CETT Celebrates International Literacy Day with Arrival of Classroom Libraries

(2004) In September, the CETT program and a consortium of partners from the public and private sectors distributed over 60,000 books to CETT schools in Peru and Bolivia, thereby establishing nearly 3,000 new classroom libraries in these countries. The books arrived in time to commemorate International Literacy Day on September 7.

Over 52,000 books are also being distributed to Grenada. The Grenada donation is part of humanitarian assistance offered by INMED to help reconstruct schools and replenish books that were destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

The CETT program is a presidential initiative supported by USAID that fosters child literacy through teacher training and assistance to schools. It is a public-private partnership that brings together corporations, governmental organizations, universities, and non-profit organizations to work on behalf of giving children the vital life skill of reading and writing well. The Caribbean CETT program is managed through the Joint Board of Teacher Education and the University of the West Indies. The program in Peru and Bolivia is managed through Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia and Nur University.

Classroom libraries are a critical component of a literacy-rich environment. By providing immediate, easy access to a wide range of high-quality reading materials and visual aids, the libraries help make reading a natural part of the children's everyday activities. This stimulates the children's imagination, facilitates their sense of ownership and promotes learning at their own pace. It increases their motivation to read—ultimately improving their reading skills. Libraries are also very cost-effective, because one book can be used many different times by many different children.

The stakeholders who have made this possible include the U.S.-based publisher Scholastic, DHL, Ford Motor Company, Project HOPE, and the Peruvian businesses PlusPetrol and Banco Sudamericano. Food for the Poor, a U.S. NGO, has donated the shipping for the Grenada books.