

USAID/Nicaragua
ANNUAL REPORT FY 2003

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Please Note:

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A. Program Level Narrative

Program Performance Summary:

Nicaragua is at a crossroads. There is an urgent need to promote sustainable economic growth, globally competitive production, job creation and good governance so as not to undermine fragile gains in democracy, and let it take firm root in the national culture and conscience. President Enrique Bolaños, inaugurated in January 2002, declared a "New Era", promising government transparency, a fight against corruption, private sector growth, and the assurance that all Nicaraguans would be able to lead their lives with dignity. Nicaragua's problems are severe, and the job ahead is tough. Per capita GDP is the second lowest in the Western Hemisphere at just around \$500. An estimated half of the population lives in poverty; the labor force is unskilled; unemployment and underemployment is close to 50%; and income distribution is the fifth most unequal in the world.

Overall, the economy has declined from a healthy 7.4% growth rate in 1999 to a precipitously low 1% growth in 2002. Private sector corruption and outright fraud caused the failure of four major banks and an economic loss to the economy of \$500 million. Foreign and internal debt is more than three times the GDP, and even if Nicaragua can comply with IMF requirements to obtain the HIPC relief expected in 2003, total debt would still be more than 100% of GDP. The private sector is small and inefficient. Domestic and foreign investors' confidence in the country's stability and justice system is low.

While Nicaragua has achieved "pieces" of a democracy, including technically fair election-day operations and a relatively free press, the current status of democracy as a whole is fragile and tenuous. Institutional weaknesses are evident in the justice system, which is highly inefficient and offers only limited access for the poor and marginalized ethnic groups. Corruption, which Bolaños has steadfastly fought, is widespread and has diverted hundreds of millions of dollars into private pockets. Despite the recent spectacular indictment of former President Aleman on corruption charges, the crusade for transparency in government needs to continue for generations to have a lasting effect. The criminal justice system is only now beginning to improve with the enactment of a new Criminal Procedures Code, adopted with USAID support.

Though significant improvements in health and education were made over the past decade, problems remain. The average Nicaraguan has less than five years of schooling, while extremely poor populations have only two years. Nearly one million school-age children remain outside the formal education system. Population growth is estimated at 2.6%, one of the highest in the region, undercutting economic gains. In 2001, over 45% of 19 year old females were pregnant or already mothers, a figure virtually unchanged since 1998. There are serious inequities in health care for the poorest 40% of Nicaraguans with stark differences observable from health status data. Compounding the situation, the country is prone to regular natural disasters including floods, droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and hurricanes. Impoverished Nicaragua has limited capacity to respond to and recover from natural threats.

In January 2003, Nicaragua, along with five other Central American countries, began negotiations with the United States for the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Membership in CAFTA is expected to help boost Nicaragua's sagging economy and foster needed structural changes in the economy to attract foreign investment, increase productivity and create jobs. The challenges of reducing poverty, increasing economic growth, and strengthening democracy will require a major commitment from Nicaragua and the international donor community.

USAID program: The renewal of U.S. assistance programs in Nicaragua dates back to the election of Violeta Chamorro in 1990, a relatively short history compared to that of other USAID programs in the region. The current strategy began in 1998 and runs through 2003. USAID's assistance in the areas of democracy, human investment and economic growth complements Nicaragua's poverty reduction strategy, and contributes to achieving priority U.S. foreign policy objectives in Nicaragua. Development assistance, including food aid, totaled approximately \$38 million in fiscal year 2002. USAID focuses its sustainable development program on strengthening democratic institutions and increasing citizen

participation, investments in health and basic education, and economic growth through support to small producers and natural resources management.

Key Achievements in FY 2002: Under President Bolaños' leadership, Nicaragua is improving substantially as a development partner. USAID's programs achieved excellent results in fiscal year 2002 despite the challenges in both the economic and political arenas.

USAID was the principal donor supporting the Nicaraguan national elections in November 2001. The elections were carried out in a peaceful atmosphere of citizen participation with a record-high voter turnout. USAID assistance for a special voter registration effort ensured that thousands of previously unregistered Nicaraguans could vote. A consortium of local NGOs, funded by USAID, fielded more than 6,200 local election observers.

The USAID-supported Criminal Procedures Code was passed in December 2001 and went into effect one year later despite opposition from elements hoping to undermine judicial reform. USAID provided training for prosecutors, lawyers and other actors who will have expanded roles under the new Code. Judges, who will now serve as impartial arbiters, have been trained as well.

Nicaragua's history is one of corruption and political deals serving personal and party interests rather than the national interest. President Bolaños is determined to root out corruption and break the political "Pact" forged between the two major parties in late 1999, which divided the Supreme Court, the Supreme Electoral Council, and other key institutions into political fiefdoms that answer to party leaders. USAID initiated activities to strengthen the Attorney General's Office, which has taken a leading role in prosecuting the high-profile corruption cases against the former president and his associates.

Though the Nicaraguan economy closed the year 2002 with barely 1% growth, USAID's successes in increasing the incomes of small producers and micro-entrepreneurs helped to alleviate some of the economic need in rural areas. USAID emphasized more crop diversification, increased the use of improved agricultural techniques and seeds, continued to strengthen financial markets in rural areas, and supported the adoption of government policies conducive to private investment. Under its \$2.5 million Coffee Relief Program, USAID also addressed the acute food needs of families dependent on the coffee sector and affected by the sharp decline in international coffee prices.

By 2002, USAID agricultural activities benefited a cumulative number of over 87,000 farmers. USAID projects brought over 11,000 hectares under improved sustainable production systems. A specialty coffee alliance among small-scale producers, a New York buyer and a local roaster was formed to introduce Nicaraguan specialty coffees to European markets. Under the USAID seed promotion activity, the volume of certified seed used in Nicaragua increased to over 180,000 quintals yielding impressive harvests during the year.

USAID's micro-enterprise program benefited over 108,000 micro-entrepreneurs in 2002, of which 85% are women, in the poorest rural areas of Nicaragua. In environmental activities, a total of six protected areas are now under co-management between the government and local NGOs.

Some of Nicaragua's greatest development successes in the past year occurred in health and family planning, accomplishments that are all the more remarkable given the country's continuing abject poverty. Many factors supported these improvements, including the significant influx of USG and other bilateral and multilateral donor assistance following Hurricane Mitch in 1998, and social investment in community participation.

Moreover, Nicaragua carefully targeted primary health care and basic education investments to achieve extraordinary improvement in key social sector programs and indicators during the 1990s. From 1993 to 2001 infant mortality rate dropped from 58 to 31 per 1000 live births, lower than that of its neighboring countries. Likewise, child mortality for children under 5 dropped sharply from 72 to 40 per thousand during the same period, a rate substantially below that of many other countries in LAC. While still unacceptably high, the prevalence of chronic malnutrition or stunting in Nicaragua fell to 20 percent by

2001. This is one of the lowest rates in Central America; chronic malnutrition in Nicaragua is less than half that observed in Guatemala, a country with roughly four times Nicaragua's per capita GDP. Overall malnutrition (low weight for age) fell below 10 percent for the first time ever. Finally, fertility rates also fell sharply from 4.6 in 1993 to 3.2 in 2001, due to overwhelming acceptance of modern contraception by 67.8% of women. Since USAID purchases 75% of contraceptives used in Nicaragua, much of this remarkable achievement can be attributed directly to USAID assistance.

Nicaragua has also made significant changes to its educational system over the past decades, resulting in a number of beneficial outcomes. Progress has included increases in gross enrollment at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels, improvements in school infrastructure, and the decentralization of many primary and most secondary schools. In the 2002 school year, a "historical record" 1,551,000 students attended school, representing a 6.3% increase in primary and secondary education enrollment. School completion in USAID-supported model schools exceeds that of non-model schools by over 20% and academic achievement increased 8% in Spanish and 12% in math. Parent participation in model schools reached 96% this year in urban schools and 93% in rural schools. Girls' participation in urban classrooms was 6% greater than boys and increased 4% over last year. These factors figured significantly in the GON's proposal to adopt USAID's model school approach nationwide. In view of the facts that Nicaragua made these changes in the face of political turmoil, one of the highest poverty rates in Latin America, and a population demographic that includes 50 percent under age 18, these gains are notable.

The superior performance of girls in school in Nicaragua is significant (and unusual) and merits recognition. Girls consistently do better than boys in school enrollment and completion and academic achievement. Indeed, this year, the Agency's gender program selected Nicaragua as the "positive deviant" in a four-country study on girls' performance in school. However, these statistics hide many serious inequities. Nicaragua's teenage pregnancy rates remain among the western hemisphere's highest. Domestic violence and abuse of women are common. USAID's 1998 DHS found that 29% of women had experienced physical violence or sexual abuse. USAID is actively engaging on such issues through joint activities between sectors. For example, USAID provided a grant to a local organization to educate the general population on trafficking in persons.

Environmental Compliance: The mission reviewed all strategic objectives and determined that all current activities are in compliance with approved Initial Environmental Examinations, Environmental Assessments, and Categorical Exclusions and all required mitigations and conditions are being followed. A Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) for all Title II Cooperating Sponsors (CS) were approved in July 2002, and all activities are being implemented in pursuance with the plan.

The Mission will prepare a new five-year strategy (FY2004-09) and in FY2003, initiate new activities and modify existing ones that will transition into the new strategy. As part of this process, the Mission will conduct assessments in compliance with FAA sections 117, 118 and 119 and 22 CFR 216. Either an IEE will be prepared or categorical exclusion will be determined for each new activity. Where necessary, an Environment Assessment will be conducted. Furthermore, as part of these requirements, the mission will also be reporting on what other donors are doing or plan to do in the environment and natural resource management sector.

Pesticide Evaluation: An environmental assessment for agro-chemicals and vector control (health, veterinary compounds) was completed in July 2001. The assessment applies to current programs, and the participating institutions have incorporated integrated pest management into their current programs in Nicaragua.

Country Closeout & Graduation: N/A

D. Results Framework

524-001 More Political Participation, Transparency and Compromise

SO Level Indicator: Civil Liberties Score

SO Level Indicator: Political Rights Score

IR 1.1 Consolidating the Rule of Law

IR 1.2 Efficient and Transparent Elections

IR 1.3 Strengthened Civil Society

IR 1.4 Strengthened Mechanisms for Transparency and Accountability

Discussion:

524-002 Sustainable Growth in Small Producer Employment and Income

SO Level Indicator: Agriculture GDP Growth Rate

IR 2.1 Small farmers produce more and diverse crops

IR 2.2 Small business and microenterprise expanding

IR 2.3 Natural resources being used more rationally

Discussion:

524-003 Better Educated, Healthier, Smaller Families

SO Level Indicator: Fifth Grade Completion Rates in Model Schools

SO Level Indicator: Infant Mortality Rate

SO Level Indicator: Total Fertility Rate

IR 3.1 Integrated child survival services and practices

IR 3.2 Comprehensive reproductive health services

IR 3.3 Better nourished women and children

IR 3.4 More students learning more and completing primary school

Discussion:

524-005 Rapid reconstruction and sustainable recovery in Mitch-affected areas

Discussion:

Selected Performance Measures - Nicaragua

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Indicator (all data should pertain to FY or CY 02)	OU Response	Significant Result: Description of the significant result for a strategic objective	Data Quality Factors: Information relevant to the collection of this indicator data, e.g. "this data was not collected last year because it is only collected every five years."
Pillar I: Global Development Alliance			
Did your operating unit achieve a significant result working in alliance with the private sector or NGOs?			
524-002 Sustainable Growth in Small Producer Employment and Income	No		
524-003 Better Educated, Healthier, Smaller Families	N/A		
a. How many alliances did you implement in 2002? (list partners)			
b. How many alliances do you plan to implement in FY 2003?	6		
What amount of funds has been leveraged by the alliances in relationship to USAID's contribution?			
Pillar II: Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade			
USAID Objective 1: Critical, private markets expanded and strengthened			
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?			
524-002 Sustainable Growth in Small Producer Employment and Income	No		
USAID Objective 2: More rapid and enhanced agricultural development and food security encouraged			
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?			
524-002 Sustainable Growth in Small Producer Employment and Income	Yes		Increased to 181,541 quintals of certified seeds produced in Nicaragua, exceeding the target of 125,000 quintals
USAID Objective 3: Access to economic opportunity for the rural and urban poor expanded and made more equitable			
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?			
524-002 Sustainable Growth in Small Producer Employment and Income	Yes		108,295 rural and urban micro-entrepreneurs received credit, of which 85 percent are women.
USAID Objective 4: Access to quality basic education for under-served populations, especially for girls and women, expanded			
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?			
524-003 Better Educated, Healthier, Smaller Families	Yes		Student completion rates in model schools surpassed the national average by more than 20%. In addition, in rural classrooms, student initiated interactions exceeded projections for the year by 16%; and for the first time, the number of interactions initiated by girls has surpassed boys by over 5% in regular schools.

a. Number of children enrolled in primary schools affected by USAID basic education programs (2002 actual)	0 Male	0 Female	0 Total	
b. Number of children enrolled in primary schools affected by USAID basic education programs (2003 target)	0 Male	0 Female	0 Total	

USAID Objective 5: World's environment protected by emphasizing policies and practices ensuring environmentally sound and efficient energy use, sustainable urbanization,

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-002 Sustainable Growth in Small Producer Employment and Income	Yes			Six co-management agreements were constituted for six protected areas and the capacity of six NGOs to manage the protected areas was strengthened.
a. Hectares under Approved Management Plans (2002 actual)	768047			
b. Hectares under Approved Management Plans (2003 target)	769669			

Pillar III: Global Health

USAID Objective 1: Reducing the number of unintended pregnancies

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-003 Better Educated, Healthier, Smaller Families	Yes			With a sharp increase in the use of modern methods since 1998, the number of births and unintended pregnancies has fallen significantly in Nicaragua. In the demographic pyramid, the percentage of population 0-4 has turned inward, dropping to 12.9% lower than the 5-9 year old cohort (15%) and the 10-14 yr old cohort (14.2%). Total aggregate demand for contraception rose from 76% of women in union in 1998 to 83% of women in union in 2001-2002, and unmet need among women in union dropped from 19% to 17%.
Percentage of in-union women age 15-49 using, or whose partner is using, a modern method of contraception at the time of the survey. (DHS/RHS)	68%			DHS report issued October 2002 based on data collected from August-December 2001.

USAID Objective 2: Reducing infant and child mortality

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-003 Better Educated, Healthier, Smaller Families	Yes			High level of immunization coverage maintained in the population during 2002 along with increased levels of use of Oral Rehydration Therapy contributed greatly to a 20% decline in Infant Mortality Rate in three years.
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Percentage of children age 12 months or less who have received their third dose of DPT (DHS/RHS)	39.5 Male	39.5 Female	Total		Due to changes in the vaccine schedule, and the addition of new vaccines the DHS now captures children 18-23 months to determine full coverage. DHS report issued October 2002 based on data collected from August-December 2001. USAID Nicaragua does not collect gender disaggregated data from the DHS. Thus we have equally divided the figure here between males and females. Since Nicaragua has a history of providing equal access to health care for both males and females we feel that this division is acceptable.
Percentage of children age 6-59 months who had a case of diarrhea in the last two weeks and received ORT (DHS/RHS)	13.5 Male	12.6 Female	Total		DHS report issued October 2002 based on data collected from August-December 2001
Percentage of children age 6-59 months receiving a vitamin A supplement during the last six months (DHS/RHS)	38 Male	38 Female	Total		DHS report issued October 2002 based on data collected from August-December 2001. PAHO data from immunization campaign October 2002. USAID Nicaragua does not collect gender disaggregated data from the DHS. Thus we have equally divided the figure here between males and females. Since Nicaragua has a history of providing equal access to health care for both males and females we feel that this division is acceptable.
Were there any confirmed cases of wild-strain polio transmission in your country?	No				

USAID Objective 3: Reducing deaths and adverse health outcomes to women as a result of pregnancy and childbirth

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-003 Better Educated, Healthier, Smaller Families	Yes			The sharp increase in use of modern methods of contraception (Contraceptive Prevalence Rate rose from 60% to 68% between 1998 and 2002) has reduced the aggregate number of births and has contributed to reducing pregnancy-related mortality. USAID's investment in quality assurance has also contributed to an increase in institutional births to 66%, with an increase in rural areas over the last three years from 43 to 45%. Percentage of births attended by trained personnel rose from 65 to 67 between the 1998 and 2001 DHS.	DHS report issued October 2002 based on data collected from August-December 2001.
Percentage of births attended by medically-trained personnel (DHS/RHS)	65%				DHS report issued October 2002 based on data collected from August-December 2001.

USAID Objective 4: Reducing the HIV transmission rate and the impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic in developing countries

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-003 Better Educated, Healthier, Smaller Families

Yes			Condom use has risen sharply with the social marketing sales increases of Bodyguard and VIVE brand condoms to almost 3,000,000 condoms in 2002, 20% more than 2001. In addition, public sector supplies of condoms increased. Among irregular partners condom use reached 13.8% and with spouses or regular partners 5.3%. USAID's social marketing program has promoted abstinence, fidelity and use of condoms in high risk sexual encounters. HIV prevalence remains extremely low in the general population. Among female commercial sex workers/prostitutes HIV is 0.6% nationwide; although it rises to 9% in some samples of men who have sex with men.
a. Total condom sales (2002 actual)	1400000		
b. Total condom sales (2003 target)	1650000		
National HIV Seroprevalence Rates reported annually (Source: National Sentinel Surveillance System)	0.30%		
Number of sex partners in past year (Source: national survey/conducted every 3-5 years)per DHS or other survey)	0		
Median age at first sex among young men and women (age of sexual debut) ages 15-24 (Source: national survey/conducted every 3-5 years) per DHS or other survey)	0 Male	0 Female	0 Total
Condom use with last non-regular partner (Source: national survey/conducted every 3-5 years)per DHS or other survey)	13.80%		
Number of Clients provided services at STI clinics			
Number of STI clinics with USAID assistance			
Number of orphans and other vulnerable children receiving care/support			
Number of Orphans and Vulnerable Children programs with USAID assistance			
Number of community initiatives or community organizations receiving support to care for orphans and other vulnerable children			
Number of USAID-supported health facilities offering PMTCT services			

Source: Profamilia national social marketing program with BODYGUARD. This does not include regional program sales of VIVE.

PAHO data

Behavioral surveillance report not conducted in 2002.

Number of women who attended PMTCT sites for a new pregnancy in the past 12 months				
Number of women with known HIV infection among those seen at PMTCT sites within the past year.				
Number of HIV-positive women attending antenatal clinics receiving a complete course of ARV therapy to prevent MTCT (UNGASS National Programme & Behavior Indicator #4)				
Number of individuals reached by community and home-based care programs in the past 12 months				
Number of USAID-assisted community and home-based care programs				
Number of clients seen at Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) centers				
Number of VCT centers with USAID assistance				
Number of HIV-infected persons receiving Anti-Retroviral (ARV) treatment				
Number of USAID-assisted ARV treatment program				
a. Number of individuals treated in STI programs (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of individuals treated in STI programs (2003 target)	0 Male	0 Female	0 Total	
a. Is your operating unit supporting an MTCT program?	No			
b. Will your operating unit start an MTCT program in 2003?	No			
a. Number of individuals reached by community and home based care programs (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of individuals reached by community and home based care programs (2003 target)	Male	Female	Total	
a. Number of orphans and vulnerable children reached (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of orphans and vulnerable children reached (2003 target)	Male	Female	Total	
a. Number of individuals reached by antiretroviral (ARV) treatment programs (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of individuals reached by antiretroviral (ARV) treatment programs (2003 target)	Male	Female	Total	

USAID Objective 5: Reducing the threat of infectious diseases of major public health importance

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-003 Better Educated, Healthier, Smaller Families	N/A			
a. Number of insecticide impregnated bed-nets sold (Malaria) (2002 actual)	0			Impregnated bed-nets not sold during 2002.
b. Number of insecticide impregnated bed-nets sold (Malaria) (2003 target)	50000			USAID partner NICASALUD anticipates to launch a new intervention in 2003.
a. Proportion of districts implementing the DOTS Tuberculosis strategy (2002 actual)	%			
b. Proportion of districts implementing the DOTS Tuberculosis strategy (2003 target)	%			

Pillar III: Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance

USAID Objective 1: Strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-001 More Political Participation, Transparency and Compromise	Yes			Passing of a new Criminal Procedures Code by the National Assembly, is a major achievement under this category. This new Code establishes new prosecutorial procedures that guarantee the rights of the accused.
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USAID Objective 2: Encourage credible and competitive political processes

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-001 More Political Participation, Transparency and Compromise	Yes			Free and fair national elections of November 2001 is a significant result. USAID support helped to guarantee that the elections were conducted in a more transparent and democratic manner
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USAID Objective 3: Promote the development of politically active civil society

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-001 More Political Participation, Transparency and Compromise	Yes			USAID support/funding to 12 NGOs that were part of the Electoral Consortium contributed to a wider participation and observation of the election process in general by the civil society. Support for the carrying out of a quick count by Etica y Transparencia is a major achievement under this category.
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USAID Objective 4: Encourage more transparent and accountable government institutions

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-001 More Political Participation, Transparency and Compromise	No			
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USAID Objective 5: Mitigate conflict

Did your program in a pre-conflict situation achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-001 More Political Participation, Transparency and Compromise				
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Did your program in a post-conflict situation achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

Number of refugees and internally displaced persons assisted by USAID	Male	Female	Total	
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USAID Objective 6: Provide humanitarian relief

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

524-002 Sustainable Growth in Small Producer Employment and Income	Yes			The Mission successfully began its Coffee Relief Activity and reached 12,740 coffee workers. This figure represents a 25% increase over the target of 10,150 beneficiaries.
Number of beneficiaries	75000			
Crude mortality rates	%			
Child malnutrition rates	20%			
Did you provide support to torture survivors this year, even as part of a larger effort?	No			
Number of beneficiaries (adults age 15 and over)	Male	Female	Total	
Number of beneficiaries (children under age 15)	Male	Female	Total	

Total Title II indirect beneficiaries: 75,000 because this number include all the members of the family. This information does not distinguish between men and women. The food is given to 28,000 heads of households.

Chronic malnutrition identified in children under 5 years of age from the 2001 DHS.