

## PRESS RELEASE

### EUROPEAN FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS BEGIN NEW COOPERATION PROGRAM IN GUATEMALA

*Christian Aid, ICCO Cooperation, Bread for the World, the Swedish Church, Lutheran World Federation and Norwegian Church Aid, join forces to expand the impact of ecumenical cooperation in this country.*

GUATEMALA, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 --- **JOTAY: ACTing Together**, is the new joint initiative of these six organizations (with vast work experience in this country and in the Central American region) which seeks to unify and strengthen support to Guatemalan civil society in its efforts to configure an inclusive and sustainable society, respectful of human rights and ecological sustainability.

The word **Jotay** means "rebirth, sprout or regeneration of life" in Maya Kaqchikel. This metaphor represents the sense of unity and brotherhood that drives the creation of this joint program, and its commitment to building a more fair and inclusive Guatemala.

From April 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, these organizations carry out a series of activities to launch the new program, such as the **International Cooperation and Civil Society Forum in Guatemala: new scenarios and challenges** and bilateral strategic meetings with ambassadors from Sweden, Germany and Great Britain and with leaders of different religious denominations.

The first event took place in April 18<sup>th</sup>, when the new program's office was inaugurated, with an ecumenical and a Mayan ceremony, which began with this statement: "*With joy we celebrate today the brotherhood that unites us in favor of justice, the search for the common good and well-being for all. This brotherhood, which will grow as a sprout, seeks to keep in sight the principles of community that society needs.*"

**JOTAY: ACTing Together** will focus on urgent issues for Guatemala such as gender justice, sustainable natural resources management, rule of law and citizen security.

Christian Aid, ICCO Cooperation, Bread for the World, the Swedish Church, Lutheran World Federation and Norwegian Church Aid are members of the Act Alliance, a coalition of 144 churches and church-related organizations working around the world promoting positive and sustainable change for all people, regardless of religion, political ideology, gender, sexual orientation, race and nationality.



La Iglesia Sueca



Brot für die Welt

