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OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING

IN

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

IN

COSTA RICA

BY

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Presentation made by Mr. Avila on October 17, as part of a Participant Panel during ICA's First International Workshop in Public Personnel Administration.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING IN
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by Arnolde AVILA Cardenas, Chief of Personnel
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Presented at Panel of First International Workshop
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Today's topic is "opportunities for training in Public Administration in my country". However, first of all, I want to give you a training definition as used in this talk, and, at the same time, a brief explanation about the importance of training. Dr. William Torpey in his book "Public Personnel Management" says that "training refers to the process of developing skills, habits, knowledge, and attitudes in employees for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of employees in their present government positions, as well as preparing employees for future government position".

"In the work environment, the choice between training or non-training of personnel does not exist. Training, at least of an informal type, takes place even where no plan has been formulated to impart learning. Without some type of formal training, the work environment is frequently characterized by high accident rate, wasted effort, inefficiency, errors, excessive absenteeism, complaints, and personal dissatisfaction occasioned by inadequate use of individual capabilities."

As you can see the importance of training is transcendental in Government Personnel Administration.

There is much material and there are many types of training in order to talk extensively about training in general; however, I am not a technician in this field and therefore I am not the competent person to keep a long lecture talking about this matter; secondly, the panel refers to the opportunities for training in the specific field of Public Administration.

In this respect I am going to say that in Costa Rica we have three different Public Administration courses: a) University courses, b) ESAPAC courses, and c) Civil Service courses. University courses: In the School of Economic Sciences of the University of Costa Rica is given a Public Administration course for those students who want to follow it or are interested in that field.

I do not want to emphasize this course because of its educational nature. It seems to me it is not exactly a training course. Students are not prepared for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of themselves in their present government positions. As you know the majority of students do not have any position. Objectives of the School of Economic Sciences are different. However, this matter is not interesting for us now; so let us continue with the second Public Administration course which is organized in my country for the purpose of training. ESAPAC courses: The Escuela Superior de Administracion Publica para la America Central (Central America

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Superior Public Administration School) was established in March 1954. The idea to create a Public Administration school like this came from the Committee of Economic Ministers of Central America in its meeting held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in 1952. The idea was well received by the Administracion de la Asistencia Tecnica de las Naciones Unidas (Technique Assistance Administration of the United Nations) and this organization gave Dr. Enrique Tejera Paris the task of making into reality the resolution taken by the Committee of Economic Ministers in 1952. In the meeting held in 1953 the Committee approved the project of Dr. Tejera Paris, and in March 1954 ESAPAC was created. Dr. Tejera Paris was its first director.

Purposes of ESAPAC: ESAPAC is under the auspices of the United Nations which give it technical and financial cooperation. Its purpose is to give opportunities to employees of high levels, university professors, and candidates for high positions to systematize and amplify their knowledge. Also they have the opportunity to know new techniques and to plan their futures activities.

Even though its headquarters is in Costa Rica, ESAPAC was established for all central american government employees.

Every year ESAPAC develops two courses: a) General Course, and b) Course of Application

General Course: Duration is approximately sixteen months divided in three periods: 1) Preparatory period lasts six months and the students remain in their countries and receive letters, articles, pamphlets, and books which must be read in order to present reports concerning this material. 2) Lessons period duration of twenty weeks and lessons are given by outstanding professors from different countries. They are instructed in the following subjects: Personnel Administration, Public Relations, Principles of Statistics, Public Law, Budget, Administrative Ethics, Organization and Methods, etc., and 3) Controlled Experience lasting six months. The purpose of this period is to verify if the student can apply his acquired learning. During this period, the professors travel over the different countries in order to review the job of students.

Courses of Application With regard to this course, I do not know exactly how it has been developed, but I would like to give you some information about how scholarships for participants are given in Central America

In each of the countries of Central America there is a National Committee of Selection and Cooperation.

Before the beginning of the Preparatory period of the course, each Government choose ten candidates through the National Committee. From these ten candidates, ESAPAC makes a selection of five.

Scholarships are given by the United Nations. Participants receive twelve hundred colones a month during the lessons period, plus transportation expenses. Participants from Costa Rica receive only three hundred and thirty colones when they live in San Jose, which is the capital of the Republic, and five hundred and thirty colones when they live outside the Capital.

Civil Service Courses: These courses were established by the Civil Service Direction of Costa Rica.

The Training Department of our Civil Service has developed two courses for public employees. The first one is called "Public Administration Middle Course for department heads. The matters given in this course are: Principles of Public Administration, Personnel Administration, Principles of Administrative and Constitutional Law, Public Relations, and Organization and Methods.

The second course is called Secretaryship Course. The given subjects are: Wording, Public Relations, Principal Secretaryship, and Personnel Administration.

Duration of both courses is five months.

Finally, I want to point out that if we take into consideration the population of Costa Rica (one million) we have to admit that the opportunities for training in Public Administration in my country are very bright.

Thank you.