traditional stoves known as Household Air Pollution (HAP). This program also provides local economic growth as the factory that produces these stoves is located just outside the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, and directly employs over 150 Honduran people.

“Our partnership with President Orlando has made a real difference in the lives of the people of Honduras,” said Ron Bills, Envirofit CEO. “Every household that receives an *Ecofogon Ahorrador* benefits from breathing cleaner air, saving money, and getting the time back they would have spent cooking and collecting fuel to use for pursuing educational and entrepreneurial opportunities. By providing his people with better houses to live in and improved stoves that are better for the environment, President Orlando is fulfilling his commitment to raising living standards and economic progress.”

President and First Lady Hernandez are also helping the people of Honduras by launching beneficial social projects designed to help those with the most need. Earlier this year they founded a Youth

Development Center in La Lima, improved a center for the children of returning migrants, and continued to provide dozens of new, modern houses to urban and rural working families in need. Through INFOP, an entrepreneurial skills and development program, they have helped women become micro-entrepreneurs in order to support their families and themselves by teaching them cooking and business skills. This program has impacted underemployed and unemployed women, helping them to become more self-sufficient while gaining expertise that will benefit them throughout their lives.

About Envirofit

Envirofit is a social enterprise that produces the highest performing, lowest cost biomass cookstoves that are efficient, durable, desirable, and affordable for households and commercial applications in developing nations. Envirofit's clean energy products empower individuals, transform lives, and ignite aspirations while stimulating prosperity across a global value chain. Pioneering the use of a market-based approach for clean cookstoves, Envirofit has reached more than 1 million households with a positive impact on the lives of an estimated 5 million people across 45 countries.

<http://www.envirofit.org/>

Media contact: Jessica Alderman at info@envirofit.org

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