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Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis
in USAID/Honduras

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Executive Summary

This report concerns USAID/Honduras' current support for the collection and analysis of quantitative data to 1) meet program and project information needs and 2) to develop the capacities of GOH ministries to use quantitative data for administrative and planning purposes. Information for this report was obtained from interviews with twenty USAID/Honduras staff and contractors. This report is one in a series of six which will be used to develop a typology of USAID mission capacity for in-house data use and for facilitating data use in host country ministries. The main findings of the report are as follows:

- 1) USAID/Honduras has made extensive use of quantitative data and analysis for project and program purposes. In this regard, the mission represents a model for improvement of data related activities for other USAID missions. Factors which have facilitated data use in the mission include: a) adequate funding and staffing for data related activities; b) mission director and office chiefs who have generally supported data use; c) analytically skilled staff; d) the installation of a mini-computer in the mission; e) the availability of competent local contractors; and f) the GOH's interest in and tolerance for various data collection efforts.
- 2) The 1978 Agriculture Sector Assessment has been of substantial utility in mission activities. The proposed update needs to balance limiting the effort to areas of special interest to the mission and

the GOH and incorporating plans for acquiring data from the update that have been built into project designs.

3) Because of staff changes in GOH ministries and in the mission itself, it is uncertain whether plans for baseline and follow-up data collection can be carried out. The mission and the Agency as well need to consider whether too much emphasis has been placed on data collection at the project level and not enough on periodic sector assessments to evaluate development impact.

4) The capacity of GOH ministries for data collection and analysis is limited. Staff changes due to changes in government plus heightened emphasis on immediate project impact have complicated mission efforts to build the institutional capacity of GOH ministries. USAID/Honduras is funding projects which barring a sudden change in government will lead to better data use in the Ministries of Education, Health and Natural Resources.

5) Data for program purposes has been far less problematic than it has been for other USAID missions because of a) the availability of and access to necessary data and b) the GOH's cooperation in providing data to the mission, interest in data collection and tolerance of data collection even on sensitive issues.

6) To continue sound use of quantitative data in the mission, a key staff person who had been providing in-house technical assistance but was transferred needs to be replaced by someone with comparable skills. The capacity of and access to the mission's computer should be re-evaluated to guarantee its adequacy.

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USAID/Honduras

Overview

USAID/Honduras has a direct hire staff of thirty, a foreign national staff of thirty-nine and an annual budget of \$30 million which in recent years has been augmented by ESF funds. Given the size (i.e., area and population) of Honduras, the mission's scale of operations in the country is comparable to that of much larger USAID missions. USAID/Honduras is exceptional in terms of a USAID mission's support for data related activities. For a number of years the mission has funded various data collection efforts and has made substantial use of socio-economic data for project design and program planning. Several current projects will generate additional data useful to both the mission and the GOH.

The principal factors which have made possible USAID/Honduras' use of quantitative data include:

- 1) The mission has had adequate funding and staffing necessary for supporting data collection and analysis efforts. Though mission staff describe USAID/Honduras as a large program operating in a small country, it has not been so large as to become unmanageable. That is, funding has not been so excessive that mission staff are overwhelmed by project implementation problems or by obligating money on schedule, such as is the case in USAID/Egypt, for example.
- 2) Mission directors and office chiefs have generally recognized the utility and importance of generating and maintaining essential

data bases for mission operations. The support of senior management has led to a more sustained involvement with data related activities and better use of quantitative data than is generally found in other missions.

3) USAID/Honduras' staff included one individual with quantitative analytic skills who, in addition to other responsibilities, provided in-house technical assistance to a number of projects which involved data collection and analysis. This person had the ability to interpret the results of statistical analyses into forms of information (e.g., policy options) that mission staff and GOH officials could understand and use.

4) USAID/Honduras was one of the first missions to acquire its own computer facility and has received considerable assistance from USAID/Washington and, in particular, SER/DM to make the system operational for word and data processing.

5) Unlike other missions which confront a dearth of competent local contractors, USAID/Honduras has a number of experienced consulting firms it can rely on to conduct surveys and analyses.

6) Perhaps most important is the GOH's appreciation of the importance of data and analysis for administrative and planning purposes. The GOH has been very open to the collection of social and economic data which other governments would not have permitted. Moreover, the GOH has been genuinely interested in improving its data bases

and has cooperated with the mission in making data available to it. In short, USAID/Honduras' involvement with data related activities has resulted from or been possible because of a combination of factors, some of which the Agency can influence (i.e., 1-4) while others are fortuitous (5 and 6).

Improvements still need to be made in building the institutional capacity of GOH ministries for better use and some problems have recently arisen which could negatively affect data use within the mission. Despite the GOH's support for data collection and analysis, some ministries have very little capacity for such work. This inadequacy has been prolonged by changes in Honduras' government which have led to ministry staff changes at upper and middle levels. The mission currently has projects underway which will attempt to expand the capacities of the Ministries of Education, Health and Natural Resources to collect and analyze data for administrative and planning purposes. However, the success of these projects is contingent upon the present government retaining office and maintaining political stability within the country. Political considerations have recently (over the past year or two) led ministry officials to place greater emphasis on the immediate development impact of projects. Some ministries are now unwilling to allow sufficient time for necessary data collection and analysis before taking action. Such heightened action orientation could have the effect of eroding the GOH's past support for data related activities.

Changes within the mission could also affect data use. The staff person instrumental in past data collection and analysis efforts was unexpectedly transferred for personal security reasons. Someone with equivalent skills has not as yet been appointed to fill this individual's position. Project officers and other mission staff who do not have adequate technical skills are now without the support they previously received. Second, access to the mission's computer had to be restricted due to security concerns. This has substantially reduced data processing within the mission, altered plans for using the mission's computer for project analyses and interrupted GOH staff training. Moreover, during normal working hours when computer services are available, word processing and financial management programs consume most if not all of the system's operating capacity. The mission will have to at least partially resolve these problems if it is to continue making extensive use of quantitative data in program and project activities.

1. Rural Development

1.1 Agriculture Sector Assessment

In 1978 USAID/Honduras published the Agriculture Sector Assessment for Honduras. The Assessment was undertaken to assist the GOH with its agriculture policy determinations and to provide the mission with information for developing its sector strategy for the 1978-1983 period. Between 1976 and 1978, twenty-three individual

studies were conducted including a sample survey of more than two thousand small farmers. The studies drew upon a wealth of existing information contained in previous analyses of Honduran agriculture and the rural sector. For the most part, the studies were diagnostic; that is, they dealt principally with present constraints to increased agricultural production, better utilization of natural resources and increased income for the rural population. Their findings constitute the core of the Assessment: they summarized available information (what already existed combined, in some cases, with more recent data from special studies); provided concise descriptions of key factors affecting agricultural production; and suggested tentative policy options for overcoming existing problems. The Assessment reviewed Honduras' Development Plan for 1974 - 1978 for its adequacy in the following areas: level and composition of public investment, agricultural production, land use, agrarian reform, agricultural institutions, decentralization, delivery of public services, infrastructure, human resource development, credit, marketing and pricing, agricultural inputs, research and development, and control of post-harvest losses. Special studies evaluated GOH production targets, estimated production and current trends for each major crop. Constraints affecting production targets were discussed in terms of the different impact they had on traditional farmers (peasants as compared to small or medium

commercial farmers). The assessment commented on the appropriateness of the GOH's agricultural strategy; its capacity to meet proposed objectives; factors which would impede progress toward these goals; and policy or strategy options the GOH might consider as alternative solutions. The Assessment also identified six principal areas where USAID/Honduras should concentrate its efforts:

1) Human Resource Development - training for middle level GOH ministry staff with greater emphasis on specialized, out-of-country education; in service training for Ministry of Natural Resources staff, improvement of training programs for rural women and farmers.

2) Organizational Improvement - numerous organizational problems affect the operation of the various GOH agencies involved with agricultural development; the most important are: overlapping assignments, duplication of functions and fragmented jurisdictions; organizational reform necessary to improve the delivery of government services to farmers.

3) Small Farmer Infrastructure - the Assessment recommended that USAID/Honduras should continue to support the construction of basic infrastructure systems which would directly benefit small farmers.

4) Nutrition Improvement on the Farm - agricultural projects should promote home gardening raising chickens and rabbits, and establishing tree nurseries to improve the diet of farm families.

5) Agricultural Research - IADS working with the GOH identified strengths and weaknesses of existing research activities and outlined plans for improving agricultural research and agricultural research stations in Honduras.

6) Technology Adaptation and Delivery - a lack of appropriate technology for small farmers contributes to low productivity; USAID/Honduras was advised to sponsor a project to develop and distribute light capital (i.e., low cost) agricultural implements to small farmers.

The Assessment recommended that USAID/Honduras' Sector Strategy emphasize the following points: 1) concentrate on improving the delivery of agricultural goods and services to small farmers (as opposed to focusing exclusively on the landless); 2) develop the institutional capacity of the GOH for improved policy analysis and planning; and 3) improve the dissemination of information and appropriate technology to small farmers to increase their production and, hence, their incomes.

The Socio-economic Profile of Small Farms was one of the studies undertaken for the Assessment and has proven to be of particular utility to the mission. The Profile contributed to refining the mission's understanding of problems affecting small farmers. This in turn has assisted in designing projects which

will more effectively reach small farmers. Data for the Profile were collected in two stages. In 1976 the American Technology Assistance Corporation (ATAC) conducted a survey of 1086 small farmers in the North, South and East regions of the country. The survey pertained to the 1975 production year and covered land tenure arrangements, production input and output measures and quality of life indicators. In 1977 USAID/Honduras and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) replicated the survey in the West Central, East Central and West regions. 987 additional farmers were interviewed using ATAC's 1976 questionnaire. The two surveys then provided a nation wide data base on the conditions and operations of small farms. The data were used by the mission for a target group analysis more precise than was previously possible.

The Profile defined three main beneficiary groups within the rural population: rural laborers (landless and near-landless), traditional small farmers (those with less than thirty-five hectares), and agrarian reform farmers (those in government sponsored cooperatives and asentamientos). According to 1974 Agriculture Census data, it is estimated that these three categories contain approximately 300,000 families. Labor, on-farm employment, capital investment, debt and credit, land use, crop mix, farm technology, production, productivity, profitability, marketing, off-farm income, access to technical assistance, participation in cooperatives,

the quality of life, education and total household income were analyzed by size of landholding and region. The Profile was able to distinguish the major constraints to increased farm production according to size of holding (i.e., less than 3 ha., 3-5 ha., and 5-35 ha.) and by farmer sub-group (i.e., laborers, traditional farmers and agrarian reform farmers).

The general utility of sector assessments and the role they should play in meeting USAID/Washington and mission information needs warrants more careful consideration by the Agency. A fuller discussion of periodic sector assessments as an alternative to the present emphasis placed on data collection at the project level especially for evaluations goes beyond the scope of this report but will be taken up in a concluding discussion paper about mission capacity for data related activities. Suffice it to say at this point that the Agriculture Sector Assessment has provided USAID/Honduras with much useful information. Though the Assessment was designed to be an analysis of selected aspects of Honduran agriculture, as opposed to a broader evaluation of the rural economy (i.e., agricultural and non-agricultural production), the information it presented has been used throughout the mission. For example, the target group analysis has been used by project design teams and in the mission's CDSSs. Some of these uses were not

anticipated by those who designed the Assessment. Furthermore, the studies contained in the Assessment serve as a point of reference for evaluating agricultural development since 1978. The Socio-economic Profile will allow measuring changes and improvements in the condition of small farmers, for example. In other words, USAID/Honduras is capable of complying with Agency demands for program evaluations which are based on demonstrable development impact. The mission is currently planning an update to the Assessment. Some staff argue that the update should be focused in on selected issues and smaller/ scope than the 1978 Assessment. Their reasoning is that the Assessment was designed to identify existing problems and delineate possible strategies for addressing them. Some changes have occurred in the past five years and what the mission needs is to concentrate on problematic areas since the basic issues are now well understood. However, several on-going projects have planned on the Agriculture Sector Update to provide data which will pertain to their specific needs. The mission needs to take this into consideration and not limit the update to the extent that these other information needs are excluded.

1.2 Agriculture Sector II

The agriculture office of USAID/Honduras is currently supporting several projects which will upgrade the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and other

GOH ministries involved with agriculture for data collection, analysis and policy development. The Information and Planning section of Agriculture Sector II - the mission's sector strategy initiated in 1980 - follows directly from the recommendations of the 1978 Sector Assessment.

One major activity involves both the National Statistics Office (which is responsible for Honduras' census) and the Statistics Department of the MNR. The project involves strengthening these units' capacities for conducting quarterly agricultural surveys. The surveys are five pages in length and collect data on area under production, expected yields of rice, corn beans and sorghum, and other basic input - output farm activities. Some three thousand interviews are conducted quarterly; however, the entire procedure - processing, analyzing and reporting - is all done manually. Therefore, there are plans to computerize the system. At the very least, this will reduce the turn-around time between collecting the data and producing simple reports.

A second component of improving the collection and analysis of agricultural data is the introduction of an area frame sampling method using aerial photographs. The area frame sample will replace the list frame sample (based on census data) that had been used. Based on aerial photographs, agricultural land will be categorized

according to present use. This will produce a sampling frame from which samples stratified by land use can be drawn. The area frame samples will provide more accurate and timely data probably at lower cost (setting aside initial start-up costs - i.e., generating a complete set of up-to-date photographs, staff training, equipment, etc.). Progress to date has been made in three out of seven planning regions. The sampling frame has been constructed for the southern region which served as a pilot for the project and is approximately eighty percent complete for two other regions. As for the four other regions, the aerial photography is almost complete. Ministry staff are being trained to use, maintain and update the sampling frames. Some vehicles and other equipment are also be acquired to expedite producing the quarterly reports.

The agriculture office is supervising a centrally funded project on the consumption effects of agricultural policies. Three Hondurans have been hired who have the necessary quantitative analytic skills and who are experienced in working with the MNR. They are first concentrating on the Southern region but there are plans to expand the analysis at a later date to include the entire country. The project will develop econometric models of supply and demand elasticities taking into account production targets and price policies of the GOH. Farm level data, such as credit and agricultural inputs (amount and cost), combined with farmgate prices, marketing, transportation costs and consumer prices will be used to generate regional and then national estimates

of the impact of price changes on nutritional status. According to mission staff, the project team should have constructed the necessary models and other simulations to produce these estimates by Spring 1984. It is unclear, however, how this information will be incorporated into government policies and what decisions will actually be affected by it. An early indication of this problem was the unsuccessful attempt to coordinate this project with the Ministry of Health, MNR, CONSUPLANE (Ministry of Planning) and SAPLAN (a USAID funded nutrition planning unit). Periodic technical meetings were to be held to brief ministry staff on the project's progress. For various reasons, the ministries have not been interested in participating and this will reduce the input the project might otherwise have had into ministry planning.

The Technical Agricultural Statistics Committee has been much more successful. The Committee is an inter-ministry body consisting of staff from the MNR, the Central Bank, CONSUPLANE, INA (a semi-autonomous land reform agency) and the IHMA (an autonomous government marketing agency). After some unfortunate personnel problems at the start, the committee has made significant progress toward rationalizing the collection of agricultural data and, in some instances, coordinating data collection activities. For example, the Central Bank and CONSUPLANE had been collecting livestock data. Because of their overlapping information needs, they

have been able to pool their efforts in this area. An equally important accomplishment has been keeping these ministries and agencies informed about what data is currently available and what will be collected.

It should be added that the agriculture office will play a central role in planning the update of the 1978 Sector Assessment. As of November 1982, the office's staff was involved with determining what the content of the update should be given data which have (or have not) become available in the interim. The agriculture officer most involved with data collection and analysis activities pointed out that the 1978 Assessment did not get very good production and income data and that this might be an area which should receive greater attention in the update. There is also some concern about coordinating data needs of other projects with the update. This same person noted that Agriculture Sector I has never been thoroughly evaluated; now Sector II is approaching its conclusion. The 1983 update could, therefore, provide some basis for a sector strategy evaluation.

The problems the agriculture office has encountered in matters related to data use are worth mentioning at this point because other USAID/Honduras offices and projects have experienced similar difficulties. The change in government that occurred in January 1982 adversely affected data related activities. Ministry officials

who had supported efforts to improve data bases were replaced by others who were not as interested in the activity . With the exception of the Ministry of Education, this was the most commonly cited problem that projects attempting to improve the planning capacities of GOH ministries have encountered. Agriculture office staff report that a significant curtailment in the time perspective of MNR officials has also resulted from the change in government. The former head of the CONSUPLANE, who had been supportive of data collection efforts, now heads the MNR. However, in this new position, he is unwilling to wait more than several months to obtain information for decision-making purposes which is simply unrealistic in many instances. The GOH perceives the MNR as one of its more action oriented ministries. The MNR is under pressure to implement projects which have an immediate social or economic impact. The political implications of such a perspective should be obvious in light of the violence and instability in the region. Ministry staff at middle levels have also been fired or shuffled around as a result of the change in government. This has had an adverse effect on training programs. Staff who received training were reassigned or fired. This situation is indicative of the poor use of skilled staff found in a number of GOH ministries and only perpetuates the limited analytic capabilities of the government units. Because of these problems - i.e., instability in the ministries,

immediate impact orientation, poor use of staff and limited analytic capacity - projects trying to provide better information to the ministries for decision-making purposes, such as the Consumption Effects of Agriculture Policy mentioned above, have encountered some difficulties.

1.3 Rural Technologies Project

The Rural Technologies project addresses one of the priority areas identified by the 1978 Sector Assessment - technology development, adaptation and delivery. The mission obligated \$9 million to 1) increase the efficiency of land and labor use with light capital implements (e.g., hand tools); 2) increase industrial productivity and employment through improved production techniques and better management systems in existing enterprises as well as establish new pilot industries; and 3) adapt appropriate technologies for the rural poor to improve their overall quality of life. In other words, the project is designed to reduce technological constraints affecting the productive activities of small farmers, small scale enterprises and poor rural households in general. For example, capital intensive technologies are not suitable for small farms because many farmers do not have access to credit nor does their limited production warrant costly capital investments. But by providing them with inexpensive farm implements, their production of cash crops can be increased with little cost. Similarly, small

enterprises which are estimated to number some 75,000 employing approximately 175,000 workers could increase their production if they used better manufacturing or processing techniques and followed better management practices. Therefore, project inputs will include tools, information about improved production systems or improved farm practices and other technologies suitable for conditions in Honduras which are labor intensive, involve low capital investment per worker and conserve natural resources.

To effectively assist small scale enterprises, information about their current practices and economic situation was needed. Michigan State University working through a local consulting firm conducted a Small Industry Survey in four zones where the project was to be implemented (i.e., districts in the economically stagnant areas near El Salvador plus others in the central and eastern portions of the country). Using a cluster sample stratified by population size (i.e., large, medium and small), a set of census enumeration areas was selected. In each area, a complete inventory of all industries was made. Fourth year college students were used to interview the 2120 owners/operators of the establishments in these selected areas. Data on employment, capital assets equipment, socio-economic characteristics of the operators and their perceived problems were collected. A sub-sample of 540 were selected for a detailed study which involved bi-weekly interviews on the inputs and outputs of the enterprise. A USAID/Honduras

staffer with the assistance of MSU and a local programmer analyzed the data. Worker - machine ratios, capital investment per worker, stock and labor inputs, capital requirements, credit, production capacity, apprenticeship practices, characteristics of the entrepreneur, occupational mobility, motivation and work orientation of the operator, management practices, marketing and constraints to increased production were examined in terms of regional, industry type and labor input variation. This provided a thorough description of small enterprises which in turn helped identify appropriate technologies and information needed by entrepreneurs to increase production.

Despite the amount of data that was collected at the outset of the project, it appears unlikely that the planned evaluation of the project will be possible. According to the project paper, the small farmer component of the project should lead to increased production and income, better cultivation and soil conservation practices, decreased man hours per unit of production during peak labor periods, increased labor use during slack demand periods, and increased value and quantity of marketable products. For small scale enterprises, the impact of the project should be evident in increased production and income, increased employment, increased returns to capital and labor, a greater number of industries, greater value added to products and increased credit utilization.

It should be noted that some of the data on small farms was to be obtained from the anticipated update of the 1978 Agriculture Sector Assessment. Other data were to be collected with a follow-up survey, but this will probably not be conducted.

The change of government in 1982 produced important staff changes in the Center for Industrial Development. The Center now has no interest in undertaking a follow-up study or creating a longitudinal data base necessary to measure changes resulting from the project as planned. The technical assistance provided by MSU, which the current project manager described as very good, has been discontinued for various reasons (e.g., a turnover in staff). Local expertise in this area is very limited. Finally, a key USAID staff person who was instrumental in the data collection and analysis portions of the project had to be transferred of the country for security reasons. Most of these problems are beyond the control of any project manager. As a result, the current project manager admits that only if the present GOH staff working on this project reverse their views concerning the follow-up survey will the evaluation be conducted as initially planned.

1.4 Small Farmer Titling

The Agriculture Sector Assessment recommended that the GOH and USAID/Honduras give greater attention to improving the conditions of small farmers as a means for increasing agricultural

production. Approximately 75% of the total number of farms in Honduras are between 1 and 35 hectares in size and roughly 45% of all rural households live on farms of this size. However, it is estimated that out of the 400,00 rural families in Honduras, only some 3,700 to 3,800 hold title to the land they occupy. In other words, the vast majority of rural families occupy and work land to which they have insecure tenure. A major component of the GOH's Development Plan, therefore, is to extend fee simple titling to more than 100,000 small farmers between 1982 and 1986. To assist the GOH in this effort, USAID/Honduras has obligated \$12.5 million for the Small Farm Titling project.

The economic rationale for land titling stems from the short-fall in recent years of basic agricultural commodities. Low agricultural production has been outstripped by increased demand due to rapid population growth. The GOH views increased production to meet domestic demand and for export as an important goal. To raise production farmers need to invest in capital improvements on their farms and land titling is considered to be a strong impetus to do so. Land titling is supposed to encourage investment because ^{the farmer} / now has secure tenure over his land. Capital improvements will lead to increased production and, hence, increased income. Part of that income will be used for additional farm investments. Alternatively, some view land titling as essential to making the agricultural sector economically more efficient. That is, titling

allows the farmers to sell his land, thus creating a land market. Less efficient farmers will in time choose or be forced to sell their land which will ultimately be purchased by more efficient farmers. If these processes actually occur, titling is believed to produce a host of economic, social and political benefits.

The project will assist the National Agrarian Institute (INA) to develop a coordinated system for titling rural lands. The system will establish the legality of a claim, verify and register it, process necessary documentation and issue a registered land title. The INA plans to make this process as streamlined as possible. The agency itself will have to be expanded to meet the objective of issuing up to 15,000 titles per year. The INA will also improve its capacity to adjudicate contested land claims. Needless to say, the INA must walk a very thin line between contesting political views. Its official position has been that it will preserve the rights of private property while extending land ownership to legitimate claimants. The primary focus of land titling will be on small farmers who presently have access to land as opposed to large landholders, the landless and minifundistas. Most beneficiaries, therefore, will be working less than ten hectares.

The National Cadaster Program will provide the INA with data necessary for its operations. Some 3.2 million hectares will be surveyed, delineated and mapped by the program. The data will be

stored in a central computer. In many cases, this will be the first time the size and location of landholdings have been recorded for certain areas of the country. Though small farmers are the primary beneficiaries of the project, others could benefit as well. For example, aerial photographs and orthophoto maps have identified large sections of relatively good agricultural land the government did not know it held. This will assist the GOH in relocating landless laborers in productive areas. The survey could also provide useful data to the Forestry Development Corporation concerning exploitable areas throughout the country.

The project has only recently begun. A pilot study was made to help clarify the range of land tenure status arrangements in Honduras and their varying degrees of legality. Baseline data will be collected in the Spring/Summer of 1983 and will be modelled after a comparable study conducted in Costa Rica. The project manager is still grappling with what combination of local professionals, university staff and outside consultants would make the most effective team for the study. More important is the question of selecting the most appropriate survey methodology to obtain valid information about land tenure and land use. This will be critical if the evaluation standards specified in the project paper are to be met:

"In the final evaluation, special attention will be given to quantifying the effects of titling on economic and social behavior. The mission will be particularly interested in the effects of titling on access to credit, on patterns of production, and on the purchase, sale, rental and inheritance of properties. Trends in land sale prices and the consolidation of minifundia as well as breaking up of large properties as a result of market forces will be examined. The impact of titling on political and sociological patterns in the affected areas will also be included. Estimates of the project's impact on national income and wealth will be made."(1982:57)

These are very ambitious plans. At the very least, quantifying the effects of land titling will require that fairly detailed data be collected at the start of the project and at the conclusion. The LOGFRAME of the project cites census data, IHCAFE records and an INA follow-up evaluation. That assumes, of course, that the census is undertaken by the GOH and in time for use by the project.(There is some doubt about this by mission staff; they cite both economic and political reasons as possibly delaying plans for a census). It also assumes that the census will include the type of data the project needs. Keeping in mind the problems

that the Rural Technologies project has encountered with creating a longitudinal data base and conducting the proposed follow-up study by the appropriate COH agency, USAID/Honduras could find itself in the same situation for this project if the mission merely assumes that the INA will undertake the follow-up study as planned. On the other hand, the next Agriculture Sector Assessment could provide much useful data for the Titling project if such plans are incorporated into the proposed 1983 update.

1.5 Rural Housing

USAID/Honduras has funded an experimental project to provide healthier and more comfortable housing for the rural poor. The purpose of the project is to develop a system for making small loans available to the rural population. The loans will be made through the National Housing Institute (INVA) using local PVO's as intermediaries. The primary beneficiaries of the project will be those living in the rural outskirts of Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba who generally lack access to credit. Though housing is typically accorded a lower priority than other basic amenities by the poor, they will borrow to make minor home improvements if the loans are small and repayable in a short period of time. Rather than lending money directly to the poor, loans will first be made to PVO's at five percent interest. The PVO in turn will make sub-loans to individuals living in the areas where the PVO has been active

and is known by the community. The loans will range from L100 to L500 (US\$50 to \$250) and will be paid back within a maximum of twenty-four months. After repayment of a loan, the borrower is eligible for another and so on. Loans of this size and short duration are too small to be profitable to larger lending institutions. The PVOs, on the other hand, will set interest rates high enough to cover administrative costs as well as the five percent they must pay to the INVA. To obtain loans, the PVO must meet minimum standards of financial competency set by the INVA. PVOs participating in the project will receive staff training on basic accounting and loan management procedures. The system should become self-sustaining; that is, after providing the INVA with initial seed money, as loans are repaid, the money will be lent again and interest payments will cover administrative costs. Because the borrower/^{is} dealing with a PVO who knows the individual and will remain active in the community, defaults on loans are expected to be infrequent. The PVOs participating in the project thus far are small local organizations operating in only a few communities which adds to the personal relationship between lender and borrower.

This project should generate a significant amount of information as it progresses. The PVOs are developing socio-economic profiles about their borrowers. An evaluation is planned for July 1983

to determine what aspects of the project motivated individuals to borrow, what improvements they made and any side-effects of the project which were unanticipated. However, if the evaluation plans for the project are to be met, additional data will have to be collected. For example, the project paper states that a survey of beneficiaries might be necessary "...to determine the effects of the housing improvements in terms of improved health, attitude on life, and the general living conditions." (1981:56) An expected health improvement is a decrease in Chagas disease for those making housing improvements. Clearly this will require more data than that obtained from PVO records; in fact, to evaluate health impact, baseline data would be necessary and some comparison group to show improvements are possibly due to the project. But no baseline study of these conditions was conducted. An alternative approach which might be cheaper in the long run would be to do a comparative study of housing conditions in the communities where the project was implemented. A comparison would then be made between housing and health conditions of those who borrowed from the PVOs and those who did not. Though this does not control for a self-selection bias (i.e., those who borrow might be more attentive to housing in the first place, hence, their housing would be superior and more "healthy" than others in any case), it would serve as a rough estimate of project impact.

More important is imposing some system of data collection on the borrower profiles being developed by the PVOs. At present, eight PVOs are serving as intermediaries in the project. Each receives an administration course, but exactly how they keep their files and what information they collect about their borrowers is left to their own discretion. With eight PVOs, it would be possible for someone to review each set of records and synthesize a composite description of activities, borrowers, improvements, etc. However, the project manager reported that the number of participating PVOs could increase to as many as twenty. That is entirely too many to have going off on their separate courses in regard to record keeping and data collection to pull together at some later date. Thought should be given now to establishing a more uniform system that will produce identical data from each PVO and be readily amenable to computer entry for analysis. Anything short of that means missing a golden opportunity to satisfy project information needs with a minimum of additional effort and expenditure.

1.6 Rural Water and Sanitation

USAID/Honduras has obligated \$10.5 million for the construction of water supply and sanitation systems in rural communities. The project focusses on villages in the west and northwest sections of the country near the borders with El Salvador and Guatemala. The Ministry of Health and the National Sewer and Water Authority (SANA)

are the GOH implementing agencies. The goal is to expand access to and promote the use of safe (not necessarily potable) water and waste disposal facilities. The primary beneficiaries are estimated to number approximately 250,000 residents of communities with populations less than 2,000. Project funding will be used to construct 180 new gravity flow aqueducts,, twenty-five sewer systems, 32,000 latrines (both pit and water sealed), 3,000 wells with hand pumps and 50 piped water systems. In addition to the construction of these systems, the project will help the MOH and SANA develop their maintenance and service capacities. The project includes an education component to teach villagers about improved health behavior, promote their participation in the project and encourage proper use of the facilities. Field agents will also be trained who will assist community participation in the selection of systems, provision of labor and maintenance of the facilities.

A number of health benefits are expected to accrue from the project. The infant mortality rate, for example, is estimated to be 103 per 1000, one quarter of which is attributable to dehydration from diarrhea. Improved water quality and greater use of relatively clean water in the home is expected to reduce contamination of food. More frequent washing of hands before food preparation will contribute to this end. In general, the project paper states that there will be a reduced incidence of water-born diseases which will reduce

morbidity and mortality rates.

The project officer for Rural Water and Sanitation raised a very important issue in connection with the planned evaluation of the project. This person was very concerned about the prospect of conducting an elaborate data collection effort to show changes that can normally be assumed to occur from better health practices. I think these are very legitimate concerns and have much wider implications which go far beyond this particular project. For example, according to the LOGFRAME, the major benefit of this project - improved health conditions resulting in better public health - is to be empirically demonstrated using MOH records and special studies. These special studies will have to be very special indeed. They will require careful and elaborate data collection over time. Reliable and valid measures of the incidence of water-borne diseases - e.g., typhoid, diarrhea, dysentery - will have to be obtained (assuming that equally accurate measures of the incidence of these diseases before the start of the project are available). They will have to discriminate among diseases which symptomatically appear to be similar to the layman (e.g., diarrhea and dysentery). A comparison group outside of the project area will be necessary to control for general trends in health status of Hondurans during the course of the project. The same type of data will be needed for this group as well. To attribute measurable changes specifically to the project, there will

be
 have to /controls for other factors (e.g., projects which encourage rehydration for childrens' diarrhea) which could also account for health improvements. Even more elaborate research designs would be necessary to obtain scientifically rigorous evidence of the project's health impact.

The point that the project officer raised is that to a certain extent, it can be assumed that health status will improve from the proper use of clean water and sanitation facilities. Why then must the project undertake a mini-health sector assessment? At issue here is the question of assuming the intended result will be obtained if the necessary preconditions are met. In this project, there is a mechanistic connection between the project's input - water and waste disposal systems - and the desired effect - improved health. simply installing the facilities is no guarantee that they will be used. However, the project includes an education component which will explain in simple terms to the villagers ^{the} germ theory and/re-relationship of disease to the use of clean water and waste disposal. The mechanistic intervention combined with the education component gives credence to the project manager's argument. From this perspective, what is needed for the evaluation is information on whether the systems have been properly installed, maintained and used. In regard to use, it would be important to know whether people have been adequately informed about the use of the new facilities and

how by using them, community health conditions will be improved. It would also be important to monitor actual use. The contrast here is between a substantial data collection effort and one of much more limited scope. At issue is the question whether this project should realistically be expected to undertake the more extensive data collection activity. A final decision concerning data collection for the evaluation of this project is still under consideration; however, there is much to be said in favor of the project manager's view.

1.7 Rural Infrastructure

The Engineering Office of USAID/Honduras is engaged in several basic infrastructure projects - rural roads, electrification and hydroelectric generators. These projects implemented through GOH agencies routinely use baseline and follow-up data concerning project impact and social benefits for evaluations. Much of the data is obtained from the GOH; the rest is collected by local contractors. In addition to specialized engineering data, these projects also require some socio-economic data for planning and design work. For example, a rural roads project will need data on the population size of villages to estimate potential use; for electrification, data on the number of households that want electric service is necessary. Demographic and economic data are also used for cost benefit analysis to justify projects. Office staff report that

for the most part, data for project needs are available from the GOH or easily obtainable, but the quality of the data is sometimes poor. The availability of basic data is in part a reflection of the type of GOH agencies involved with infrastructure projects. It is generally the case that the more technically oriented ministries and agencies are much more accustomed to data collection and analysis for their operations.

The major information problem office staff reported was the lack of a central file on all active and planned projects in the country. It would be useful to know not only what other USAID and GOH projects are underway, but also what activities are being carried out through the World Bank, the IDB, CARE and other international agencies. Even within the mission, one office is not necessarily aware of where or when projects will be implemented by other offices. For the Engineering Office, it would be helpful to know if extending a road or electrification to a specific village would assist another project that has been or will be implemented there. Second, there is no "mission memory" of precisely what engineering projects have been done in the past. For example, where have roads been improved in the past, what kind of improvements were made, have they been maintained or are they in need of repair? According to office staff, it is difficult to even find copies of past project papers let alone documentation of

what was actually done. When the next person takes over from the present staff engineer, he will begin from scratch as did his predecessor because there is no system for storing this kind of information and making it easily retrievable. As is true for other USAID missions, there is a need to coordinate office and project activities better in USAID/Honduras; Obviously the type of information system described by this staff person is feasible for the mission given its mini-computer installation.

2. Human Resource Development

The Human Resource Development Office has supported a number of projects which involved considerable data collection. Some have been completed, such as the Non-formal Rural Education project and the 1979 Health Sector Assessment. A Contraceptive Prevalence Survey conducted by Westinghouse Health Systems is scheduled to produce final reports by the end of 1982. Apparently the survey has been very successful, so much so that a proposed supplementary survey of illegal abortions has been cancelled because the CPS data are sufficient. Rather than focusing on specific projects in health and education, the comments of USAID staff working in the HRD office provide a number of useful insights into the capacity and interest of GOH ministries for data collection and analysis.

One person working in the HRD office is involved with assisting the Ministry of Education to develop its capacity to collect, manage and use data about ministry operations and educational services. The MOE needs to be able to estimate the demand for educational services, its capacity to provide those services and evaluate its past performance for better planning and resource allocation. The MOE's interest in developing this capacity is a fairly recent event. Though data about the education system was very inadequate and poorly used, the ministry had not been particularly interested in correcting the situation. Like the MNR, the MOE's reluctance was in part due to pressure to produce immediate results. As pointed out earlier, when this action orientation is taken to extremes, data collection and analysis to guide decisions is viewed as too time consuming. For example, an attempt was made to establish a system for curriculum development. The system was to consist of developing educational materials; evaluating the effectiveness of these materials; and if they were found effective, training teachers in the use of the materials and finally distributing them to the schools. A pilot curriculum was to have been developed first. The ministry, however, wanted to short-cut the process and deliver the materials to the schools as soon as possible which undermined the testing procedure to determine their effectiveness. The MOE's lack of interest in data use was not the only problem. According to this staff person,

the Agency's extreme emphasis on project implementation and keeping to schedule too frequently results in relegating other concerns, such as collecting and analyzing necessary data before making major decisions, to an inconsequential status. In a sense, this is USAID's equivalent to the heightened action orientation of the GOH. As a result, data bases languished until the change in government in 1982.

At present, HRD staff are assisting the MOE with organizational changes. One anticipated result of this re-organization is better use of quantitative data. The ministry needs to improve the coordination of the Research, Statistics and Program offices. One possible improvement will be to coordinate data collection activities among these offices where information needs for administrative and operational information overlap. There is good reason to believe that barring a sudden change in government, progress toward better data use will be made. Unlike other GOH ministries, when the Sauzo government took office, the new minister and deputy minister appointed to the MOE both have advanced degrees in fields involving data collection and statistical analysis. Both are reported to be very supportive and interested in improving the quality of data and analysis available to the ministry. A computer has been acquired and programs for data processing are being developed for the MOE. Mission staff state that they are now want to see how ministry officials actually

use the information provided by the system and what decisions are affected as a result. They feel that this should be a key element in any evaluation of this effort to improve MOE data use.

According to USAID contractors and mission staff, the capacity of the Ministry of Health for data related activities is extremely limited. The 1979 Health Sector assessment is indicative of their present capabilities. The Assessment consisted of a number of small separate studies. Though substantial amounts of data were collected, no thorough analysis has been made of it by the MOH. For the most part, the data have been simply tabulated and reported as is. Apparently the utility of the Assessment has been minimal. For example, it has had far less impact on project planning than has the Agriculture Sector Assessment. Contractors working on health projects report that this lack of analysis is typical of ministry operations. It is their opinion that except for the Department of Epidemiological Vigilance in the MOH, the ministry has virtually no capacity to perform or even understand data analysis. The MOH obtains basic descriptive statistics from the Census Office, but it does not further analyze the data. One individual stated that his counterparts are so ill trained that they requested him to interpret simple cross-tabulations that were run for the ministry.

Others working on an evaluation of a health project pointed out that plans for training MOH staff to use and interpret quantitative

data have been thwarted by restricted access to the mission's mini-computer. Last Spring bombings in Tegucigalpa and rifle fire near the U.S. embassy (across the street from the USAID building) required increased security measures. One action taken was to restrict access to the USAID building after normal working hours. In the past, non-USAID personnel had access to the mission's computer after hours. Contractors, university staff, graduate students working on dissertations and other local and regional development agency staff (including CARE) had used the system extensively. For all intents and purposes, these users have been closed off from the system. In addition to restricted access, embassy officials complained about non-USAID staff using the system when no computer support was being provided for their activities. Furthermore, the addition of MACS to the system (a financial accounting system) has placed a heavy burden on the computer. (I was told that it takes three to four minutes for the computer to respond to each entry made by other users when MACS is operating.) Giving access to even more users during work hours (which would probably be necessary under current security restrictions) is questionable until the capacity of the system is increased. One result has been that even though Hondurans have been running a health project which the mission funded, they have not been able to use the computer to get the in-service training that was planned. The consultants providing technical assistance have ac-

cess to a large U.S. university computer. But their efforts to involve ministry counterparts with the data processing have been completely undermined. As a result, ministry staff have not been able to develop analytic skills. Needless to say, this is a very difficult situation which deserves more careful consideration by the mission.

Management Health Systems has been contracted to help develop the Ministry of Health's planning capacity. MHS staff will concentrate on health management problems that impede the efficiency and effectiveness of the health service delivery system. Alternative techniques for ministry operations, supervision of staff, administration of health services and logistics affecting the availability of medical supplies will be developed for the MOH. Some of this work will require data collection and ministry staff will be trained in these areas. To demonstrate improvements resulting from better management practices measures such as the cost per unit of service rendered, the number of patients treated per worker, delivery time of medical supplies and other comparable indices will be constructed. The project has only recently started; however, MHS consultants reaffirm that the MOH has virtually no capacity for independent data collection and analysis. One improvement to be made soon is acquiring a computer for the MOH. MHS staff are currently considering which type of system to recommend (i.e., a mini or microcomputer). Like those assisting the Ministry of Education, HRD and MHS staff are concerned

about whether the time and effort spent on developing the capacity of the MOH for better data use will produce tangible results in the form of improved planning and health service delivery.

3. Urban Studies

Several years ago USAID/Honduras considered adding an urban development component to its program. Studies were undertaken to obtain basic information to guide project identification and design. However, it was later decided that the mission should not broaden its program to include urban development projects. Perhaps the decision not to proceed after funding several urban studies will, in retrospect, prove to be wiser than it first appeared given the less than satisfactory outcome of two of these studies.

Urban Income Dynamics was a study of survival strategies used by low income urban families. An urban economist from the University of Texas provided technical assistance and a local PVO participated as well. The general goal was to obtain detailed socio-economic information about the possible target groups of future urban projects. Data were collected on some two hundred families. However, according to one individual knowledgeable about the study, very little was actually achieved. CONSUPLANE and the Central Bank produced a report in 1978/79 using information from the study. But serious methodological problems restricted further analysis. Apparently a number of staff changes were made during the course of the project. As a

result, it became increasingly difficult to determine precisely what decisions had been made, how specific problems were handled and what action was actually taken. Data collection procedures and known shortcomings or problems with the data set were never fully documented. It seems that the one individual who did understand the intricacies of the data set lost his position with a change in government. Without this person, I was told that further use of the data was impossible even though they had never been fully analyzed. Granted the mission's plans for an urban development program are now defunct; nonetheless, this is one more example of where data collection and analysis funded by USAID has been mismanaged.

The Regional Urban Assessment attempted to develop a regional and national planning model based on the hierarchic organization of market and service systems. That is, data on available services and existing institutions for all towns in Honduras was used to rank communities in terms of their central place status (i.e., socio-economic importance). Data on fifty-one services and institutions were used to construct the rankings; the institutional categories include: administrative (the presence of government offices), commercial (banks, cooperatives, granaries, markets, etc.), social (medical and educational facilities), communication (post offices, telegraphs), public utilities (electricity, water), and recreational (stadiums, cinemas, clubs, etc.). This technique is basically a

descriptive tool used to identify marketing/administrative centers and the network of outlying communities they service. It has been widely used by economists and geographers for planning purposes. For example, such work usually locates likely secondary or tertiary central places (i.e., smaller marketing towns) which would be logical targets for development activities to stimulate regional growth. Unfortunately, it appears that little will come from this particular attempt in Honduras. First, the study had been assisted by a USAID staffer who had the necessary quantitative skills. This person had been involved with other successful studies which involved analysis and there is every reason to believe that the Regional Urban Assessment would have benefited greatly from this person's help. However, this individual had to be suddenly transferred. Those now working on the project are experiencing considerable difficulty in translating the output of the project into a form of information which will be directly applicable to GOH planning activities. The mission has come to the position that the assessment has received ample funding and time to produce something usable and that a final report will be submitted soon. The person in charge of the study reported that more analysis is needed though no more computer funds are available to him (expenses are now being paid out of his own pocket). The project was funded by Agriculture Sector II, but that will not be continued. One mission staffer working with the MOE stated

that there was some possibility that the ministry might want to use the Regional Urban Assessment data to assist planning, but it is unclear what this interest means in terms of direct involvement or funding at this time. In any case, as of November 1982, the assessment has little if anything to show for its efforts.

Whatever else can be learned from this experience, it reiterates the point that assistance to LDCs for improved data use should begin with problems defined by the ministry involved as important. The output of the project should be a usable product that ministry staff understand. At the very least, this stands a better chance of demonstrating how data use facilitates ministry operations and of generating ministry interest and involvement in the project. By not focusing on specific problems and needs at the outset, the Regional Urban Assessment has produced primarily promises about what might be done rather than a concrete example of what it can do. The unanswered question for the Regional Urban Assessment is whether it can produce in short order something which demonstrates its utility as a planning tool.

4. Program Level Data Use

In comparison to other missions, USAID/Honduras has relatively easy access to macro-economic data and benefits from the numerous studies it has sponsored in past years. One current activity of the program office which illustrates this point is its monitoring of

Honduras' economic performance. Particular attention is paid to trends which have direct implications for GOH development plans and the mission's program. The office has carefully tracked the sharp downturn in the Honduran economy which began in 1980. One of the mission's program economists collaborates with the embassy's economic attache to produce an annual overview of each major sector of Honduras' economy. The report discusses key factors which affected economic growth in the past year and the general strengths and weaknesses of the economy. It also tries to anticipate changes in the coming year which might affect domestic economic growth and U.S. trade with Honduras. Such work is also useful to the mission for continuing policy discussions with the GOH. Data for the report are in part obtained from the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank (for balance of trade, banking transactions, etc.). This data is supplemented by information obtained from IMF reports which are a major source of data for the program office. According to program office staff, macro-economic data provided by the GOH is reasonably accurate. Data collected by government surveys, especially concerning employment, are much less reliable. This would suggest that continued support of ministry staff training is necessary.

The program assists in project design where economic analysis, such as cost benefit analysis, is needed. The office also has some capacity to provide in-house methodological support. For example,

one individual in the office has general research skills which proved useful to the Small Farmers Titling project. While in the U.S., this person discussed sampling problems with experienced university personnel knowledgeable about land tenure surveys. The design of a sample for this project (to obtain baseline data on the effect titling has on farm investment, cropping patterns, production, etc.) is much more complicated than it might at first appear because of the diversity of land tenure arrangements and the varying legality of each. In this case, the project should be able to avoid some serious mistakes as a result of this staffer's assistance.

Despite such positive examples of data use for program purposes, there is room for improvement. Though mission staff report that senior management is generally supportive of data related activities, some believe that too little work time is provided for applied analyses pertaining to mission activities. Such work frequently has to be done after hours or on weekends. Similarly, the complaint was made that some consider economic analysis to be little more than a potpourri of unrealistic assumptions and, therefore, too far removed from actual conditions to be of particular importance. The Agency has enough economists to defend their profession. The point to be made here is that skilled analysts working with reasonably good data can only contribute to mission effectiveness if they are given adequate resources - especially work time in this case - to do so.

One program economist made a very interesting observation about how eagerness of GOH agencies to conduct special studies in some cases seems counterproductive. A case in point is CONSUPLANE, the national planning commission. CONSUPLANE apparently has a penchant for forming committees and holding meetings. A standard response CONSUPLANE makes to issues put before it is to form an inter-ministry committee. As a result, it is endlessly involved with/multi-disciplinary study or another which seem to produce little of actual use. Worse yet, these committees simply perpetuate and prolong the problem rather than resolve it. Perhaps this is being overly cynical, but it appears that one undesirable by-product of developing ministry capacity for data use is that the ministry or agency begins to use that as either a means to appear busy or to delay taking action. It seems that CONSUPLANE not only has learned and adopted the ways of its mentors, but now uses the decision-by-ponderous-committee approach as an effective tool for dealing with external demands placed on it, including those of USAID/Honduras.

Program office staff, like other mission staff, expressed interest in the prospect of improving data use and information services to assist mission activities. They did have several very strong views concerning USAID/Honduras' future course of action in this area. It was their opinion that past activities have generated much useful information, but the mission has suffered somewhat from an encyclo-

pedic approach to data collection. Broad, general surveys are definitely not needed at this time. Rather, the mission would be better served by improved analysis and interpretation of existing data. In particular, further analysis should be operational as opposed to diagnostic. That is, the major problems are known; what is needed is information to guide strategies to effectively address them in the context of Honduras' present economic and political situation. In regard to the proposed update of the Agriculture Sector Assessment, it was the opinion of some program office staff that the update should be much more narrowly focused than was the 1978 Assessment. Careful thought needs to be given to precisely what additional data are necessary for only those areas where the mission will continue to concentrate its resources and which are of interest to the GOH. Such concern for clearly defining information needs is most laudable. However, mission staff and particularly those working in the program office should take into consideration 1) the extensive and perhaps unanticipated use made of the 1978 Assessment and 2) that some projects have planned on obtaining data from the update. In other words, there is the risk of making the update too narrow thereby excluding certain legitimate information needs.

One final point which pertains to data use for program purposes concerns the content of the FY83 CDSS for USAID/Honduras. In comparison to other CDSSs, USAID/Honduras' is a remarkably clear, well -

organized statement of recent progress, current problems and strategies and plans for immediate action. Particularly useful is the topic by topic description of areas of program activity, the problems being addressed, current activities and a strategy for further action. The use of quantitative data in the FY83 CDSS is also remarkable in how little is actually presented. The FY83 CDSS represents a planning exercise which has gone through considerable evolution and refinement. Logically this would reduce the necessity of presenting analytic support for strategy statements. Instead repeated references are made to studies either underway or planned which promise to provide necessary information and guidance for mission operations. This creates the impression of USAID/Honduras as functioning as some dynamic center of applied research. But one finds that during the intervening two years since the publication of the FY83 CDSS, a number of these studies have been eliminated or are not yet available. Others have encountered what appear to be insurmountable obstacles, such as the longitudinal data collection effort planned for the Rural Technologies project. This in itself is not surprising. But given the planned use of these studies as outlined in the FY83 CDSS it is reasonable to expect the FY85 CDSS to suggest how these unmet information needs will be resolved and what impact, if any, this has had on mission planning.

5. Conclusion

The main points this report has made are as follows:

- 1) USAID/Honduras has made extensive use of quantitative data and analysis for project and program purposes. In this regard, it represents a model for improvement of data related activities in other USAID missions. However, much remains to be done in regard to improving GOH capacities for data use especially in the human service ministries.
- 2) The 1978 Agriculture Sector Assessment has been of substantial utility in various mission activities. In regard to the forthcoming update of the Assessment, a balance needs to be struck between limiting what is done to areas of special interest to the mission and the GOH, and incorporating legitimate information needs of offices and projects which have anticipated obtaining data from the update.
- 3) USAID/Honduras' various rural development projects have subscribed to the standard baseline and follow-up formula for project level data collection. It is uncertain whether these plans will be followed because of staff changes in GOH ministries and in the mission itself. This problem is not unique to USAID/Honduras; rather, it is typical of other missions as well. An important point the Agency needs to consider is whether too much emphasis is placed on data collection at the project level. Alternatively, more attention to data collection for periodic sector assessments might provide the Agency and host countries with the / necessary information for evaluating development impact.

- 4) USAID/Honduras is funding efforts which barring a sudden political change, will lead to better use of quantitative data for planning by the Ministries of Education, Health and Natural Resources.
- 5) Urban studies have had little success which at present is a moot point since the decision has been made not to fund projects concentrating on urban development.
- 6) Data use for program purposes has been far less problematic than it has been for other USAID missions because of a) the availability of and access to necessary data and b) the GOH's cooperation in providing data to the mission and tolerance for data collection activities.
- 7) To continue the sound use of quantitative data in USAID/Honduras, the former staff person who provided in-house technical assistance should be replaced by someone with equivalent skills. It will also be necessary to re-evaluate the need for computer services to determine how much capacity is necessary for current and future use. Limited access to computer facilities by non-USAID staff needs to be resolved either by upgrading the present system or by acquiring a microcomputer.

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