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SUPPORT TO GOC TO DEVELOP EMERGENCY DECREES

In December, following the declaration of a State of Emergency due to heavy rains throughout the country which had caused massive flooding and damage, the Minister of Agriculture requested support from USAID and the USAID Public Policy Program to develop five draft legislative decrees for submission under Decree 4580 (Dec 7th 2010). The Decree was designed to address the Economic, Social and Ecological Emergency, and it empowered the GOC to adopt measures required to address the crisis.

A team of experts from AECOM and Ecovera (Sub-contractor) lead the technical team which also included representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment. The team quickly provided technical recommendations and drafted four decrees on environmental compliance, management of flooded areas, reforestation and improvement of land use. The decrees were designed to mitigate the consequences of flooding on agricultural land, the severe sanitary problems affecting both plants and animals, devastation to crops and rural housing and methods to improve the irrigation districts. The technical drafts were submitted for review to the Ministry of Agriculture legal office on Dec 24th.

AECOM's team of finance experts also provided input in the design of tools that would target resources to recovery of the productive capacity in the affected rural areas. Many of the recommendations were included in Decree 4828 which was approved on December 29, 2010. The draft decree on reforestation is under review by AECOM's experts after recommendations from the Ministry of Agriculture legal team, and it will be presented again to the Minister's Council on January 6th.

The Policy Team will continue to work with the Ministry of Agriculture on resolutions and the design of programs, which aim to achieve more comprehensive reforms in key areas and to strengthen the recovery and mitigate the effects of future disasters.

PLAN DE CHOQUE AND DRAFT LAND LAW

The Policy Program has been actively supporting INCODER in the implementation of the Emergency Plan "Plan de Choque" for restitution and formalization of rural property. A team of experts has been hired to assist INCODER in the implementation of the plan as well as in strengthening the institutional capacity of INCODER to implement the Plan. A team of experts has also been

supporting the drafting of the Land and Rural Development Law (Ley de Tierras y Desarrollo Rural) which has been presented to Congress.

LAND CONFERENCE

In December the Policy Program in conjunction with the MIDAS program held a week-long conference in Medellin on “Land Policy in Colombia: a contemporary vision for structural change.” Attendees included National and Regional level GOC officials working on land related issues as well as representatives from civil society organizations to better inform them on the situation in Colombia and to discuss next steps to improve land tenure, land use, and land titling in Colombia. The highly successful conference will be replicated in other cities, with the next event to be held in Cali in February.

DECENTRALIZATION AND IMPROVED PUBLIC AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT (DIPEM)

The DIPEM Component has been focused on understanding GOC priorities and how they fit with the Program’s Work Plan. Initial effort will include supporting the GOC in the design and revision of the following policies (i) the National Consolidation Policy, (ii) the strengthening of sub-national governments, and (iii) public employment policies.

The National Consolidation Policy: The GOC through the High Commissioner for National Security, Sergio Jaramillo, requested USAID support in the design and implementation of the Strategic Revision of the National Consolidation Policy. The Program has provided technical assistance to support the core Consolidation team, which includes the Office of the High Commissioner for the National Security and the CCAI, in defining the methodology and structure of the review process, and in the design of the mechanisms for the active participation of the GOC entities involved. To date, the methodology has been defined and has been validated with high-level GoC representatives. The implementation of the revision process will begin in the second week of January, with DIPEM Component experts providing technical assistance in the discussions of the 12 subcommittees that will be discussing the main issues of the National Consolidation Policy.

Strengthening of Sub-National Governments: The DIPEM team met with the National Planning Department and the High Commissioner for Good Governance and Administrative Efficiency, to understand GOC priorities for policy related to local government capacity building. After those discussions, the DIPEM team produced a brief analysis of the main issues faced by local governments including: their capacities to effectively administer; capacity to adapt and access the services offered by the national government, and their capacities to design and implement regional development strategies. The team presented an initial action plan to address the deficiencies, which was adopted by the High Commissioner for Good Governance and Administrative Efficiency, and validated with the National Planning Department.