

# Uncertainties arise in a tense regional environment.

Migratory waves – especially of young people fleeing violence and unemployment -, political instability and the deepening of the fiscal crisis, turn Central America today into a turbulent region full of challenges.

The deterioration of the fiscal situation addresses, among other components, an increase in public spending, in almost all countries of the region, a complex scenario in face of the weight the increase in public debt and the decreased capacity for tax collection represent. To the foregoing is added a weakness shared by the countries of the isthmus: the absence of adequate planning systems.

In such a complex and worrying scenario it is logical that businesspeople of the region demand answers that allow them to take accurate business decisions.

Aware of the need of the Central American private sector to know how the political and economic climate, as well as the current and future risks they must manage, will affect it, the Dutch – Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce (Holland House) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands have organized the roundtable **“Whereto is Central America headed?”**

Four outstanding guest speakers will be the appetizers of this closing activity of the year, planned for December 4 in the EBC Building located in Escazú. They are:

Dr. Kevin Casas, Managing Partner of Analítica Consultores and Vice-President of Costa Rica in 2006-07, who will share his political and economic analysis for both Costa Rica and the region.

Dr. Daniel Suchar, expert in Economics and Director of the Universidad Latina, who will address the issue of tax reform in Costa Rica, and its implications for the productive sector.

They will be accompanied by Aino Jansen, Minister Counselor of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Herman van der Plaats, President and founding member of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce.

Information is power, especially in times of crisis. Join us in this year-end activity.

# Ornamental plants hand in hand with technological innovation

In many companies, maintaining cool, controlled and humid environments is essential for a produce of high quality and optimal features for exportation.

It is a constant issue in the agenda of the company [Orquídeas Costarricenses S.A. \(ORCOSA\)](#), a branch of Handelskwekerij van der Velden of the Netherlands, present on Costa Rican soil since 1990. Its specialty, bromeliads and ornamental cuttings, are exported with considerable success to markets in Europe and the United States.

In order to incorporate better environmental practices, the company innovated with ventilation systems in its nurseries, which allows them to manage adequate levels of temperature and to keep ornamental products always fresh and in suitable climatic conditions.

Through our programme ‘Get to know our Members’, from Holland House we went to see firsthand the cutting-edge technologies and practices used by Orcosa and led by its director, Folkert Hoekstra.

The experience was highly enriching, especially because it is a dynamic sector, in constant growth and with a strong presence on international markets. As explained Folkert, the air is extracted by the fans, and only enters through the humid wall. Moreover, when dry, hot air enters through the humid wall, the temperature lowers and humidity increases.

With the implementation of the technology, the temperature can be kept between 24 and 27 degrees, at a humidity of less than 70; it prevents appearance of fungi and prevents damage to plants.

The operations of Orcosa are located in La Guácima de Alajuela, at 800 meter above sea level, in an excellent climatic environment for production of ornamental plants.

Innovating and trying out new technologies is a familiar theme for Folkert and his team. Their objective is to improve the quality of their produce, starting from the criteria of efficiency, quality and improved environmental management.

He also remains interested in the advances in bioprospection, developed in Costa Rica, particularly in the search for new alternatives for ornamental plants of the Bromeliaceae family.

# Informative cocktail to strengthen networks took place last September 20

Business networks are strengthened by sharing information and exchanging experiences. Under this premise, Holland House and the Embassy of the Netherlands organize a meeting between member companies once every three months; an ideal space both to discuss a current issue, and to know the products and services of companies associated with our chamber.

On September 20, the third cocktail of the year took place and was attended by over 70 people and 50 companies. The meeting was held at the Marriott Hotel, with the participation of RA Costa Rica and Oceania, Peter Derrek Hof, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Costa Rica. Thank you, our host Dennis Whitelaw, General Manager of Hotel Costa Rica Marriott.

Prelude to this meeting was a tour through the economic and commercial scenario of the Netherlands and the growing commercial relationship with Costa Rica, with data provided by *Peter Derrek Hof* and Hermen van der Plaats, President of Holland House.

Costa Rican exports represent a value of USD 586 million, and imports from the Netherlands USD 90,6 million, both for 2017.

Holland is for Costa Rica the fourth most important commercial destination and the second one from the European Union, standing for 5.5% of total exports in 2017, according to data from the Foreign Trade Promoter (Procomer).

The distance between both countries is 9,000 kilometers, with a similar size although dissimilar population. Whereas Costa Rica has 5 million inhabitants, the Netherlands has 17 million.

Another issue addressed in this third cocktail revolved around the registration of cheeses and other Dutch products in Costa Rica. Dr. Alicia Marín Rojas, Medical Advisor of Registros Sanitarios, [R.A. Costa Rica S.A.](#) and Anat Greisman, Sales Manager of the [company Oceánica Internacional S.A.](#), went into detail on the steps and procedures required to introduce Dutch products to the Tico market.

*Thank you again! to our sponsors, [Hotel Costa Rica Marriott](#), [Heineken](#), [KLM Airfrance](#),*

# Strengthening trade relations in the region

One of the most attractive showcases with a Costa Rican stamp of doing business between Latin America and the European market is the Buyers Trade Mission (BMT). With a track record of twenty editions conducted, BMT is one of the best business wheels of the region, thanks to its high innovative contents and diversity of exportable offer.

This buyers trade mission is organized by the Promotora de Comercio Exterior (Procomer). The edition of 2018 stood out with over 700 potential exporters who showed their products through 5000 business appointments.

Present there, was also the Dutch Chamber of Commerce – Holland House – with a wide range of products and services, a clear evidence of the commercial importance between Costa Rica and the Netherlands. It should not be forgotten that the Kingdom of the Netherlands the most important European destination is for Costa Rican export products, with approximately 6% of total Tico exportations.

Agricultural products, plants, flowers, precision and medical equipment and food industry products are part of the Costa Rican exportable offer towards that European nation. Meanwhile, food preparations for a complete and balanced nutrition; bulbs, roots and rhizomes; coated electrodes for arc welding; medical prostheses; tires; barley malt; needles and catheters, and medicines constitute the main products Costa Rica buys from the Netherlands.

**Hermen van der Plaats**, President and founding member of Holland House Costa Rica, rescued the importance of these business meetings as a tool to strengthen trade relations between both countries, based on elements like diversification, added value and sophistication.

Holland House was specifically created to connect Costa Rican and Dutch companies, aiming at making the trade relationship even more robust, from a more comprehensive perspective that includes trade promotion, accompaniment of search processes for associates and clients in the financial, legal and logistical fields; generating market studies and supporting recruitment of local or Dutch talent for companies installed in Costa Rica.