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Parting Remarks from Ambassador Heather Hodges

Saying goodbye is part of a diplomat's job. Every two to three years, U.S. Foreign Service officers must depart for their next destination, saying farewell to the relationships they have built, the friends they have made and the country of which they have grown so fond. But while we leave each country in which we have lived and worked, it is always our hope that the work we have done will leave a lasting impact.

This ability to look forward with optimism and enthusiasm, a trait that is so much a part of the Foreign Service, is part of the very essence of America. As a country we are ever mindful of our past, while at the same time taking action with an eye to the future.

Over the past 30 years, I have had the privilege of being a member of the United States Foreign Service. I have come into contact with many, many wonderful people who were seeking, and continue seeking, to make their

neighborhood, their city, their country and this world, just a little better than before.

Ecuador has been no different. I have been impressed with so many Ecuadorians from so many walks of life. From the small indigenous business owners I have visited who



work long days to make a better life for their children, to the many devoted Ecuadorian officials at all levels who seek to formulate and implement positive change for their people, to representatives of civil society in Ecuador who have created organizations and enlisted the support of fellow citizens to make progress on issues of interest in their communities, to the journalists and media outlets who know that their

work is to keep citizens informed and provide an outlet for the vibrant and diverse opinions that make a democracy healthy and strong.

So once again, I bid farewell to a country which I have grown very fond of and to the friends, colleagues and all the wonderful people that I have stood beside for the last 32 months in Ecuador, striving to do what we can to foster mutual understanding between our two countries. I leave this country knowing that despite the many accomplishments, there was still more I would have liked to have done, but I also leave with pride and gratitude for those who represent the United States here.

Thank you for your support and for allowing me to serve as your Ambassador. I have been proud of the job we have done here and proud of those I have had the honor of serving with.

- Ambassador Heather Hodges