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CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN FIELD SITE SELECTION FOR TA/UD
LAND USE PROGRAMMING DEMONSTRATION IN AN INTERMEDIATE-SIZED CITY

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Central and South American Field Site Selection for TA/UD
Land Use Programming Demonstration in an Intermediate-Sized City

INTRODUCTION

Any decision on the appropriateness of a demonstration city for application of the TA/UD land use programming project had to be made within the framework of a number of key issues, both developmental and programmatic. These issues flowed from exploratory research and development work on the project and subsequent review and analysis by TA/UD. Specifically, the alternatives were evaluated in terms of the following questions.

1. Is the city subject (now or potentially) to increased stress on its urban structure?
2. Does the city exhibit the characteristics of modernization in its institutions and physical form?
3. Does a political climate exist, at both the national and local level which is supportive of regionally decentralized development as well as controlled development efforts on the part of the city?
4. Is this political support reflected in coherent programs for the city's development?
5. With respect to AID's focus on rural development and agriculture, is the city a vital node in an important agricultural region?

6. Is the level of interest in the proposed demonstration sufficient at the local and national levels to guarantee full commitment and support in the implementation of the project.
7. Is the setting such that the project can be replicated elsewhere without major alterations in assumptions or substance.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Two candidate cities were examined in detail; Leon in Nicaragua and Villavicencia in Colombia. As one might expect in such an analysis there were more shades of gray than blacks and whites. We found that the field situation of both cities clearly fulfilled the first five conditions, as subsequent sections will demonstrate, so that in the final analysis the last two conditions were decisive.

The enthusiasm for the project at all levels in Nicaragua was such that the project would be guaranteed considerable initial momentum. This was less the case in Colombia although there was a clear interest in the project at the local level and at least facilitative support at the national level. In addition, we concluded that the Nicaraguan situation would be more easily replicable elsewhere. Colombia is highly regionalized, and its urban systems and supporting institutions are extremely complex. The urban development skill levels in Colombia are higher than most LDC's so that potential for replication outside of Colombia would be limited.

The Colombia situation suggests an approach different from the model originally contemplated for this project. An alternative approach which might be explored is proposed in the Colombia section of this report.

For all of these reasons, the decision was made to initiate the project this fiscal year in Leon, Nicaragua. The potential for developing a different model for Colombia that also could be appropriate for other more advanced LDC's should be the subject of further consideration and possible funding in FY 1976. It is entirely possible that expertise gained during such a project could be transferred to other countries by Colombians.

NICARAGUA

While by most standards Nicaragua is a small country both in size -- almost equal in area to Iowa -- and population, it is physically the largest of the Central American Republics. Growing at more than 3.0% per year, its population of two million people is concentrated for the most part on the more fertile west coast of the country. Like many Latin American countries it is not densely populated and is characterized by large land holdings, even on the more populous west coast.

Nicaragua is a very mountainous country which helps to account for its highly varied climate and soil conditions and for its skewed pattern of population settlement. The west coast consists of a range of volcanic mountains whose alluvial soils form a rich and sometimes incredibly deep top soil. This is the region which was colonized originally, and its good conditions for agriculture have caused it to remain the center of economic

activity and settlement. Two huge lakes, Lake Managua and Lake Nicaragua, share with the Mountains and the Pacific ocean the dominance of the West Coast and add to its overall attractiveness for Nicaraguans.

The center of the country is very sparsely populated, and consists almost entirely of rugged forested mountains. Low lying savannah, swamps, and marshland characterize the eastern portion of the country and this too is almost uninhabited.

The system of cities in the west coast region is dominated by the primacy of Managua with a population of nearly 450,000. The next largest city is Leon with approximately 70,000 people, followed by Granada with almost 45,000. Granada is actually a satellite city to the southeast of Managua, while Leon is about one hour by car on a good paved road to the North of Managua and is the principal city in the agriculturally rich northern west coast.

The beauty and agricultural richness of the west coast is marred only by its coincidence also with a belt of seismic faults. Some of the most severe of these underlie Managua and caused the total destruction of its urban core in the earthquake of 1972. Tens of thousands of people were left homeless and jobless. Many fled to other west coast cities only to drift back to Managua in large numbers in the wake of the disaster. The total experience has brought about serious consideration of decentralization and the government is currently in the process of instituting these

policies stepwise. The first priority is deconcentration of Managua into polynucleated centers and decentralization through promoting growth and development of Managua's satellite cities. The next step is further decentralization, including promoting growth of the system of cities to the North, of which Leon is the most important.

Nicaragua clearly has recovered its spirit, if not its capital city, and the enthusiasm of people we encountered during our visit towards the tasks of rebuilding and redirecting was heartening.

The Organization for Urban Planning and Programming in Nicaragua. The existing organization for urban planning and programming is reflective of two strong development thrusts that seem vital to GON strategy in both the short term and over the next five-year plan period: the rebuilding of metropolitan Nicaragua and the decentralization of investment within a regional development framework. The attention to Managua is a traditional aspect of urban development in Nicaragua, but increased concern, of course, was precipitated by the earthquake of 1972. The commitment to regional development appears to flow from several sources: the desire to increase agricultural productivity and thereby the level of exports; the desire to spread the fruits of development to those areas which often have taken second place to Managua; the view that integrated regional development will serve both the purposes of increased productivity and natural integration.

The constellation of planning agencies that are responsible for carrying out government policy is not unlike that which is found in other countries of Latin America. A national planning agency, Oficina Nacional de Planificacion, (ONP) deals with overall economic strategy in a now familiar sectoral approach; a research and planning unit (CATASTRO) of the Ministerio Economica Industria y Comercio is concerned with regional development and decentralization; the newly created Viceministerio de Planificacion Urbana (VIMPU) is specifically charged with planning for the reconstruction of Managua, but interprets its mandate within a regional context.

The Vice Ministry for Urban Planning (VIMPU). While each of these agencies will be important to the purposes of the TA/UD land use programming process, it is VIMPU which is most attractive as the national level backstopping organization that will support the field work in Leon. VIMPU provides a full range of planning, programming, and development services at the national level. Organized into four main divisions, VIMPU deals not only with the broad-planning process, but also is responsible for such detailed issues on the approval of building plans for new construction in the Managua areas. VIMPU is supported by USAID through its sector loan to Nicaragua. Advisors are located in key sections of the organizations, working "shoulder-to-shoulder" with Nicaraguan counterparts.

VIMPU has focussed on two complimentary objectives in the Managua reconstruction process: the "deconcentration" of Managua from a pattern of growth emanating from a core to that of a polynucleated urban mass with three major growth areas; and the decentralization of metropolitan growth to sub-centers within the metropolitan regions. This latter effort is the particular concern of the Seccion Plan Urbano Regional (SPUR). SPUR is of particular interest to the purposes of the TA/UD project because it provides the most logical niche for a backstopping effort for Leon.

SPUR is staffed with five professionals (as compared with more than 200 professionals in VIMPU). It is led by an architect/planner who has been trained in the OAS-sponsored PIAPUR program in Peru. An advisor provided by USAID works in support of the section chief. The section is relatively new, and may well grow; the most recent table of organization proposed by the Section chief indicates staffing of twenty-five professionals in the social sciences, architecture, and planning.

SPUR coordinates its activities with those of the Division de Desarrollo Regional Y Decentralizacion of CATASTRO by participating in the work of an inter-agency committee which consists of CATASTRO and SPUR professionals. This committee was formally established by an exchange of letters between the VIMPU Vice-Minister and the Minister of the Economy. Presently, CATASTRO is focussed on an analysis of regional resources and in creating a theoretical framework for the six regions that compose its view of the nation. (Other agencies suggest that the appropriate number of regions

is something other than six. SPUR uses five for its work.) CATASTRO is supported in its work by the OAS, which has provided technical assistance to the organization; two OAS advisors were among the group which briefed us on the activities of the organization.

Field Teams for Regional Cities. The proposed table of organization of SPUR includes a unit which would be charged with developing "Planes Locales de Desarrollo Urbano". Briefly stated, this unit would consist of a core group (planner, industrial economist, social planner) which would be located in the SPUR office in Managua. In addition, advisory teams (planner, architect, economist) would be located in each of the regional cities of Masaya, Granada, Jinotepe, and Tipitapa. The field teams would be attached to the office of the alcalde in each city, would advise and assist in urban development affairs, and would train local staff to operate in support of the alcalde. The core group in Managua is envisioned as a backstopping element which would also rove the field to assist the teams that are in place in each city.

This regional effort is directed only to those cities within the "metropolitan region" of Managua which appear to offer opportunities for implementing a decentralization process. It offers a model, however, of the way in which support to Leon could be organized. The chief of SPUR and the Vice Ministry of VIMPU expressed strong interest in the possibility of including Leon as another city which would be the site for a fifth field team. The terms of reference of VIMPU and SPUR

have precluded such action to date. According to the Vice Ministry, an operation in Leon would receive the support of all divisions of VIMPU on an "as needed" basis.

Clearly then, an unusual situation exists in VIMPU. The notion of support to cities outside of Managua is accepted and an organization for that purpose has been designed. It could easily be extended to include Leon; any effort for Leon would be subject to support by the full complement of professionals within VIMPU. It is difficult to imagine a more fertile institutional setting for the TA/UD project. VIMPU clearly meets the need for a project "home base" which would provide the means for strong support to work in Leon and equally effective liaison with the other government agencies at the national level.

Our recommendation, therefore, is that VIMPU should be identified as the national organization which will host the TA/UD land use programming project in Leon.

We are ~~are~~ aware, however, that the advantages apparent in the VIMPU situation must be tempered by a hard look at the future and at the way in which the organization now operates.

VIMPU: Is It Too Soon? VIMPU is now in a strong position within the ministerial structure of government. The devastation caused by the 1972 earthquake rallied the country and the international community for the tough job ahead -- rebuilding Managua. VIMPU was created and has experienced continuous growth as budgets grew in pace with the national perception of the enormity of the task. VIMPU is not only a planning agency; it sets standard for buildings, approves designs, inspects construction and package development projects for other public and private sector organization. As measured by its terms of reference, VIMPU is a powerful entity within government.

Its power and status has been enhanced by the USAID commitment to it. While it receives only a small part of sector loan funds, it effectively sets forth the framework for disbursement of funds to capital projects, both those funded internationally and nationally. The focus on VIMPU is understandable to a great degree. Managua, the capital, is a source of pride for Nicaraguans; only the best efforts in its reconstruction will do. On a more pragmatic level, Managua has been the centroid of development investment in the past; the destruction of the city was synonymous with the destruction of much of the nation's productive capacity; rebuilding; therefore, is viewed as being all the more important.

The point here is that resources have been poured into VIMPU, which has been viewed as an organization that is crucial to the success of reconstruction and decentralization. It must deliver well planned, implementable projects on a fast-track schedule if it is to maintain its position. We have not heard any serious criticism of VIMPU, and take this as suggestive that its power and authority are still strong. Other ministries who have had segments of their budgets diverted to the purposes of VIMPU, however, could be in a good position to argue for a diminution of this authority if these critical development projects are not delivered.

Similarly, the effectiveness of VIMPU thus far has been enhanced by technical advisors. VIMPU is not alone in this respect, since other government agencies have benefited from international support since the earthquake. The crucial issue here is whether the present momentum of VIMPU activities can be continued upon the phasing out of this technical assistance. The field teams for the cities of Masaya, Granada, Jinotepe and Tipitapa, for example, will only go into operation if the sector loan purposes are interpreted to include decentralization at this level. Clearly, any continued effort in these cities will be dependent on the degree of local support (and resources) that can be mustered after international funds run out.

Time will be the ultimate arbiter in any debate about the role ahead for VIMPU. Our own position is that all major signs now are positive and that the TA/UD project in Leon could effectively use the presence of the strongly complementary sector loan and GON commitment to VIMPU as a springboard into a successful demonstration for all of Central America.

Public Sector Investment in the Leon Area. We have mentioned the existence of the Oficina Nacional de Planificacion (ONP). It is the organization which is charged with the task of macro-economic planning and for the identification of major sectoral efforts during the plan period. The next plan, covering the years 1975 - 1979, is scheduled for release within the next two or three months. We were unable to uncover any detailed information that could be used to accurately gauge the magnitude of investment in the Leon area over the next five years. The Director of ONP (who is new to the job, having assumed the post only last month) has termed the national scheme a "rolling plan", indicating a fairly high level of flexibility with regard to investment priorities year-to-year, with much dependent on the results of the first year.

Thus, data on the potential for concerted development effort in the Leon region remains elusive. It is possible, however, to piece together a broad brush impression of the situation as it might exist during the next five years or so.

It is important to recognize at the outset that much of the national investment over the plan period will be centered in Managua. Reconstruction will certainly claim a good deal, but investment in productive capacity of the capital will also absorb resources as well. Some suggest that at least 40% of national public investment will be located in Managua over the next five years. Others estimate that this figure could reach as much as 60%. The significant point here is that investment at this level within the capital will tend to reinforce the historic primacy of Managua within the nation's urban structure. Public investment of this magnitude will certainly encourage complementary private investment of at least the same magnitude; there is also a strong case to be made that an even higher proportion of private investment will follow the public resources which are invested in Managua.

While the precise level of public investment which is projected for the Leon region cannot be assessed accurately at this writing, some general indicators as to likely government commitment are readily apparent. Leon is, of course, the second city of Nicaragua and its first capital. It is on the basis of size alone in a position to argue strongly for development resources for the city proper and its hinterland.

But Leon does not stand alone. It is the largest city in a three-city regional cluster: Leon, Chinandega and Corinto. Leon is central to a large and productive agricultural hinterland. The soil is rich (top soil in some areas is estimated to have a depth of three meters) and the crops are generators of foreign exchange. Chinandega is a city having similar economic characteristics. It is a marketing and agricultural processing city. Some land owners in Chinandega have holdings in Leon; some in Leon have holdings in Chinandega. The economic ties are intertwined, if not the strongest. Corinto is the nation's port and an exit point for the products of the land surrounding Leon and Chinandega.

On the basis of trends in productivity alone, the Leon/Chinandega/Corinto complex will continue to be extremely important to the national economy. One can expect, therefore, that close attention will be paid to the needs of the region in regard to increasing this productivity to even higher levels. Two studies of regional significance are soon to be undertaken (and paid for by USAID): The regional transport network will be evaluated and future needs identified as part of a nation-wide study; the port of Corinto will be studied in terms of land use characteristics as part of a pre-feasibility study for a possible sector loan. These studies underscore the importance of the region to the nation's economy.

The importance of the region is indicated further by a major irrigation project that is slated for the Jigara Municipio. This project, to be developed under the auspices of INBIERNO (the national institute for campesino welfare), will result in the creation of a dam at the confluence of two rivers and in the irrigation of 65,000 mansanas (a mansana is a area which is approximately 30% smaller than a hectare). The land is presently unproductive to any significant degree and thus this project will certainly enhance the importance of the region. Leon is certain to benefit from the impact of this sudden increase in productivity, as it will serve as an important transfer point for shipments to Managua and Corinto and for marketing and processing.

In summary, the exact scale and scope of regional investment remain difficult to assess at this juncture of the national process of resource allocation. All indications point to continued strengthening of the Leon region, however, because of its importance in the production of foreign exchange crops. The strategic location of the city of Leon as the intervening point between the Corintos/Chinandega axis and Managua suggests an even more important role for Leon within its agricultural hinterland. For the purposes of the TA/UD land use programming project then, the regional setting for the city of Leon is one of dynamism and increased productivity.

The Setting of Leon. Leon is the second largest city in the country. With a population of 70,000 it is roughly one-sixth the size of Managua. It is an old city, dating back to the 1600's and was the original capital of Nicaragua. Leon is a cultural and intellectual center as home of the National University and an important agro-industrial center servicing the richest agricultural region in the country. Leon and the smaller cities related to it, principally Chinandega and the Port City of Corinto, are vital to the agricultural economy of the region which, in turn, is a key to the economy of the country. The area is a rich producer of cotton, sugar, cattle, soya, sorghum, bananas and other fruits. In addition it has the potential for many other kinds of agricultural produce, such as dairy cattle, peanuts, corn, etc.

Leon is also the site of what is reportedly the only attempt at "invasion" settlement in Nicaragua. While the attempt was not successful it is indicative nonetheless of the opportunity the city represents within the region as an alternative to rural or small town life.

There are also signs of rapid urbanization and growth of a more conventional nature. Automobiles, trucks and busses now jam the city's narrow streets during peak periods. Sewerage waste and industrial effluence have polluted seriously the two small rivers that border the city on the south and north although for many of the city's poor these rivers still serve as a source of water for the family laundry. Construction of new buildings

is proceeding at a rate of about \$500,000 per month, and in the past ten years the city has acquired two large new schools, a new hospital, a number of new processing industries and commercial activities, and a new common marketplace. The settled area of the city has expanded by at least 50% since 1950 and Leon is clearly beginning to take on the appearance and encounter the problems of a modern agro-industrial city. Moreover, given the rapid growth of national population (3.5%) and the considerable agricultural potential of the region, the city of Leon is certain to continue to grow in size, activity, and importance.

Local Leadership. Leon's Alcalde, Don Roger Blandon, is reputedly one of Nicaragua's most energetic and dynamic Mayors. These qualities were evident to us in our meeting with him, and appear to be supported by the many signs of recent progress in the city and by the hustle and bustle that seems to typify his municipal government staff. He is young, politically astute, and obviously is dedicated to the betterment of his native city ("I was born in Leon and will die in Leon. I want only to make this city a better place to live."). His progressive management is evidenced in the changes he has brought about in local government, including (1) the publication of an Urban Development Code for the city, reportedly the first of its kind in Nicaragua; (2) establishment last year of a small Office of Urbanism staffed by a volunteer; (3) publication of handsome annual brochures sharing information on the city's organization,

budget, growth and development; (4) developing a special project to bring heavy construction equipment to the city through private financing; and (5) initiating a one percent tax on construction for use in the city's development budget.

The Mayor was highly receptive to the idea of establishing the land use programming demonstration project in Leon. He sees it as directly responsive to his own desires to move the planning and development functions -- now primarily situated in Managua -- down to the level of his city. He indicated that if such capacity had existed in Leon in the past, many projects which have not come to fruition would no doubt be completed or underway. The project could give the Mayor's fledgling Office of Urbanization a tremendous lift and establish it as an institution with considerable developmental impact.

The Planning and Development Function in Leon. A review of the balance sheet which is included in the latest available annual report for Leon will show quickly that little of the city's income is expended for the purpose of development. The budgets of Leon have been operating budgets, and the city has been dependent on central government for the resources needed to accommodate new growth and to alleviate deficits in infrastructure, housing, and social services. This is a pattern which is familiar in city after city in Latin America.

But the growth of Leon, especially in these brief years following the earthquake, has put increased pressure on the full range of urban services. Problems that were once easily solved by reference to the city's Plano Regulador are now complex enough to warrant the Alcade's careful attention to the arguments on all sides. Planning until recently has been considered a "nice to have" function which was beyond the capacity of the public (local) purse.

A Plano Regulador was prepared for Leon in 1970. It exists only in preliminary form, and is based on a series of detailed studies of urban morphology and potential for expansion. It is primarily a physical plan, and an idealized snapshot of what the city should aspire to in the years ahead. We did not have the time needed to analyse the plan, but were told that there was no serious attempt to create a planning function in government in 1970. The fee for the Plano Regulador was paid from the Leon treasury, out of a now non-existent reserve.

Two points here are important, for they underscore the dynamism of the Leon situation. The Plano Regulador was not tied to the process of implementation, as is usual in planning efforts of this kind. Further, a single "one-shot" plan was thought to be adequate for the needs of the city. By 1975, the situation had changed drastically; both continuous planning and implementation are very much on the Alcade's mind.

A new Oficina Urbanismo has been added to the table of organization of Leon. This office is small, embryonic, susceptible to growth and change. It is headed by a (volunteer and unpaid) engineer and staffed with two building inspectors and a secretary. It does not contain a professional planning staff, but is the best that the Alcalde can do within the constraints imposed by the municipal budget. It is more than is possible in most municipalities, and it is significant because its establishment reflects the concern of Leon's most important political leader for the process of urban development.

In addition the Alcalde has voiced some concern with the development response to the needs of Leon, in terms of the scale of resources that flow from the central level and the pace of development of each project. While it was not possible to trace the sequence of events that led to the current situation, one thing is clear: the Alcalde would like more development resources placed at the local level for local disposition. He is not at all sure that this is possible and would certainly be receptive to any assistance that would serve the purposes of more rapid and effective development.

While the political climate at the local level is certainly one which would be receptive to the TA/UD project, it is important to recognize at the outset that the Alcalde is a product of a system which often views planning as a process leading to a map and development as a process to be controlled by regulation. In fact, Leon has a "Reglamento de Urbanismo para la Municipalidad de Leon" which controls subdivisions, use and

construction. One objective of the TA/UD land use programming process, therefore, must be to establish a new view of urban development which transcends that of urban design and negative controls alone.

In summary the Leon situation is fertile in the creation of the (potential) planning function at the local level and commendable in terms of the political concern with the flow of development resources at a more rapid pace. It is certainly a fertile ground for the TA/UD project.

COLOMBIA

It is relatively simple to draw marked contrasts between the urban structure of Colombia and Nicaragua and between the response of government to the existing structure and its development potential. Colombia is, after all, a much larger country both in terms of land area and population. According to the 1973 census, Colombia had a population of more than twenty-three million people. Bogota, its capital, has a population of approximately three million, or more than the total population of the country of Nicaragua. Capital cities aside, Colombia has fifteen cities with populations which exceed 100,000; Nicaragua has none.

But for all of the differences in urban scale, and in the regionalization of cities within the country, Colombia still provides several attractive alternate settings for the TA/UD land use programming project. Identifying the "right" city in Colombia is a particularly difficult task, however, because of the complexity of the national urban situation and therefore, the existence of many variables which must necessarily affect the decision process. Our task was simplified somewhat through discussions with urban development professionals in both the private sector and government. From a field of twenty-six possibilities (which represent cities ranging in size from 50,000 to 350,000 population) our choice on the basis of a target population of approximately 100,000 was narrowed to eleven. Further analysis which considered the role of these cities

with regard to the growth potential of an agricultural hinterland further narrowed the choice to three cities: Monteria, Valledupar and Villavicencia. For reasons that will become apparent in subsequent paragraphs, Villavicencia was chosen as the most appropriate potential location for the TA/UD project.

Organization for Urban Planning and Programming in Colombia. Like Colombia's urban structure, the existing organization for planning and programming is complex and wide-ranging, dealing with urban development at all levels of government. The GON has accepted the principal of national planning, for example, with enthusiasm; some observers cite Colombia as the first country in Latin America to produce an economic development plan of the type envisioned by the Charter of Punta del Este.

The Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Planeacion (DNP) is the national planning agency which reports to the President of the Republic and which is responsible for creating overall economic growth strategies and targets. This agency is responsible for coordinating the development proposal of the various Ministries of government and for evaluating development program and project implementation. The DNP has had a strong interest in urban and regional development for some time and has viewed the processes of urban growth and change as critical to a national strategy for development. Within DNP, a planning unit "Unidad de Desarrollo Regional of Urbano (UDRU) is responsible for establishing the urban framework for national planning. We shall return to the work of UDRU in the next section of this report.

Almost all of the other ministries of government have development planning and programming functions which lead to investment in urban areas. In a 1971 study by the Ford Foundation, nine ministries are listed as having programs which bear on the issues of urban housing, infrastructure, economic and social development, and on regional development as well. Each of these Ministries has within its organization one or more autonomous agencies which deal with urban-related issues. The Ford Foundation count of the autonomous agencies is 31. There are in addition ten institutes for regional development, and, of course, the departments and municipio bodies which also create urban plans, programs or projects. The purpose of this broad and incomplete inventory is to suggest that the richness of the urban structure of Colombia is fully reflected by the number of government bodies that have responsibility for some aspect of urban development.

But sheer number does not measure effectiveness. Some observers have been critical of the level of coordination that is possible with such a large number of operating agencies; some would suggest that efforts of one agency are often counterproductive to those of others. The value and problems inherent in coordination need no further discussion here. More important is the issue of scarce human resources. Colombia has thirty cities with populations of more than 50,000; when the census definition (an urban center is any place which is headquarters of a municipio, regardless of

size; this includes settlements with as few as 1,500 people) is used, the number of "urban" centers explodes to more than 900. Clearly, not all agencies can frame programs for all "urban" centers simply because they do not have the staff to do so. Further, the proliferation of agencies at the national level (some often created ad hoc to fill an immediate need) spreads thin the professional resources of the nation, and provides attractive alternatives to those who might otherwise live and work in the smaller cities of Colombia.

The Unidad de Desarrollo Regional of Urban (UDRU). This unit is staffed with thirty professionals who are generally responsible for bringing a spatial component to the national plans of Colombia. UDRU is one of eight staff units that actually perform the planning work of DNP.

Urban and regional development strategies have been important components of the national plan of Colombia for some time. Under the last national administration, the planners were concerned particularly with a strategy for decentralization of investment to intermediate-sized cities so as to provide impetus to the process of development within the then nine regions of the country. Strategies often are modified with shifts in political leadership, and now UDRU has taken a slightly different tack in its current thinking with regard to the urban structure of the nation.

Broadly speaking, the current emphasis is on the development of "new towns-in-towns" for the large cities so as to capture increases in land value, create employment, and thereby increase effective demand for the products of the agricultural sector. For intermediate cities, the scale of development envisioned is more modest, generally consisting of large integrated projects. For the smaller cities, emphasis is placed on environmental improvement through the installation of public infrastructure.

The point here is that UDRU plays an important role in refining economic theory to the point where sectoral investment is given a spatial (regional) dimension. UDRU does not focus on the grand strategies for development alone. Its staff is vitally concerned with detailed urban planning, particularly of the intermediate and large cities. UDRU does not provide comprehensive planning services for these urban centers, but does provide encouragement to municipal administration to commission such services.

Field Teams for Regional Cities. We have chosen to duplicate this title, which originally appeared in the part of this report dealing with Nicaragua. UDRU does not actually have a scheme for providing field teams to regional cities, at least not on the scale envisioned in Nicaragua. UDRU does, however, have a field team of five professional staff members who serve as a roving advisory body to municipalities, especially the smaller municipalities which have no professional urbanists.

The point here is that the Nicaraguan scheme -- ambitious, creative, comprehensive and therefore attractive -- is a paper plan which must await resources so that it can be staffed and the field teams put in place. In contrast, the resources available to UDRU permit coverage of the country by one professional team. Fortunately, Colombia's municipal entities are often staffed with urbanists who maintain day-to-day contact with the problems at hand and in these cases need assistance in only special circumstances.

During discussions with UDRU staff and especially with the mobile technical assistance group, it became apparent that Monteria, Valledupar and Villavicencia were the strongest contenders for the TA/UD project. All are growing at between 8 and 11 percent annually based on the most current intercensal data and each one is playing a critical role in the development of a major agricultural region. The Monteria hinterland is becoming an important rice producing area whereas traditionally it has been used almost exclusively for cattle and cotton. The city has a great deal of wealth for a city of its size and is presently the site of major water and sanitation projects geared to helping overcome major flooding and water table problems associated with its relationship to the river.

Valledupar is the most rapidly growing city in Colombia at 11% annually. Its emergence as an important city is a relatively recent phenomenon, associated with its location in a rich agricultural region producing cotton, cattle and timber, but also due in large part to its proximity to Venezuela. It is the most important Colombian city close enough to Venezuela to have substantial overland intercourse with that country.

Villavicencia does not have the special physical problems of Monteria (water table), nor is its commerce especially influenced by proximity to another country. However, it is a gateway to an important Colombian agricultural region with vast potential and it has the demographic and physical characteristics we were seeking. Moreover, its political leadership was intact during a time of routine local political resignations required under a new government. These factors, combined with the Mayor's recent request to Planeacion for assistance with a new plan, led us to select Villavicencia as the site for our field visit.

The Setting of Villavicencia. Villavicencia has been characterized as a port city by its Alcalde. If the llanos can be likened to a sea, then the Alcalde is certainly correct in his observation. The llanos accounts for almost half of the land was of Colombia. This is cattle country, gently rolling land that is dotted with groupings of trees and scrub brush. Although the availability of water is uncertain (some streams have been known to shift locations by miles during the course of a wet season/dry season/wet stream cycle), irrigation has made possible the cultivation of other crops: rice, maize, peanuts, soya, etc.

All of the produce of the llanos flows to Villavincencia because the roads of the llanos lead there. Much of the produce flows through the city, however, enroute to Bogota and the other consumer centers of the nation. Similarly, products from the west flow to Villavincencia, to be distributed in the llanos; more characteristically, by being sold in the central market.

Estimates of the city's population vary; the DNP suggests a total of 82,000 but the Alcalde feels that 130,000 is a more appropriate figure. The Alcalde, Sr. Vacca, describes a process which accounts for more than 40,000 "floating" population (which were presumably unenumerated in the 1973 census.) These floaters are people who have tried to set up fincas on the llanos and failed; people who live in Villavincencia for only part of the year when the growing season is over; people who are trying to strike it rich on the potential of the llanos and its trade.

Whatever the correct population figure, the city certainly exhibits the characteristics of a boom town of America's old west. The streets are crowded with cattle traders and cowboys. The most active plaza in turn is one created by closing a downtown street; it is lined with cafes and bars. The tallest buildings in the city are offices of commercial banks and there are also two or three elevator apartment blocks. Villavincencia appears to be a male town. We were told that many men came to the city and the llanos to seek their fortune, leaving their families behind. Once settled, these same men send back for their wives and children. We understand that this

situation has led to a relatively high level of prostitution in the city but that activity is limited to several zones, boundaries that have been informally agreed upon.

In brief, Villavicencia appears to be a somewhat rough and raw town, trying to keep pace with the impact of new growth and with the development requirements of the llanos. Its hustle and bustle, lack of pretension, and local color reflect fully the challenges that the llanos presents to its new settlers.

Public Sector Investment in Villavicencia. Mayor investment in the city has been projected for the areas of housing, water supply, and road construction. Housing and road projects are underway, as in detailed planning for a new water supply system.

The Director of the city's planning staff estimates that approximately 800 dwelling units annually have been constructed with public funds in recent years. These projects have been financed by Caja Popular and I.C.T. As expected with projects funded through these entities, the lower income households cannot generate the effective demand needed to participate in the housing program. Further, new household formation within the city is approximately 1400 households annually. The gap between public projects and overall need is currently being bridged by invision and barrios pirates. It is difficult to gauge whether public programs will be expanded in the years ahead; nevertheless, it is unlikely that they would be expanded

to fill all needs. Thus, like the other cities of Colombia, Villavicencia must come to grips with the problems of low-income shelter in the years ahead.

In the area of infrastructure, BID (IDB) has financed a water supply master plan, presumably in anticipation of providing capital for implementation. A major problem with the current system is its complete dependence on the river, which is virtually dry during the summer, thereby sending a fair measure of mud into the intake station of the city. A circumferential road is now under construction. It will cost approximately C \$7.5 million, of which C \$2.5 million will be accounted for by transfer from central government agencies. The remaining C \$5.0 million will come from local banks who are required by law to reserve 8% of assets for investment in local projects, with the interest rate to the borrowing entity subsidized by the central government.

Planning in the Meta Department and Villavicencia. According to our Planeacion counterpart, planning in the Meta Department is regarded as more of a professional function there now than it had been in the past. This is evidenced by the young professionals that head and staff the two local planning organizations, the Planning Office of the Villavicencia Municipality and the Planning Department of Meta in which Villavicencia is the major city. Moreover, while coordination between the two units is not close or regular,

they do collaborate on projects in which there is mutual interest. This is a natural turn of events as Villavicencia plays such a critical role in the entire region as gateway to the llanos. It was described by the Director of Planning for Meta Department as a two-way funnel through which flow the inputs and outputs of the llanos. Moreover, Villavicencia provides crucial services to the llanos such as banking, government functions, storage, processing and marketing.

Departmental Planning. The Director for Planning in Meta Department is a young woman recently graduated from the Universidad de los Andes as one of Colombia's first female Industrial Engineers. She has a professional staff consisting of an additional industrial engineer, an economist and a business administration specialist. When questioned about sectoral expertise such as agriculture, she indicated that the planning staff draws freely on the staff of other units in the Department, including the Divisions for Housing, Agriculture, Education, Public Works, and Government. While she does not seek to develop a large bureaucratic unit she would like to have more analytical capacity built into her staff since much of the work of the planning office centers on coordination of the sectoral activities of the department.

One such activity is the planned road system for the Meta region in which three major roads will be projected out into the llanos -- two stemming directly from Villavicencia -- and the road system along the base of the mountains will be extended and improved. The plan for this system, Plan Vial del Meta, was developed by a private firm under a contract with the Secretariat for Public Works and the Valorization Office. The plan takes into account the sub-regionalization of the llanos into areas with different potential, resources, and physical characteristics.

The projected budget for plan implementation over the next twenty years is one thousand million pesos or approximately thirty three million dollars. About \$1.3 million of this is available this budget year from commercial bank rediscount papers available under a special decree requiring banks to provide a minimal proportion of their holdings to finance public works (decree 384). Priority in allocation of these funds will be given to improvement of the road system at the base of the mountains because of the importance of this area in rice production. As a footnote, it is interesting to note in the historical section of the plan the tremendous growth of the existing transport system that took place from 1955 to 1970. This coincides also with the rapid recent population growth of Villavicencia.

Other major long-term projects contemplated in the department are rationalization of water flow in the llanos, reforestation in the mountains and in the llanos (there have been no controls to date), improvement in cattle strains, and development of lime production.

Development in the region will be stimulated by tax incentives (offered since 1973) by the government for projects undertaken in the llanos. This incentive pertains to all of the sparsely settled or lagging regions of Colombia. However, much development has taken place in the region spontaneously. A good example is rice production and drying which was started by a single family several years ago and has since drawn many new entrepreneurs to this field.

Long-term programs are of great interest in the planning department but most of the staff's energies are concentrated on implementation and coordination in the short term. One modus operandi that would seem to bear promise in this respect is the newly initiated strategy of seeking close coordination with national implementing agencies with the objective of obtaining funds for financing of the department's priority short-term projects.

Planning in Villavicencia. The planning office of Villavicencia is headed by an architect who reports directly to the Alcalde on all matters relating to the plan for urban development of the city. The Alcalde is himself an

architect (the Governor of the Departamento de Meta is an engineer) and is particularly concerned that the city's growth seems to be outstripping the 1967 plan which was prepared by consultants from Bogota's University de los Andes.

The Jefe of Planeacion, Gonzalo Cruz, was trained in Bogota, at University of the Americas. He is assisted by a four-man staff: an engineer, an economist, a land surveyor, and a draftsman. According to Cruz, his Office has major responsibility for the economic and administrative aspects of development (fulfilled through assisting in municipal budgeting and scheduling of projects) and also for architectural/"urban" control (fulfilled through a system of building approvals and density standards.

The attempts at budgeting, scheduling and controlling do not appear to be as effective as the Alcalde and his planner might wish, for both cited the rapid growth of barrios pirates and an increase in invasion attempts as severe municipal problems.

The Office of Planeacion coordinates all plans and programs of other public agencies, such as the local empresas publicas and the housing banks. The main guide in this process is the 1967 plan, which both Alcalde and planning director would like to update. In some aspects, the Los Andes group missed by a mile. They projected a population growth rate of 4.4% annually, for example, and the present rate is 7.9%. Still, the 1967 plan does provide a core of data and analysis which is useful to the current planning process.

In summary, the planning staff is young, energetic, and anxious to make a contribution to the development of their city. Their lack of experience does hamper their activities, particularly when they must negotiate with more senior professionals in national level agencies. To a large extent, the inexperience which is evident is offset by enthusiasm and by an intimate knowledge of the growth characteristics and potential of their city.

A Technical Assistance Variation for Colombia. There exists in Villavicencia an excellent opportunity to demonstrate in Colombia the utility of land use programming and development at the intermediate (to small) city level. Indeed, it could be a viable model for other developing countries that are -- like Colombia -- large, complex, and highly urbanized. The critical ingredients are all in place; e.g., a national policy supportive of decentralization and regionalized urban development, decentralization of national government investments to implement the policy, national and local level interest in the control and guidance of urban land uses, progressive leadership by a new mayor, a serious need for land use programming generated by a doubling of the population over the past decade, a concomitant increase in economic activities almost wholly related to agriculture, and a newly established planning office with a core of young professionals. Villavicencia appears to be moving into a new era in terms of political leadership, dedication to planning and development, and dramatic new and potential growth.

However, consideration of implementing the project in Villavicencia has forced us to consider the special circumstances extant in Colombia. Unlike most developing countries, it has had a wealth of urban experience and, owing in large part to a recent preoccupation with urban and regional development, has created a large cadre of talent and several good university programs in the field of urban planning and development. The only difficulty is that for a variety of reasons the talent is seldom found at the level of the intermediate city. Moreover, it has yet to be demonstrated here that building a strong land use programming and development capacity is feasible at this level although its importance clearly is recognized.

Taking these factors into consideration we are proposing that a future TA/UD demonstration project be conducted in Colombia and carried out almost entirely under a prime contract with Colombian urban and regional development experts. It would be desirable to provide the assistance of a senior expatriate urban and regional development expert in the early stages to assist the Colombian contractor in setting up the project, throughout the project for occasional consultations as required by the Colombian contractor, and for project evaluation.

The TA/UD contract in Colombia could be let on the basis of competitive bidding with the Mayor of Villavicencia and Planeacion to assist in selection of a contractor. Scope of work and selection criteria would have to be spelled out very carefully and clearly to insure a flexible, broad-gauged approach to the project -- a complete departure from the urban design, master planning approach common in Colombia -- and a full understanding of what is meant conceptually by the term land use programming.

The scope of work would resemble closely that proposed for the Nicaraguan project except that the core project team already is established at Villavicencia. It is young and inexperienced and would have to be trained on the job and through courses available in Colombia. No more than one full-time Colombian contract expert would be required to develop over an eighteen-month to two-year period an effective local capacity for land use programming.

The contractor would be required to perform one additional task that relates to rapid personnel turnover, a problem which historically has been endemic in Colombia. In recognition of this problem about which Planeacion also expressed considerable concern, we are proposing that the Colombian contractor prepare a series of "how to" manuals based on the various critical steps involved in establishing and implementing land use programming in Villavicencia. This would serve the dual purpose of helping ensure the continuation of the process there as well as aiding in its replication elsewhere

in Colombia and in other countries.

In summary, the Colombian project would have two innovative features:

1. The prime contractor would be Colombian, making it a very effective test of project replicability in Colombia and in other countries at a similar stage of urbanization and development, and
2. The project would create a series of "how to" manuals based on a local model, a feature which would help in the institutionalization of the project locally and aid in its replication elsewhere.

Another factor not to be overlooked is that its cost should be considerably less than the Nicaraguan demonstration which requires an expatriate prime contractor as well as training outside of the country. Moreover, expertise gained during the project could be transferred to other countries by Colombians.