

SPEECH AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 6TH SESSION OF THE DIPLOMA COURSE IN EL SALVADOR

Lúdvík S. Georgsson, Director,
United Nations University Geothermal Training Programme.

Dear representatives of CEL LaGeo and the University of El Salvador, and Diploma Course Fellows

Buenos Dias

It is a special and happy opportunity for me to send this greeting at the closing ceremony of the 6th session of the Diploma Course given at University of El Salvador for Latin American countries. When we at UNU-GTP were approached by LaGeo a year ago and asked to become an active partner in the running of the Diploma Course intended for Spanish speaking geothermal professionals, our answer could only be positive if the financial implications could be solved. And when the Nordic Development Fund (NDF) pledged to support the DC for the next two years the matter was quickly closed, through the signing in April of a formal cooperation agreement on the development and running of the Diploma Course. The special contribution of the UNU-GTP was that our new short course series supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals would become an integral part of the Diploma Course and Icelandic lecturers would participate to some extent in the teaching.

The time constrains for running the DC in 2016 were difficult as contractual matters took their time, but through the efficient work of the management of LaGeo things worked out well with the start of the DC in Mid-August, with 30 participants. Twenty Fellowships were awarded, 10 to foreign geothermal students, coming from Bolivia, Colombia (2), Ecuador, Mexico (2), Nicaragua (3) and Peru, and 10 to local Salvadorians. Furthermore, 10 additional Salvadorians were admitted to the Diploma Course.

The running of the course seems to have gone very smoothly. During the SDG Short Course I in September, we had 39 extra participants, taking the participation in the Short Course to 68, which is the largest number UNU-GTP has seen participate in any event of our Short Course Series in Latin America. Besides lecturers participating in the Short Course, three Icelandic geothermal experts have joined in for lecturing specifically at the Diploma Course. All of the 30 students admitted to the course are graduating here today, which is a very good achievement. And looking at your project titles, I can see that you have been ambitious in your work. Congratulations all of you on your good work during your study period. Now it is time to return to your home and work and start applying the skills you added to your repertoire during these 4 months.

This has been a very special year for the UNU Geothermal Training Programme, and probably our busiest ever. In our 6-month training here in Iceland we had the biggest group from the start with 34 UNU Fellows. Furthermore, 6 have graduated with a MSc degree and 1 with a PhD degree. And we had the special pleasure of experiencing the visit to Iceland of Ban Ki-Moon, General Secretary of the United Nations, our superior officer, with UNU Fellows having the honour to present their activities for him. The task that he is specially focussed on during his last year in office is ensuring that everybody pulls their weight in realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted by the world leaders last year, and came into force on January 1 this year. And that that is a message you need to take with you home.

Finally, I want to give my deepest thanks to all the good people who have been instrumental in this cooperation. Here, I would like to mention four persons specially, Mr. Ingimar Haraldsson Deputy Director of UNU-GTP and Kevin Padilla, manager at LaGeo, who were instrumental in the work needed to complete all bureaucratic matters for the contracts. But what also made this possible was the support and will of David Lopez CEO of CEL and Hannu Eerola, the recently retired Director of NDF, who provided the financial guarantee needed for this project. Thank you and congratulations all of you and I look forward to see a successful continuation of our cooperation in the coming years. Best greetings from Iceland and merry Christmas to all of you. Thank you.