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INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS
IIHR

EVALUATION REPORT
IIHR TEAM

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I. Introduction

As members of the IIHR team selected to participate in the evaluation process, we are pleased to present our conclusions and hope that they will be added to those of the consultants Stephen Cox and Michael Schifter and submitted to the consideration of the USAID. In doing so, in addition to fulfilling the commitment assumed with the USAID, we wish to share the impressions set out in this document with the entire "IIHR community," that is: the staff and members of the Board of Directors, so that together we can all reflect on the future of the Institute.

We wish to call attention to the work carried out by the two external consultants, both because of the quality of the report they presented and because of their contributions during the closed-door sessions held in January and March. They displayed a high level of professionalism in both meetings, thus contributing much to the process and helping us to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the Institute. Furthermore, they directed the execution of several tasks agreed upon during the session in January, which was of tremendous help in successfully completing and obtaining very valuable results, which were then presented in March.

As regards the evaluation process, we want to state that we assumed this commitment in the full understanding that many others -staff members, members of the Board of Directors and outsiders alike- could provide much valuable information on the work and the future of the Institute. We understand that we were selected by the Executive Director in order to ensure that discussions would be manageable within a group whose membership would remain constant throughout the entire process. While at no time were we asked to "represent" any particular group -such as the staff or the Board of Directors- we often shared our concerns and impressions with other colleagues, to ensure they were truly relevant and applicable. In addition, the personnel of the IIHR participated in the tasks carried out between one session and the other. Each person in charge of a Program was asked to collaborate in the preparation of the "program profiles," while others contributed to the preparation of all other products.

This exercise allowed us to re-think our long-term vision of our work at the Institute, beyond the experience we acquire from day to day. Also, it enabled us to ask the right questions rather than hold on to our suppositions, and it gave us an opportunity to look at how other institutions have managed similar problems of growth and diversification. It is our hope that this report will be of help to the Executive Directorate of the Institute in preparing long-term plans, and to the Board of Directors in considering same. Also, we offer these comments to the IIHR's principal donors, since they contain information useful in evaluating the Institute's work.

At no time did we regard this process as a self-evaluation. We are aware that this would have led to the question of a conflict of interest. Rather, we viewed it as an opportunity to interact and share information, points of view and analyses with the external evaluators, while recognizing that they would be obtaining data from other sources also. We simply took advantage of the opportunity to examine the same topics as our evaluators, and to arrive at our own conclusions.

II. The Context

In a relatively short time, the seventeen years since its creation, the Institute has had to carry out its work of the promotion of human rights in a context that has changed dramatically and rapidly. When it began its work, most of the countries of Latin America were governed by military dictatorships that perpetrated serious, massive and systematic violations of fundamental rights. Faced with this panorama, the IIHR undertook the task of promoting democracy and respect for human rights, directing its efforts toward what constituted the most evident need in each case: the organization of open and honest elections and attempts to halt massacres, summary executions, disappearances and the most horrendous tortures. This effort was, without a doubt, supported by the international legitimacy of those attempts, precisely because of the prevailing situation. Nevertheless, it required great skill to promote an agenda based on democracy and human rights without alienating the leading governmental figures.

A short time thereafter, a rapid transition from dictatorship to democracy began. However, while the military elite and other powerful political forces seemed to withdraw from the upper echelons of government, they retained considerable autonomy and influence. The Institute was aware of the problems of the transition. On one hand, it understood that it was necessary to consolidate the progress made to date. On the other, it offered a forum to those who insisted on the need to do away with impunity in the case of grave violations of human rights.

The IIHR believes that the region is currently in the midst of a third stage. While it cannot yet be said that democracy is firmly in place, it is clear that the transition has concluded. With few exceptions, the specter of the coup d'etat is not as ever present as in the past. Consequently, it is necessary to leave behind the notion of the transition; today, it only provides elected leaders with excuses for not living up to their obligations in the area of democracy and human rights.

The IIHR must characterize this situation carefully. While this involves a certain level of overgeneralization, it also makes it easier to identify the most pressing needs of the region. This should enable the Institute to adapt to the challenges of today and program its activities on the basis of those needs. Indeed, an important element to consider is that in the Americas the context is never static: the dynamics of politics and the social climate tend to change fairly quickly. The IIHR must keep abreast of these changes and adjust its working strategies accordingly.

At the present time, democracy seems to have taken hold in the hemisphere, at least in terms of the extent to which it is accepted. Indeed, most political movements in the world claim to be democratic, which shows the legitimacy of

the system. This democratic veneer that covers almost the entire region nonetheless conceals strong authoritarian beliefs that still persist in certain societies. These beliefs are not necessarily restricted to elected leaders; rather, they tend to permeate many aspects of life and, with a certain ease, find their way into political dialogue when, for example, considering solutions to the growing sense of citizen insecurity.

It is significant that this preference for authoritarianism seems to come to the fore every time the system shows some sign of being unable to resolving society's problems. All too easily, government leaders in the region blame democracy for what they see as social ills. In such cases, the tendency is to resort to or call for antidemocratic measures as soon as difficulties appear, rather than to try solve the problems of democracy with more democracy. This explains the reluctance, in many cases, to recognize the independence of civil society organizations, as well as the friction in relations between governments and a free press and investigative journalism.

This can be characterized as "insufficient democracy," a concept in which not only the adjective but also the noun should be underscored. Indeed, these systems constitute true democracies and offer great advantages over the dictatorships they replaced. This new panorama offers, in addition, valuable opportunities for the promotion of human rights. Despite these advances, the democracies of the region still require assistance to fill in certain gaps, especially those related to the limitation of power, the independence of the different branches of government and the recognition of the role of civil society. Of greater importance is the need to combat the tendency of these systems to be exclusive. Indigenous populations, women, children and, in general, all those who are in one way or another marginalized, whose numbers continue to grow, given the systematic effort to deny them access to participation, justice and the benefits of economic growth.

While democracy has gained great legitimacy, even though it is not inclusive democracy, the same cannot be said with regard to human rights. This shows that the democratic systems are "insufficient" since, in theory, there should be no doubts regarding the absolute respect for human rights that should prevail in a democracy, nor regarding the fact that a system that fully respects human rights is, by definition, a democracy. Even though human rights organizations are no longer persecuted as they were under the dictatorships, the term "human rights" has not gained the desired acceptance; while in the past human rights activists were labelled as defenders of terrorism, in many places today they are regarded as defenders of criminals.

In a context such as this, the Institute has an enormous task ahead of it and, regrettably, some of it differs little from the work it did in the past: to promote and support the legitimacy of the important work in human rights carried out by local

organizations. By working with public institutions of all types, including armed and security forces, the IIHR must concentrate its efforts to ensure that its message on the principle of human rights is heard. Fortunately, most current governments, contain those who believe in democracy and can collaborate by facilitating contacts and opening doors for the Institute.

In order to be able to work for more perfect, less "insufficient" democracies, the IIHR's programs must incorporate the point of view of those who are excluded from the system. For example, in the area of elections efforts should be aimed at ensuring greater citizen participation. Also, if the Institute chooses to go forward with its programs dedicated to the specific problems of indigenous populations, women, children and displaced persons, it must find a way to incorporate their perspective into all the activities of the IIHR and not only into specific thematic programs.

III. Strengths and Weaknesses of the IIHR's Programs

In general terms, the IIHR agrees with the evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Institute conducted by the experts. The Institute found the means to establish itself as the legitimate interlocutor for both governments and civil society, and even among those specific sectors of both that are not always receptive to messages related to human rights, impartiality or tolerance of the ideas of others. This strength, in turn, spawned others: a unique ability to foster dialogue, even at the regional level, and a level of recognition that enables it to convene all involved to discuss aspects of democracy and human rights. Also, the IIHR has been flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances in the area of human rights, thus ensuring it will not become obsolescent or irrelevant.

There are also inherent risks in these strengths. Without sound strategic thinking, there is the risk that the Institute's programs could easily fall into the trap of following others and imitating "fashions," a situation that could become even more serious if donors are allowed to shape the IIHR's mandate. Therefore, the ability to speak with all sectors must be promoted, but without allowing the message of human rights to be diluted in an erroneous effort to "speak the language the target sector understands."

Also, the willingness of the Institute to listen to the requests of the beneficiaries of its programs and to adapt, when necessary, the services it offers to these needs, constitutes another of its strengths. This, however, could easily lead to the proliferation of programs not always aimed at capitalizing on the particular strengths of the Institute. For this reason, program officers and area directors should be encouraged to review the justification of their activities, their goals and objectives, as well as the relationship between the actions planned and the goals set. The exercise on "program profiles" was an initial effort that led to an in-depth examination of the Institute as a whole; it revealed that, when deciding what

each program should do, not enough strategic thinking was involved. As a result, one of the priorities of the IIHR must be the incorporation of this analytical structure, as suggested by the evaluators, in the planning scheduled for the near future. The program profiles are contained in Appendix 1.

One of the challenges facing the Institute is the promotion of horizontal cooperation among the different programs, with a view to improving their interaction. This would lead to improved use of resources and better quality work. Also, the fact that some programs currently have a weak analytical structure does not necessarily mean that they should be eliminated. Nevertheless, the IIHR must be willing to make the always painful decision to eliminate a program when it is determined that the same cannot be executed in accordance with high standards of excellence, and once the negative political effect it may have on Institute clients and donors has been considered. A decision of this type will be taken once efforts have been made to improve the program by incorporating necessary changes identified in the thorough analysis suggested by the evaluators. At all events, there is consensus within the Institute that the right thing to do is to retain only those programs that offer a comparative advantage, and not try to compete with similar organizations, especially those that seem to be in a better position than the IIHR to provide services in a particular field.

As a means of better shaping the work carried out by the Institute, it is necessary to focus on its academic nature and on its promotional, training and research activities in the area of human rights. Even though a wide variety of topics related to human rights and democracy are addressed, all should have training as their focus. In other words, in reply to each request or problem, the IIHR's response should be training: organizing courses or offering advisory services that are, after all, equally educational.

An essential component of education in human rights is research. It is not enough for the Institute to impart knowledge and information through the courses it organizes. Its work in the area of training will be more beneficial and effective to the extent that creative ideas on how the needs of its clients can be met are generated. The international law of human rights is unanimously regarded as a field subject to "progressive development;" therefore, in order to respond to new demands, what is needed is an Institute that renews itself and grows through intellectual creativity.

The IIHR has contributed to this effort to promote research through articles that appear in the wide range of publications that it has produced. Furthermore, many of the seminars have yielded valuable texts and other intellectual outputs, also disseminated in publications. However, it would appear that the IIHR conducts research almost as a by-product of training courses rather than as a conscious and direct effort. For this reason, it is necessary to foster this discipline in the

program officers, so that they will combine their organizational duties with research; consequently, the planning of activities should focus on what products are expected to be obtained at the end of each project. This systematic approach to research can be implemented through the inclusion of research components in each program, under the supervision of the area director, or through specific allocations of funds. A valuable suggestion made by the evaluators was that of including the position of learning officer in the current organizational set-up; this could be the key to greater involvement by the Institute in applied research.

IV. Recommendations for Planning

The evaluators pointed up the need to develop a strategic vision and plan for the Institute, and emphasized that the lack of same could constitute a weakness that should be addressed. They confirmed the need to have a duly qualified facilitator to ensure, in every case, the inclusion of the best representatives of each area of work, of the administrative teams and of key persons for the projects. Planning, therefore, is viewed as a participatory process. Some ideas are offered later that should be taken into account when conducting this process.

At the Institute, we are aware that developing and having a strategic vision and plan is a dynamic process. This aspect was noted in previous evaluations, which led to the investment of resources with firms such as Peat Marwick and others; some of the results of same are included as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

To prepare a strategic plan, it is necessary to overcome the difficulties described below:

1. There must be a change of mentality among the entire staff, getting away from a passive attitude of "obeying orders" or "doing the task assigned" to a proactive attitude that implies the formulation of hypotheses regarding future situations or behaviors. Such an exercise has not been common among experts in the fields of social science or law. After several years of sustained efforts, the Institute is now able to operate with a budget and an annual or biannual plan of activities. The next step could be to carry out more long-term planning.

2. Given the political context in which the IHR operates, it is not always easy to establish even an acceptable level of control over future activities. Cuba is a perfect example. It is undeniable that when this country begins to undertake democratic processes to radically change the structure of its institutions, this will be a political priority in the region. In the cases of Haiti, Guatemala, with the signing of the Peace Accords, and the surprising political change in Paraguay, there is no other choice but to react with energy and decision in support of the establishment of the Rule of Law. Consequently, the Institute will always be exposed to a "level of emergencies" considerably greater than that of any other

institution or activity; this is not an argument against planning, but rather a characteristic that should be taken into account.

3. In the preceding efforts in which the IIHR has been involved it has also been evident that the planning process should be viewed differently from the work plan. The latter is a manifestation of the first and serves to make the effort goal-oriented and provide guidance for the work ahead. Nevertheless, the "work plan" is to "planning" what a "photograph" is to the object in movement it depicts. Consequently, it is necessary to make the staff see that the delivery of reports or planning documents is not the end of a project.

4. Experience has shown that the "facilitator" recommended by the evaluators to assist in the process of strategic planning must be selected with special care, since there are few professionals with specific experience in the Institute's field of work. It is relatively easy to find experts in human rights or public administration, but not in the administration of human rights projects.

As regards the guidelines suggested by the evaluators, we would like to offer the following comments:

- The analysis of the context in which the Institute operates and the identification of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats, as recommended by the experts, are exercises that should be conducted periodically. The professionals of the IIHR have the advantage of already being familiar with this methodology, as can be appreciated in Appendices 2 and 3.
- The recommendation to review the mission of the Institute and the values that guide the Institute and its staff is particularly timely, and must involve the participation of persons related with all levels of the IIHR. The Executive Director should be directly involved in the process to ensure its acceptance by the other Institute authorities.
- The structure of the Institute clearly needs to be reviewed. Over the past two years, the staff of the IIHR have been questioning the very idea of the "programs" as structural elements of the organization. The principal criticism is based on the lack of horizontal communication among the different sections; the idea is that improved interaction would make it possible not only to reduce costs but also to improve the products delivered to beneficiaries.

A sketch of the new paradigm for action could be the recent idea of an "integrated plan," as has been applied in Guatemala. Under this plan, the programs become less important and the Institute appears as a single unit to counterparts. However, it must be remembered that a change in structure seriously compromises the current system of authority and the institutional

culture, not so much at the level of the directors, who have been more exposed to this type of exercise, as at the level of mid-management personnel.

- One of the most important parts of the report is the proposal to use the model of change as the method for evaluating projects. The preparation of working hypotheses and the need to determine criteria that will make it possible to measure the impact of the activities is a practice that has been promoted in recent years, in large measure due to the responsibility to show donors that their funds have been well invested. The growing level of the inter-relatedness in the different actions of the Institute may favor also the simplification of many of its current structural problems.

Lastly, it is important to point out that within the IIHR, compared with the processes of planning, it is no less urgent to maintain a high level of motivation among the personnel. The cause of human rights and democracy requires "militancy" and devotion; that is, a "debureaucratization" of the personnel.

It should be borne in mind at all times that the objectives and goals of the Institute's projects can only be achieved if the power of persuasion is used effectively on the beneficiaries. The process of persuasion is an emotional rather than an analytical process. The person doing the persuading must expend a great deal of energy to gain the acceptance of the beneficiary, which takes considerable sacrifice and motivation. This is the first thing that should be borne in mind by those in charge of planning.

V. Specific Recommendations by Area

As can be deduced from the above, the effort made by each Area takes place within the framework of the institutional mandate for the purpose of contributing to the construction of a culture of respect and the effective exercise of human rights in the region. This involves, on the one hand, adhering to and implementing the fundamental principles contained in the international instruments on human rights, and, on the other, bringing about a profound change of attitude among the different populations that interact in the development of the projects executed.

From the academic point of view, to place human rights in the center of the actions of each Area presupposes an ongoing recognition of national realities with a critical, creative and transforming attitude.

1. CAPEL

With a view to making better use of its human resources and to foster greater thematic consistency, CAPEL was recently restructured, with three programs being defined:

1.1 Program for the Strengthening of Electoral Organizations

This Unit executes technical assistance projects related to elections and conducts missions to observe technical aspects of election processes. When technical assistance projects and observation missions coincide, each is carried out independently; to this end, mechanisms are established to ensure the transparency and credibility of such actions.

1.2 Program for the Strengthening of Democratic Governability

In an effort to complement the work carried out with electoral organizations, CAPEL has systematized its relations with political parties and legislative or deliberative bodies. The importance of working with political parties lies in the fact that the Program's validity as an interlocutor between those who exercise power and the citizenry, which delegates its representation in those elected, depends on the reliability and viability of what it offers. CAPEL proposes that, in addition to discussing funding for campaigns more thought be given to institutional mechanisms for participation -internal democracy-, the role of parties in developing political leaders and the responsible role they should assume when they are in opposition. The advisory services offered by CAPEL to legislative or deliberative bodies, including local governments, are intended to persuade same to translate into specific actions the aspirations of the voters; for example, by passing practical and effective laws or exercising control over the Executive Branch.

1.3 Program for the Strengthening of the Right to Political Participation

This unit executes projects on constitutional and legal development. Also, it holds out the Inter-American Course on Elections, whose purpose is to contribute to the promotion and strengthening of democratic electoral processes in Latin America, as a means of ensuring respect for the civil and political rights of citizens recognized in international instruments on human rights.

Furthermore, and in coordination with the Civil Society Area, CAPEL collaborates with the Executive Directorate in the development of special activities such as the project on Freedom of Expression.

2. EDUCATION

The Area of Education comprises two programs and two units:

2.1 Educational Operations

The program is responsible for the design, execution and evaluation of the *Interdisciplinary Course*, the most important forum for the study and discussion of human rights and democracy in Latin America. Due to the success of and great demand for this activity, the IIHR created the *Regional Specialized Course*, the site of which rotates every year to meet the academic requirements of the subregions. In the past four years, this course has been replicated in the Andean Region, the Southern Cone, Brazil and Central America and Mexico.

As regards the academic content of both activities the principal problems are first considered, and then the thematic focus to be addressed is defined. On this basis, human rights are analyzed in specific contexts, making it possible to move from theory to practice.

With regard to the materials used in the courses, a sound recommendation made by the evaluators was the idea of appointing an expert to determine which are the most effective.

The evaluation of the courses deserves special attention. By considering quantitative and qualitative aspects, as well as impact, it is possible, on the one hand, to measure attainment of objectives and, on the other, to identify ways to enhance the medium- and long-term impact of same on participants and beneficiary populations. In this regard, one of the principal accomplishments is that, more and more, former students are providing support in the activities which the IIHR carries out in their countries.

2.2 Center for Educational Resources

This program carries out its activities in three fields: promotion and dissemination of education in human rights, training for educators and production of educational materials.

a) Promotion and dissemination of education in human rights

Education in human rights has grown qualitatively in the region. Counterpart institutions that were just beginning to carry out work in this field now have greater theoretical and practical knowledge of the topic; as a result, the quality of their work is improving. This is the case of Ministries of Education in the countries of Central America and of the National Chapters of Amnesty International of Latin America.

For the activities of promotion and dissemination, the program uses printed material -such as posters and brochures-, videos and television spots. Distribution is carried out through counterpart organizations and could be further expanded.

b) Training for Educators

Training activities go beyond the application of methodologies and pedagogical approaches, since these vary and generally are subject to the requirements of the beneficiary populations. In this regard, advance diagnostics and planning activities are stages that assume great importance in the execution of training activities, which is why they have become standard practice. This makes it possible to determine and meet the needs and interests of the target populations of the actions.

c) Production of educational materials

These materials provide support in the learning process; some are aimed at teachers and others at students. The selection of the content and the methodology to be applied is based on an assessment conducted in advance to ensure their usefulness and validity. The materials being used range from posters and texts to educational videos.

National and international institutions have asked the CRE to prepare educational materials on human rights; examples include the manual for educators requested by UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and the texts requested by the Ministries of Education of El Salvador and Guatemala.

Even though the CRE has had a significant influence on the Ministries of Education of Central America and the National Chapters of Amnesty International, it is necessary to approach the Ministries of Education of the rest of the hemisphere, to provide them with support in developing the topic.

2.3 Editorial Unit

This unit is responsible for publishing the materials produced by the IIHR. Its work consists of: compilation of materials, publication and distribution.

To date, the Institute has not managed to develop an effective mechanism for the thematic compilation of materials or guidelines to underpin such efforts. Because of this, gaps often occur that hinder the smooth operation of this unit.

Also, the personnel of the IIHR produce little material for publication. The IIHR team agrees with the evaluators regarding the need to promote scientific

research within the Institute, in the hope that staff members will conduct research on a regular basis, thus enabling the Institute, through its publications, to show what its own personnel produce.

In the area of distribution, there is much room for improvement; as practically the only distribution channel are the training activities carried out by the different programs, since the sale of books is sporadic.

The quality of the publications varies and in some cases is substandard. With a view to improving the quality of the articles, consideration is being given to the creation of an Editorial Board, made up of experts from different disciplines and with broad experience in the topic of human rights, to review the material received for publication under the seal of the IHR. In order to increase readership, this board would also be responsible for seeing that publication of documents in English, French and Portuguese increases.

We are in agreement with the evaluators' recommendation to hire an external consultant who would review editorial practices at the IHR and recommend a strategy for making the work of the unit more effective and generating greater impact.

2.4 Information Unit

The Documentation Center and Joint Library with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights compile and systematize specialized texts and publications in the field of human rights.

The Documentation Center also conducts studies on the situation of human rights in the different countries of the hemisphere for internal use by personnel of the IHR. However, systematic research is not carried out on a regular basis. Therefore, it is necessary to promote such research, but without violating the Institute's mandate not to make pronouncements on violations committed by governments.

3. AREA OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Aware of the fact that it is impossible for it to work with every civil society organization and sector at a disadvantage in the region, for the past three years this Area has been making efforts to focus and prioritize its work. A strategic plan was designed and other documents drawn up in an attempt to delimit its field of action. An organizational structure for its programs is also being studied that would make it possible to address the priorities of a sector characterized by the diverse nature of the challenges that it faces. Despite the progress that has been achieved, the programs recognize the need for further efforts to determine the

specific areas on which their efforts should focus and to improve the quality of their work.

3.1 Program for the Strengthening of Civil Society Organizations

This is one of the Area's priority programs, inasmuch as it provides an opportunity to contribute to the protection of human rights, using the means that are in keeping with the IIHR's mandate.

The objective of the Program is to strengthen the organizational and institutional capabilities of civil society organizations, assisting them in their professionalization and supporting democratic participation processes, through actions that will foster new social practices for settling disputes by peaceful means and the construction of a culture of peace.

3.2 The Gender and Human Rights Program

The IIHR promotes the strengthening of local organizations involved in this issue and alliances have been established with a number of entities that have resulted in the execution of further actions in this field. The strategic plan currently in effect places emphasis on different actions in this regard, including the projects International Protection, Ombudsmen's Offices for Women, and Education in Women's Human Rights. The achievements so far include the development of special niches of expertise -recognized at the international level- in the design of educational methodologies, the production of educational materials with a gender focus and the international protection of women's human rights.

3.3 The Indigenous Peoples Program

The work of the Program has focused on training and technical assistance to indigenous organizations aimed at developing appropriate legislation and national and international mechanisms for the protection of the rights of these peoples. Therefore, it will only be possible to gauge the success of the program's work over the medium and long term.

The IIHR considers that its counterparts in this field should be indigenous organizations (which indigenous communities regard as their legitimate representatives), ombudsmen's offices, other government organizations and the agencies of the Inter-American and United Nations Systems with responsibility for protecting of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The Program needs to be strengthened in both technical and financial terms if it is to provide a timely and effective response to the challenges presented by the new international and regional context.

3.4 The Program for Migrant Populations

This Program has a wealth of experience in working with NGOs, business organizations, state institutions, churches and regional and international organizations involved in the protection of these populations, both within and outside the countries affected.

In spite of the expertise that the Program has acquired, the IHR acknowledges the fact that the scope of its work needs to be defined more clearly.

3.5 The Project for the Prevention of Torture and the Treatment of Victims of Torture

As in other cases already mentioned, the IHR's work in the field of the prevention of torture and the treatment of victims of torture needs to be defined and delimited more clearly. Better coordination with the Institute's other programs is also needed. This situation does not justify the elimination of the project, however, since this is a field closely linked to the protection of human rights. In fact, the program is now being restructured and its philosophy redefined.

Returning to the general overview, the Area has made efforts to incorporate new sectors of civil society that are of crucial importance to the progress of human rights in the new sociopolitical and economic context. Work with business organizations, the mass media and universities is already under way. In their report the evaluators recognize that trade unions and professional organizations are another important sector of civil society, and the intention is that they be targeted in the future.

The Civil Society Area has also proposed that its strategy should be to give priority to processes rather than isolated activities, and to extend the coverage of its projects to the entire hemisphere. Indeed, the strategic planning process under way has already produced positive results. It needs to be consolidated with permanent diagnostic, evaluation and programming activities (the groundwork has already been laid for this) and articulated with the institutional strategic planning processes that the IHR will have to undertake in the near future.

The financing of programs and projects is a priority task for the Area, as it is for the entire IHR. The portfolio of projects is making it possible to better organize the management of funds and the diversification of funding sources.

4. AREA OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The Area of Public Institutions is made up of three programs:

4.1 The Ombudsmen and Human Rights Program

This Program executes activities that are the responsibility of the IIHR in its capacity as the Technical Secretariat of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsman (FIO). In doing so, it achieves two main objectives: the development of training entities specializing in human rights targeted at the staff and advisors of ombudsmen's offices and national human rights commissioners and commissions; and the promotion of and collaboration in the process of creating similar institutions in those countries where they do not exist.

In order to consolidate the work already carried out, it is recommended that the function that the IIHR performs as the Technical Secretariat of the FIO be strengthened in order to support the work of the Federation in organizing activities, specific projects, technical missions, training courses, academic actions and the preparation of informational documents.

Hence the program should consider developing a professional profile of the staff of ombudsmen's offices, so as to extend its training activities to the potential personnel of such institutions in countries where they have been created by law but an ombudsman has not yet been appointed; Nicaragua, Panama, Bolivia and Paraguay are cases in point. By doing so it would be providing training and at the same time supporting the development of the institution in the region.

Another immediate priority, consistent with the IIHR's efforts to make the scope of its activities truly inter-American, should be the incorporation of ombudsmen's offices in the Caribbean into its activities.

4.2 The Administration of Justice Program

This program is making a systematic contribution to the review of administration of justice systems, and of their norms and practices, in the light of human rights. It carries out its work through three fields of action: the analysis of domestic legislation in relation to the immediate applicability of the norms of the international law of human rights; the training of judges, officials and the direct operators of administration of justice systems; and support to the institutional strengthening of said systems.

The IIHR considers that significant success has been achieved at the political level by sensitizing the operators of justice administration systems, judges and magistrates to the importance of updating laws in order to bring them into line with the modern currents of human rights doctrine. Furthermore, it has

contributed to making the ethical principles of fundamental rights an integral part of participatory democracy. Consequently, the program clearly needs to be expanded and strengthened.

An increasing number of projects are being executed, but the coverage of the program needs to be extended by strengthening its presence in South America and incorporating the countries of the Caribbean and Mexico.

4.3 The Security Forces, Human Rights and Democracy Program

The purpose of this program is to integrate human rights issues and democratic principles into the educational systems of military and police academies. It also provides training through seminars and technical assistance.

Thanks to the IIHR's proven experience in this field, it was invited by the US Army's Southern Command to co-sponsor the last two regional conferences on armed forces and human rights.

Without wishing to underestimate the importance of the invitation from the Southern Command in any way, the fact is that the situation has changed. The organization of regional fora is no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and the Program should now begin to gear its efforts to the specific situation in each country. A first attempt has already been made to do so, with the donor agency being asked to amend the existing cooperation agreement so that the funds may be reallocated and used for a technical assistance project for the Guatemalan army.

The Institute's Management Committee is also considering restructuring the Program and dividing it into two separate components -one for the police and another for the military.

The IIHR team also believes that the Security Forces, Human Rights and Democracy Program could enhance the project on citizen security that is being executed by the Civil Society Area. This would also contribute to the efforts to promote interaction among the different Areas of the Institute.

5. Integrated Programs

The introduction of "integrated plans" is designed to permit, among other things, greater interaction among the Institute's programs and thus make better use of its technical, logistical and financial resources. The aim is also to achieve a significant impact on the populations of specific countries by offering them higher quality products. A project of this kind is already being executed in Guatemala, and the appropriate strategies are now being designed for Paraguay, Haiti and Brazil.

6. The need to make the activities of the IIHR truly inter-American

One of the points raised by the evaluators concerns the concentration of activities executed by the Institute in Central America. There is no question that this is a real problem, but in recent years the IIHR has taken important steps to correct the situation. It should be borne in mind, however, that the efforts to make the work of the Institute truly inter-American cannot be gauged exclusively in terms of the place where events are held, since many inter-American workshops, seminars and courses are held in Central American countries to reduce costs or due to logistical considerations.

In securing funds from international cooperation agencies, one of the goals should be to increase the geographical scope of activities, seeking donors that focus on other subregions besides Central America.

VI. Recommendations for institutional development and to enhance the management of the Institute

1. Institutional development

The IIHR is aware of the importance of working to achieve the highest possible level of institutional development. This task should involve not only the directors but the entire staff of the institution. In its future negotiations with key donors, the Institute should press for the approval of more institutional funds or funds not earmarked for specific activities, as well as resources to be used specifically for institutional development. Not all cooperation agencies can be asked to do this, but in the case of those that do make provision for expenditure of this kind, the IIHR can offer the right operating structure and organizational culture.

As the evaluators pointed out, the help of the members of the Board of Directors can be very useful in this regard. This has been demonstrated by the participation of several of them in the evaluation process and the good results achieved in the past when they were assigned specific tasks. The Board of Directors and the Permanent Commission are *always* a great help as far as the executive management of the institution is concerned.

2. Executive leadership and planning capacity of the IIHR

The reactivation of the Management Committee which has met periodically since September 1996, has so far proven to be a very timely strategic decision. However, the wisdom of this decision should not be viewed in isolation. The Civil Society and Public Institutions Areas recently conducted a review of their plans and projects and defined their short and medium-term strategic objectives. Following the appointments made in Education and CAPEL, both areas are reformulating their operating frameworks.

In some cases this process calls for the available human resources to be reassigned to the tasks defined as a priority for each area in order to make more efficient use of the personnel and allow them to apply their skills in the areas for which they are best suited and qualified.

The delegation of responsibilities should not result in a loss of control. The idea is that the directors should be allowed to devote more time to the strategic planning of their respective areas and to supervising the tasks executed by the staff and external consultants. The aim is to ensure that the directors do not get bogged down in operational details, as this is the responsibility of the program officers.

Another advantage is that the area directors will be in a better position to assist the Executive Director with the integrated strategic planning of the work of the IIHR, general supervision and control over the execution of the budget (both institutional expenditure and the resources of each project). They will also be able to devote more time to the Institute's relations with its donors and beneficiaries.

There is always a danger, however, that the members of the Management Committee could be overwhelmed by the scope and magnitude of the work that they are asked to take on, confusing operating/routine tasks with management by strategic objectives, which is its real function.

3. Institutional learning

One of the evaluators' most important recommendations concerns the desirability of sharing the results of institutional learning with the entire staff of the IIHR. The training of the personnel should be consolidated as a permanent practice and a growing source of expertise. This not only represents the historical memory of the institution but also a permanent training tool that benefits everyone, including the beneficiaries of the projects executed.

The IIHR specializes in human rights education, which includes both promotion and technical assistance. Given that new knowledge is constantly being generated in this field, the importance of the IIHR's team of professionals having access to better training cannot be overstated. If its officials become more professional, the quality of their products will be enhanced, and the IIHR will thus be better placed to pass on the specialized knowledge produced by its own personnel.

The coordination of this training, combined with benchmarking to identify the way in which institutions similar to the IIHR manage their training processes, could be entrusted to the Education Area, given the expertise that it has acquired in the

field of pedagogical assistance, and its contacts with entities and individuals who could provide advisory assistance.

The first steps in this direction have already been taken with the organization of fora for the entire staff with experts and consultants who visit the institution. Advantage is also taken of other opportunities, such as the scholarships awarded to the IIHR that have enabled some officials to attend human rights courses. The IIHR has also continued the policy of earmarking part of the funds allocated for institutional development for staff training. For example, courses have been organized on the use of new computer software and Internet.

A proposal is presently being studied that entails the organization of periodic assemblies of the entire professional staff. If the topic addressed at each event were to be carefully selected and presentations prepared beforehand, a series of academic fora with rich, participatory discussions could be a useful professional training tool.

4. Communications and information policy

As the evaluators pointed out, the Institute needs a communications and information policy to enable it to reach different constituencies and disseminate knowledge in formal and informal fora.

5. Human resources

One of the Directorate's priorities in this area has been to improve the working conditions of the staff. The most recent developments include the drafting of a set of staff rules incorporating all the guidelines issued and agreements reached on labor matters and establishing an internal procedure for settling labor disputes, and the adoption of a new salary policy, fixing a salary scale for each category in accordance with the duties performed, professional qualifications, experience, and so forth. Although it has not been possible to eliminate some salary inequalities entirely, steps have been taken to ensure that the gap does not widen and that they will not reoccur in the future. A competitive procedure for filling vacant positions at the Institute has also been implemented.

6. Other functions

The evaluators recommend that the IIHR fill the position of Deputy Executive Director, which has been vacant since August 1996. This post existed in the IIHR for many years and is provided for in its bylaws. Mr. Cox and Mr. Shifter suggest that the position be filled, but that new roles and duties be assigned to it.

The IIHR teams agrees that these functions (planning, guidance in learning, etc.) are badly, even urgently, needed. Therefore, it proposes that the Institute

explicitly incorporate them into its organizational chart. However, the team does not believe that they justify the reactivation of a post that it regards, for the time being, as unnecessary. Instead, these functions could be distributed among the existing directors, as suggested in several passages of this report. For example, the role of learning officer could be assigned to the Director of the Education Area, and strategic planning to a team led by the Director of Research and Development.

Primary responsibility for fundraising should rest with the Executive Director, with the active participation of all the area directors, as is now the case. The IIHR team agrees in principle with the evaluators on the need to hire a fundraiser or development officer who would devote his/her time exclusively to this task but, for the reasons given below, it does not feel that the person appointed should be a member of the Management Committee.

The decision to strengthen the Management Committee rather than filling the vacant post of Deputy Executive Director continues to be the right one. For the present, appointing a new deputy, even with well-defined responsibilities, would not only increase costs unnecessarily but unduly stratify decision making and undermine the role of the Management Committee as a collective organ for planning and execution. The IIHR team considers that a better (and financially more viable) solution would be to divide up the functions defined in the report of evaluators Cox and Shifter among the present group of directors.

7. Financial and accounting controls

A pressing concern of the IIHR's senior management team is the updating of the software used for financial and accounting control. However, the fact that these systems become obsolete very rapidly means that it is impossible for the Institute to always be up-to-date. Nonetheless, an effort is being made to overcome this problem.

8. Management of funds

The evaluation process has already produced some important results for the IIHR in this area. One of these was a study on the way in which the Institute has traditionally managed fundraising, accounting procedures and the generation of academic and financial reports for its donors. This document also includes a brief analysis of the trends in international cooperation in this field.¹

¹ Directorate of Research and Development - IIHR, *El IIDH y la búsqueda de Recursos Financieros: Estado Actual, Proceso Interno de Gestión de Fondos, y Algunas Tendencias de la Cooperación Internacional para el Trabajo en Derechos Humanos Hacia el Final del Siglo*, March 10, 1997, as appendix 4.

As stated in the document, the IIHR has been very successful in securing funds for the execution of its projects and in maintaining the level of resources over the years. While it is true that the Institute could execute more projects if it had more funds, it has undoubtedly grown significantly in a relatively short period of time. It is important to consider the reasons for this relative success, in order to ensure that these practices are continued. Some of the key factors are as follows:

- academic approach and emphasis on training strategies to focus on the problems of human rights in a changing and violent setting;
- the continuity of the membership of the Board of Directors and the academic independence of the IIHR's specialized programs; and
- skill in facilitating pluralist participation;
- the exchange of different ideas and opposing positions; and the transparent and competent administration of resources.

Although the IIHR receives funds from a variety of sources, its annual budget depends on the contributions of a few key donors. The funding strategy instituted by the new Executive Director in the first six months of his administration (September 1996-April 1997) entails the consolidation of relations with the principal donors so that they increase or at least maintain their contribution during the next funding cycle. For example, two major one-day meetings were held at the IIHR with representatives of European cooperation agencies to present the Institute's perception of the situation vis-à-vis human rights and democracy in the region, outline the plans drawn up for the short and medium term and elicit the views of the representatives of said agencies. The directors have also carried out a series of visits to the offices of these donors.

A process was also instituted to identify potential funding sources and initial contacts have been made with a view to formalizing relations with entities interested in financing human rights and democracy projects, such as the IDB and the UNDP, which do not figure among our principal donors.

Traditionally, our fundraising efforts have focused on specific donations for certain projects, most of which do not last longer than 12-18 months. During the evaluation process, and at the meeting of the Board of Directors, the need to formulate a long-term fundraising strategy was recognized. As the experts note in their report, such a strategy should form part of the IIHR's long-term planning. In the meantime a number of measures have been adopted in this regard. Firstly, program officers are being encouraged to take on, as part of their duties, the task of identifying potential donors interested in the particular area of work in which they are involved. In the past each Director endeavored to secure funds for his/her area; now the idea is that they coordinate their efforts with their colleagues on the Management Committee. The Executive Director continues to be heavily involved in the securing of funds, but now endeavors to involve the

Management Committee and the Grants Unit, and others, in each initiative. At the level of the Board of Directors, a Permanent Committee for Finance and Fundraising was created at the meeting in 1996 and its members have periodically provided sound advice to the Executive Director.

The Institute's senior management team is aware that it does not possess all the experience and training needed for it to efficiently secure financial resources, particularly bearing in mind the evaluators' assertion that "fundraising has become a very sophisticated specialty." Accordingly, consensus exists on the need to hire, as a permanent member of the staff, an expert in fundraising who would be responsible for designing a long-term fundraising strategy and executing it once it has been approved.

The unique nature of the IIHR means that this task cannot be entrusted to just any professional, however brilliant his or her record. The Institute should be particularly selective in hiring such a person, inasmuch as the expert's previous performance at other organizations, even those with mandates similar to that of the IIHR, does not necessarily guarantee his or her identification with the Institute's academic approach to the problems and needs in the human rights field.

The collaboration of a solid professional in broadening the funding base of the IIHR promises to be an excellent investment; however, it does not mean that the senior management team will be less involved since this task depends, in large measure, on the relationship that exists between this group and the representatives of the cooperation agencies, and on their detailed knowledge of all the Institute's program areas, which cannot be easily transferred. Moreover, it is probable that new donors will wish to deal primarily with the Executive Director or another member of the Management Committee.

At present, the Institute does not possess the funds to hire such a person. Therefore, if the decision is taken to create this position, the resources will have to be guaranteed in future donations or savings made in other budget items. The latest renewal of funds for the Center for Educational Resources contains a budget item for the hiring of a fundraising expert to ensure that continued funding will be available for this program in the future. Negotiations are at an advanced stage in this regard, and the prospects look good. It is hoped that this exercise will prove to be a valuable learning experience for the institution and test the ability of the directors to work with an expert in this area.

The remaining option, at least for the time being and until such time as the right person is found, is that the directors continue to perform this task. Here also, the members of the Board of Directors could contribute by facilitating access to new sources of funding, not only on account of their solid reputations as intellectuals and academics committed to the advancement of human rights, but also

because they are familiar with a very extensive, worldwide network. Indeed, some members of the Board have wide experience in formulating projects designed to satisfy the requirements of specific donors. In the past they have shared their skills and expertise with the personnel, but this has not been a systematic or sustained process.

Over the years the Institute has been fairly tolerant of the donors' attempts to "direct" the programs to some extent. In order to correct this problem, the IIHR has endeavored to set its priorities in terms of what it regards as important for human rights and democracy and then seek the necessary funding.

The IIHR realizes that there is an imbalance in the levels of funding for the different projects and that efforts must be made to narrow this gap. If the allocation for institutional support were to make up a larger slice of the total budget, part of these funds could be used for projects in which the Institute is interested but that at a given moment in time do not enjoy sufficient financial support. The IIHR's intention is that all its programs be conceived as promoting a specific line of action for all of Latin America and the Caribbean, so that the funding of activities is not restricted by geographic considerations.

Ideally, the Institute should have a more diversified funding base, even within a single program or area, so as to avoid the impasses that occur when one funding cycle ends and the next stage has not been approved. With sufficient support, the Institute could plan, with a long-term perspective, more equitable remuneration and greater benefits for its staff. However, these are goals that can only be achieved over time. A longer-term fundraising strategy, with the help of a development officer and the commitment of the Board of Directors, could help to achieve them.

VII. Conclusions

The Cox-Shifter report contains important proposals concerning modifications to the structure and programs of the IIHR, to which the Institute's evaluation team has endeavored to respond in this report. The ideas generated by this experiment and the recommendations made should be implemented wherever feasible and appropriate. As was made clear during our deliberations in January and March, the exercise in which we took part was not a planning effort nor a first step toward the reorganization of the Institute's structures. It was an evaluation and, as such, intended primarily to be a major effort to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our work and to determine how to consolidate the former and correct the latter.

The next logical step would be to act on our recommendations and those of Mr. Cox and Mr. Shifter. Therefore, the recommendations should be communicated to those who are in a position to act on them and propose a plan. We suggest the following steps:

- Forward this report and the Cox-Shifter report to USAID and to the representatives of other donors who have participated in the evaluation exercise;
- Forward both reports to the members of the Board of Directors and seek their opinions;
- Make both available to the staff of the IIHR so that they can also offer suggestions;
- That the Management Committee draft a program for the implementation of the different recommendations contained in both reports, including reforms to the current organizational structure of the IIHR;
- That the Executive Director submit for the consideration of the next meeting of the Permanent Commission the draft program mentioned in the previous paragraph;
- That the Permanent Commission determine which aspects of said program should be submitted for the consideration of the Board of Directors and which could be implemented directly by the Executive Directorate;
- That the Permanent Commission draw up a timetable for implementing the recommendations; and

- That the Executive Directorate put into effect the recommendations of the Permanent Commission and notify all the interested parties (donors, IHR staff and the members of the Board).

Finally, we wish to state that the experience of participating in this evaluation confirmed that we are part of an entity that enjoys a well-deserved prestige and reputation in our field, and that we are proud to be part of it. The experience has also made us aware of the difficulties and challenges that lie ahead for human rights work in our hemisphere. The greatest challenge concerns the enormous expectations deposited in the Institute by the governments and the civil society and educational institutions dedicated to the advancement and defense of human rights in our hemisphere. It is our hope that with this report we will contribute to the effort to better equip the Institute to respond to these needs.

San Jose, June 1997.