

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT No. LAG -A-00-02-00001-00**

**PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH INCLUSION, CONFLICT PREVENTION AND
DEMOCRATIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA**

**STATUS REPORT
APRIL-JUNE 2006**

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the provisions of cooperation agreement LAG-A-00-02-00001-00 between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR, or the Institute), the IIHR is submitting its report on the activities carried out between 1 April and 30 June 2006 that were funded, in whole or in part, by USAID. The entire period of the funding is from 1 March 2002 to 30 September 2007.

On this occasion, the report includes the reference sheets for the performance indicators (one general reference sheet plus one for each project), updated in line with the 2006 work plan.

II. THE MISSION AND NATURE OF THE IIHR

The Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR) is an independent international institution, created in 1980 under an international agreement that mandates it to engage in educational and research activities related to human rights, and to promote the observance of these rights and of democracy throughout the Americas.

The IIHR's Statute defines it as an academic institution, which means that it refrains from investigating cases, presenting or supporting formal complaints against States, or monitoring the compliance of States with their international human rights obligations. This self-imposed limitation has proven to be an effective tool for the IIHR, as it has permitted the Institute to serve as a facilitator of dialogue among the different actors in the human rights movement, and between them and government representatives.

Politically, the work of the IIHR is predicated on the idea that the effective exercise of human rights is only possible within the framework of pluralist and representative democracy. In other words, the IIHR maintains that there is a close link between the full exercise of political democracy and the effective exercise of human rights.

To achieve this, democracy must transcend merely formal considerations and must incorporate excluded and disadvantaged sectors of the population. The indigenous peoples of the Americas, and women as a social group, are perhaps the most important examples. For this reason, the IIHR focuses especially on these segments of the population.

In methodological terms, the work of the IIHR is based on three premises:

- An integrated approach is essential for human rights work. Human rights constitute an integrated system, in which no single right, group of rights, or so-called 'generation' of human rights, takes precedence. Economic, social and cultural rights are as important for the effective exercise of human rights as civil and political rights.
- An interdisciplinary approach is essential for human rights work. As human rights cut across the entire social fabric, no single academic discipline can adequately address their complexity. The issues involved include those of a legal, political, historical, anthropological and philosophical nature. Only an approach that incorporates all these perspectives can deal with such a complex phenomenon.
- A multisectoral approach is essential for human rights work. Human rights issues concern different agents and sectors of society. Activists, government officials, political leaders and representatives of minorities all have a stake and share a common interest in human rights, which have attained a political consensus and which allow for different perspectives and are a source of strong internal tensions.

III. CURRENT STRUCTURE

The General Assembly, the Institute's highest governing body, is responsible for setting policies and the general parameters for the work of the IIHR. It is made up of renowned human rights experts from all parts of the hemisphere. The Assembly meets biannually but has created a Steering Committee that advises the Executive Director throughout the year.

The Executive Director, Roberto Cuéllar, from El Salvador, is responsible for carrying out the IIHR's mission as set out in its Statute, and for implementing institutional policy. He is also in charge of efforts to secure financial resources, overseeing the use of the funds and rendering accounts. The Executive Director, the Directors of the three Operating Departments and the Administrative-Financial Coordinator make up the team of the General Directorate.

A special office assists the Executive Director in implementing Institute policy related to the cooperation agencies, and the special programs for Cuba and Colombia.

For operational purposes, responsibility for implementing the IIHR's activities is assigned to the following:

Department of Civil Society Entities. This area carries out activities of human rights training and promotion with organized sectors of civil society (organizations devoted to human rights in general, and the rights of women, migrant and indigenous peoples in particular); organizes specialized fora for the discussion of emerging issues in the field of human rights; and gathers, publishes and distributes specialized materials.

Department of Public Institutions. This area is responsible for activities of human rights promotion and training with the judicial, legislative and executive branches of governments, the military, the police and the prison system; promotes legislative reform designed to improve access by members of the public to their fundamental rights; promotes the institution of the ombudsman throughout the hemisphere and provides advisory assistance to existing ombudsmen's offices;

provides advisory assistance to ministries of education for the modernization of academic programs; and gathers, publishes and distributes specialized materials.

Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL). Among its activities, CAPEL provides advisory and technical assistance to organizations responsible for carrying out electoral processes; holds fora for discussions and promotion with different political sectors; analyzes and discusses the issue of governance with political actors; provides advisory assistance and training and conducts research aimed at strengthening political parties; sends missions to observe elections in all parts of the hemisphere; and gathers, publishes and distributes specialized materials.

The units, on the other hand, are responsible for proposing and implementing Institute policies related to their respective fields of action, based on the guidelines established by the Board and the Executive Directorate.

Administrative-Accounting and General Services Unit: comprised of the following sections: treasury, accounting, informatics, human resources and general services.

Applied Research Unit: responsible for the Institute's policy in the areas of thematic research, integrated plans, special programs and topics that cut across all the Institute's areas of work. It oversees the "active promotion" approach, particularly as regards the three core topics (political participation, education and access to justice) and their impact in the countries on which the IIHR places special emphasis.

Educational Unit: designs, tests and implements the methodologies, teaching aids and educational and evaluative techniques that the IIHR uses in its training activities. It is creating and will maintain a data base on educational policies for primary, secondary and higher education in Latin America, and proposes ways of harmonizing the IIHR's action with educational reform projects in the region.

Information and Editorial Service Unit: responsible for the IIHR's editorial policy, for incorporating the use of Internet into the Institute's work of promoting human rights, for meeting the information needs of the target population, and for strengthening the IIHR's formal and informal networks.

A. PROMOTING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

1. PROJECT: INCLUSION THROUGH NONGOVERNMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

1.1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Between April and June 2006, the project continued to implement actions related to the research and data collection processes for the two issues being studied: the impact of legislation designed to foster gender equality in five countries of the region; and the application of quotas mechanisms in eleven Latin American countries.

The project also continued to conduct the applied research on political participation of indigenous peoples in six countries of the region, and to organize the *Panel Discussion to Assess the Situation regarding the Political Participation of the Afro-descendant Population in Colombia*, scheduled for June 2006, which had to be reprogrammed for 25 July 2006, in Cali, Colombia.

1.2. GOALS

Goal 1: To determine the impact that equal opportunity legislation has had on public policies and the institutional framework

Goal 2: To consolidate knowledge and capabilities for monitoring and influencing specific legislation designed to encourage women to take part in political life

Goal 3: To help indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant populations and their organizations, and CSOs that provide follow-up and carry out advocacy activities related to political-electoral processes, to enhance their expertise and capabilities for monitoring and influencing specific legislation intended to encourage the target populations to participate in political life

1.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

1.3.1. Assessments of the impact of legislation designed to foster gender equality

1.3.1.1. Description

The project is continuing to produce specialized knowledge about the impact of legislation implemented to ensure equal opportunities for women and men. Legislation of this kind exists in five countries (Costa Rica, Colombia, Honduras, Panama and Venezuela).

Between April and June 2006, the project implemented the actions required to continue the research process in each country. These were:

- a) Implementation concluded of the specific research methodology prepared by the counterparts, in line with the work plan and the general terms of reference drawn up by the IIHR. The methodology involves garnering information from primary sources (by holding meetings with key officials of state agencies and non-governmental organizations) and secondary sources (assorted documentation), and the

systematization and preliminary analysis of the information. The following is an overview of the activities carried out in each country:

Country	Carried out activities
Colombia	The Colombian law is the most recent, having been passed in 2003. Implementation of the work plan began later than in the other countries as it took longer to identify the counterpart. Consequently, comparatively less progress has been made. During this quarter (April-June 2006), the counterpart continued systematizing the data and produced a progress report.
Costa Rica	The Costa Rican law is the oldest, having been enacted in 1990, and is one that has been in force the longest (16 years). This makes the task more complex and more information has to be processed for the research. During this quarter (April-June 2006), the counterpart continued to systematize the documentary information, made progress in organizing the information that appears in the matrix and produced the first progress report. Key people were identified and the methodology defined for a workshop to obtain feedback on the results of the law's implementation, which will be held in August 2006.
Honduras	The Honduran law was passed in 2000. During this quarter (April-June 2006), the research process was completed and the IIHR is now studying the draft document produced.
Panama	The Panamanian law was enacted in 1999 and implementing regulations were issued in 2002. The research is focusing on the implementation of both pieces of legislation. During this quarter (April-June 2006), the research process concluded and the IIHR is now studying the draft document produced.
Venezuela	The Venezuelan law was passed in 1999. During this quarter (April-June 2006), the research process concluded and the IIHR is now studying the draft document produced.

- b) Materials related to gender equality and equity were updated and incorporated into the *DerechosMujer* specialized section of the IIHR website. As of 30 June 2006, 4252 items were available in its different subsections (*Acerca de nosotros, Para compartir, Documentos, Protección de derechos*), as well as a directory of 505 organizations devoted to the advancement of women's rights. The specialized section received a total of 47,401 visits between 1 April and 30 June 2006 - an average of 520 per day that lasted an average of 13:12 minutes each (statistics compiled using WebTrends software).

1.3.1.2. Method

This project is a continuation of the actions carried out with support from USAID with regard to positive legislation aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men. The objective is to generate and disseminate knowledge about the impact that such legislation has had in the five countries where it has been enacted (Costa Rica, Colombia, Honduras, Panama and Venezuela).

The information is being compiled using an action-research methodology, based on terms of reference that provide a framework for the research and common elements of analysis for all

the countries. Women experts or women’s organizations in the five countries serve as counterparts, garnering the information from primary sources (interviews and semi-structured questionnaires) and secondary sources (assorted documentation) following a specific methodology. The documents produced will subsequently be circulated among the women’s organizations and public institutions, to obtain feedback.

Materials related to gender equality and equity are posted in the *DerechosMujer* specialized section of the IIHR’s website, to disseminate them widely and permit visitors to study them. As the project progresses, the actions carried out and the outputs produced will be disseminated in the same way.

1.3.1.3. Background / Rationale

Between 2002 and 2005, the USAID project compiled information about successful advocacy experiences of women’s CSOs related to the enactment of legislation on equal opportunities for women and men in Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama and Venezuela. Subsequently, the work focused on Peru, where the project helped pave the way for a law on the subject. A bill before Congress had been bogged down until the project stepped in. It was eventually placed on the agenda of the 2004-2005 legislature and given priority status in the area of equity and social justice.

Furthermore, various UN and ECLAC diagnostic studies have found that laws on equality help states determine their policies in this area. They also serve as a mechanism for implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), although difficulties and problems arise that are an obstacle to its full implementation.

The current project is facilitating the production and dissemination of knowledge about an issue that hitherto has been little explored, determining the impact that equal opportunity laws have had on legislation, public policies and the institutionalization of gender equality and equity. This complements the initial approach of advocacy with results-based action. Colombia was added to the original group of countries as it approved similar legislation in July 2003.

1.3.1.4. Institution(s) responsible and coordination

During the period under review, the counterpart individuals or organizations in each country were responsible for implementing the specific research methodology they prepared and for drawing up the progress report on the research or a draft document.

Country	Counterpart
Colombia	Beatriz Quintero
Costa Rica	Ana Hidalgo
Honduras	María Elena Méndez, Center for Women’s Studies of Honduras (CEM-H)
Panama	Urania Ungo, Women’s Institute of the University of Panama (UPAN)
Venezuela	Evangelina García Prince

The IIHR was responsible for facilitating communication and feedback among the counterparts, sharing proposed methodological approaches and other instruments; for monitoring implementation of the work plan by each counterpart via email and telephone; for studying and providing feedback on the progress reports on the research or the draft documents; for coordinating the implementation of the workshop scheduled for Costa Rica in August; and, for updating the content of the specialized section of the IIHR website (*DerechosMujer*).

1.3.1.5. Intermediate steps

- Implementation of the specific methodology and work plan for each country continued or was concluded
- Progress reports on the research or draft documents were prepared for each country
- Materials were prepared for posting online and the content of the *DerechosMujer* specialized section of the website was updated continuously

1.3.1.6. Results or outputs

- Implementation of the methodology and work plan continued or was concluded in five countries, mainly involving the identification, study and systematization of documentary sources, and the identification of pertinent people to interview for the research
- Delivery of 2 progress reports on the research (Colombia and Costa Rica) and 3 draft research documents and their results (Honduras, Panama and Venezuela), which the IIHR is now studying
- The number of visits to the specialized section continues to increase. The data compiled using the WebTrends software can be seen in the following comparative table for 2005-2006:

Quarter	Number of vis	Daily average	Average length of vis
1 January - 30 March 2005	15,344	170	12:12'
1 April - 30 June 2005	22,407	246	10:43'
1 July - 30 September 2005	26,817	291	09:31'
1 October - 15 December 2005	21,314	280	10:05'
1 January - 31 March 2006	38,681	429	14:24'
1 April - 30 June 2006	47,401	520	13:12'

1.3.1.7. Impact indicators

“More information available, making it possible to assess and monitor the impact of specific legislation for equality between women and men”

The progress made in applying the specific research methodology developed by the counterparts and in implementing the work plan - according to the general terms of reference prepared by the IIHR - can be seen in the fact that we now have 3 draft research documents with their respective results (Honduras, Panama, Venezuela). The IIHR is studying them at present and, during the next quarter, the comments and observations will be incorporated and the final version of the documents completed.

Substantial progress was also made in Colombia and Costa Rica, where progress reports on the research were produced. As pointed out in previous reports, the project expected the work in these countries to be completed later than in the other three. The reasons for this are that the work in Colombia began after the other countries, and the information in Costa Rica is more copious and more complex.

Means of verification:

- Second report on the implementation of the work plan for each country
- Two progress reports on the research
- Three draft research documents with their respective findings
- Specialized section of the IIHR website and data compiled using WebTrends software

1.3.2. Research on the application of the quota mechanism

1.3.2.1. Description

During the period under review (April-June 2006), the project continued to carry out the actions needed to facilitate the production of specialized knowledge about the impact of legislation designed to encourage the participation of women in political life. Eleven countries in the region have specific legislation or electoral laws that establish minimum quotas for the political participation of women (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Panama and Paraguay).

The object of the research is to explore, as an area of analysis and dissemination, the efforts of the electoral bodies to implement the quota mechanism established in the respective electoral legislation (by conducting research in each country). The activities carried out between April and June 2006 are described below:

- a) The project concluded the process of designing and adjusting the questionnaire for the electoral bodies, intended to gather information with regard to: current legislation; mechanisms for verifying compliance and applying penalties, and for monitoring the situation; use of quotas (experiences or practices adopted in administering the system, implementation and results, decisions of electoral or general courts).
- b) The final version of this questionnaire was studied and approved by the Department of Civil Society Entities (in charge of the project) and the Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (IIHR/CAPEL).
- c) The instructions that accompany the questionnaire were drafted and revised. The document explains the objectives of the research and the exact information being sought.
- d) The procedures and mechanisms for distributing, coordinating and providing follow-up to the questionnaire were established with the IIHR/CAPEL. The document was sent to the electoral organizations of the 11 countries and they are expected to fill out and return it during the next quarter (July-September 2006).
- e) Materials related to political rights, affirmative action and quota mechanisms were updated and uploaded to the specialized section of the IIHR website (*DerechosMujer*).

Information about the number of visitors to this section between 1 April and 30 June has already been provided.

1.3.2.2. Method

The project calls for the production and dissemination of knowledge about the efforts of the electoral organizations of 11 countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Panama and Paraguay) to implement the quota mechanism established in their electoral legislation.

The applied research will be carried out using a single, semi-structured questionnaire (with instructions) that the 11 electoral organizations will fill out. The questionnaire will provide information about current legislation and implementation and monitoring mechanisms. It will also compile data about the organizations' efforts to guarantee, implement, regulate and rectify quotas, and to establish rules and impose penalties, including the electoral bodies' practices and rulings (jurisprudence).

This questionnaire will form the basis of the research and the subsequent comparative analysis. The analysis will be complemented with information from secondary sources (sundry documentation) and primary sources (meetings and semi-structured questionnaires). The documents produced will be circulated among the women's organizations and public institutions involved, to obtain feedback.

Materials related to the subject matter are uploaded to the specialized section of the IIHR website (*DerechosMujer*), to disseminate them widely and permit visitors to peruse and study them. As the project progresses, the project's activities and outputs will be disseminated in the same way.

1.3.2.3. Background / Rationale

The minimum quotas for the political participation of women established in specific legislation or electoral laws are designed to correct discrimination and inequality and ensure that equal numbers of women and men run for, and hold, elected office.

Quotas are obligatory and the simplest way of gauging their success is by counting the number of women elected to parliament or local government. For example, since quota mechanisms were introduced, 35% of lawmakers in Costa Rica are women, and 31% in Argentina. The studies carried out so far suggest that, although the number of women elected to hold office has risen in recent years, the percentage of women lawmakers is still low - an average of around 15% in 33 countries of the region (CEPAL:2004).

Quota mechanisms exist in 11 Latin America countries but no comparative analysis has been carried out of the electoral bodies' experiences and the difficulties they have encountered in interpreting and implementing legislation of this kind. Having such knowledge will enable CSOs and electoral organizations to monitor the situation better.

The electoral bodies are not familiar with the difficulties faced or the good practices being developed, and CSOs are even less aware of them - particularly organizations involved in women's rights and in monitoring women's political participation. One of the aims of this project is to address this lack of information about the issue.

1.3.2.4. Institution(s) responsible and coordination

During this stage of the project, the counterpart expert (Line Bareiro, of the Documentation and Studies Center (CDE) of Paraguay) drafted the core questionnaire to be used to collect data. Subsequently, she incorporated the IIHR's recommendations and produced the final version of the questionnaire and the corresponding instructions.

The IIHR provided technical assistance and supervised the preparation of the questionnaire; coordinated the internal work with the IIHR/CAPEL; and, updated the contents of the *DerechosMujer* specialized section of the IIHR website.

1.3.2.5. Intermediate steps

- Technical assistance was provided and the preparation of the questionnaire and the instructions supervised
- Recommendations were incorporated into the questionnaire and the final version was produced
- Procedures and mechanisms were established for distributing, coordinating and providing follow-up to the questionnaire for the electoral bodies
- Materials were prepared for posting online and the content of the *DerechosMujer* specialized section of the website was updated continuously

1.3.2.6. Results or outputs

- Core questionnaire for collecting the information was revised and a final version produced, along with the corresponding instructions
- The number of visits to the specialized section continues to increase. The data compiled using the WebTrends software can be seen in the comparative table included above

1.3.2.7. Impact indicators

“More information available about the experiences of electoral bodies in implementing quota legislation, to assess and monitor its impact”

During the next quarter (July-September 2006), it will be possible to gather the information required thanks to the questionnaire and the instructions on how to fill it out, and to the procedures and mechanisms put in place for distributing the documents, and coordinating and providing follow-up to the exercise.

Means of verification:

- Core terms of reference for the research
- Final questionnaire for collecting data and corresponding instructions
- Meeting minutes and email correspondence between the Department of Civil Society Entities (in charge of the project) and Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (IIHR/CAPEL)
- Specialized section of the IIHR website and WebTrends counting system

1.3.3 Strengthening the political and citizen participation of indigenous peoples to consolidate democracy and governability in the region

1.3.3.1. Description

During the reporting period (April-June 2006), the project completed the research on the political participation of indigenous peoples in Latin America, in accordance with the original proposal. The research consisted of specialized studies in six countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru). The aim was to document the actions of the electoral organizations in the countries concerned in implementing affirmative action and administrative measures. Information will subsequently be disseminated about the difficulties faced in increasing the political participation of indigenous peoples, along with good practices in this area, thereby contributing to the consolidation of democracy and governability in the region. This quarter was particularly interesting in terms of the data collected, because presidential elections took place in Colombia (May) and Peru (May and June). The respective organizations also continued to organize the election for representatives to the Constituent Assembly and the referendum on regional autonomy in Bolivia (July 2006) and the presidential elections in Mexico (July 2006) and Ecuador (October 2006). All these activities provided first-hand data for the studies.

1.3.3.2. Method

Methodologically speaking, the work continued to follow the guidelines established at the start of the research, focusing on the production of specialized knowledge through applied research that incorporates four variables and the gender perspective. The variables are: a) electoral legislation and regulations regarding the participation of indigenous peoples and communities in political life and, in particular, in electoral processes (study of documentation); b) administrative and practical electoral models and mechanisms related to the active and passive exercise of the right to vote by the indigenous population (study of documentation); c) use, by indigenous movements, organizations and candidates, of legal remedies and regulations and administrative and practical electoral models and mechanisms to increase the opportunities for indigenous people to participate, as voters and candidates (study of documentation and empirical data); and, d) the results of indigenous peoples' participation in electoral processes (study of documentation and empirical data).

As reported previously, a wide variety of information sources was tapped for variables 1 and 2 (each variable was addressed separately). They included the national constitution, local constitutions, national and local secondary legislation, national and local regulations and legal provisions, national and local electoral regulations and provisions, national and local electoral institutions, and electoral registration procedures, or their equivalent, at the national or local level; and, national and local electoral registries or their equivalent. Other data sought were the definition of indigenous electoral constituencies and the establishment of special rules for the indigenous population; and electoral training procedures in indigenous regions and documented experiences of administrative electoral mechanisms.

Variable 3 involved fieldwork, with a limited timeframe and spatial focus, with indigenous organizations, communities and individuals, specialists, government officials, politicians, etc. It called for the compilation, systematization and analysis of studies on the use made of the

legal courses of action open to the indigenous population with regard to electoral and political matters. The research encompasses a wide range of political positions held by indigenous individuals, such as (elected and non-elected) administrative posts, political appointments (government, political parties and associations) and managerial and international jobs. These are all positions to which members of indigenous peoples have access thanks to the legal changes instituted in the country concerned (or because the presence of indigenous individuals led to legal changes being made).

Finally, variable 4 entailed a comparative reading of national and local election results, to gain an objective picture of the participation of indigenous peoples (turnout, abstentionism, voting behavior). The work also involved the preparation of national electoral-political maps showing this population's participation in elections; the compilation of data about party platforms, to ascertain the extent to which they include indigenous demands; and the performance of governments (administrative units) headed by indigenous individuals.

In addition to the information available in the countries, in carrying out this work the project can draw on the specialized section of the Institute's website (*Diversidades*), which contains specific material useful for the research.

Using the methodology adopted, the consultants basically studied documents in their possession and Internet sources, and visited general and specialized libraries (research institutions, universities), archives, electoral tribunals, registry offices, national election boards, etc., and media organizations.

1.3.3.3. Background / Rationale

The activities form part of the work plan for January-June 2006 of the *Project to strengthen the political and citizen participation of indigenous peoples to consolidate democracy and governability in the region*, and are designed to monitor the impact of specific legislation intended to foster the political participation of indigenous peoples. The work is based on the findings of research undertaken for the IIHR's Maps of Progress in Human Rights (www.iidh.ed.cr/mapas). These document, in ten countries of the region, the legal provisions adopted or modified between 1990 and 2000 designed to encourage the participation of the indigenous population in electoral processes and, in general, in national political life. The information suggests a trend toward the adoption of affirmative actions to foster, directly or indirectly, a bigger and more direct involvement of the indigenous population in democratic life. This trend is consistent with the adoption, throughout the 1990s, of constitutional reforms that recognize rights of indigenous peoples. These reforms were undoubtedly introduced as a result of the pressure exerted by indigenous movements in recent years. Indigenous electors are being encouraged both to vote and to stand for office, in some cases outside the political party structure or under special arrangements (functional, territorial).

However, the earlier study did not explore other aspects of the electoral system that could be the result of regulations or administrative provisions, such as the demarcation of electoral constituencies, the choice of polling officers and the spatial distribution of polling stations, the use of local languages to train voters and encourage them to vote. Such provisions could improve the conditions for indigenous participation in the electoral process and go much further, and even be separate from, the legal framework and the reforms instituted. Thus, there is a wide range of information to compile and study. Hitherto, few studies have endeavored to link emerging processes and participation with the most recent changes in

the legal and administrative framework, to determine the extent to which the latter have been, or are being, used to involve the target population. Furthermore, little or no work has been done on indigenous voting behavior, largely due the difficulty of identifying them when no specific statistics are available. Neither is there data to show whether their voting behavior has anything to do with the legal and administrative framework or whether indigenous candidates take advantage of it. Further work is needed on both lines of research and this is one of the reasons for the current project.

As well as contributing to one of the IIHR's strategic goals - the promotion of inclusive and transparent political systems and the dissemination of information about them - this project will make it possible to strengthen the incorporation of ethnic diversity as a crosscutting element of the work of other departments (e.g., the IIHR/CAPEL). The results will also be used as input for indicators of political participation for the Maps of Progress in Human Rights (updated through 2002).

Hopefully, the electoral bodies will use the knowledge acquired through the research as input for their work and to increase the institutionalization of the political and citizen participation of indigenous peoples, in line with national legislation on the subject. Information about the specific action taken by the electoral organizations on this issue will also be disseminated widely among indigenous groups and other CSOs involved with the rights of indigenous peoples and that monitor political participation.

1.3.3.4. Institution(s) responsible and coordination

The work plan was implemented by the consultants and organizations selected in the countries: Alfonso Alem, Bolivia; Camila Moreno, Colombia; Josefina García, Ecuador; Francois Lartigue, CIESAS-Mexico; Bernal Castillo, Panama; and, Adda Chuecas, Peru. These experts were responsible for developing the methodology and gathering the data, identifying the actors and other NGOs required to provide feedback for their work, and producing reports on their research and findings. The IIHR monitored and evaluated the implementation of the research and the knowledge generation process, as well as the work plan and schedule of activities. It also evaluated implementation of the plan, provided technical assistance, studied and provided feedback for the reports on the research and the research findings, updated the content of the specialized section of the IIHR website (*Diversidades*) and prepared the semiannual report. USAID will be informed of open activities carried out under the work plan.

1.3.3.5. Intermediate steps

- The counterparts monitored and provided follow-up to the research activities
- The IIHR monitored the execution of the work plans and the implementation and development of the research
- The report on the execution of the research was prepared
- The implementation of the project was coordinated with the IIHR/CAPEL and the IIHR's Applied Research Unit
- Materials were prepared for posting on line and the content of the specialized section of the IIHR website (*Diversidades*) was updated continuously

1.3.3.6. Results or outputs

- Draft progress report on the research on the actions of electoral bodies, particularly as regards the application of affirmative action and administrative measures designed to increase the political participation of indigenous peoples in the six countries selected
- Reports were produced on the execution of the work plans and financial plans
- The specialized section of the IIHR website (*Diversidades*) was updated
- A record was kept of visitors to the *Diversidades* specialized section, using the WebTrends software, as shown in the following comparative table for 2004-2006:

Quarter	Number of visits	Daily average	Average length of visits
1 January - 30 March 2005	15,753	175	13:24
1 April - 30 June 2005	24,908	273	13:35
1 July - 30 September 2005	32,375	351	12:46
1 October - 15 December 2005	27,178	357	15:10
1 January - 31 March 2006	35,577	395	17:27
1 April - 30 June 2006	43,308	475	11:48

As of 30 June 2006, 6261 items were available in the different subsections (*Acerca de nosotros, Documentos, Normativa, Vocabulario, Otros sitios, Preguntas frecuentes*), as well as a directory of 330 organizations devoted to the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and migrants. The specialized section was visited 43,308 times between 1 April and 30 June 2006 - an average of 475 visits per day that lasted an average 11:48 minutes each (statistics compiled using WebTrends software). This is a sizeable increase in the number of visits and the daily average.

1.3.3.7. Impact indicators

“More information available about the actions of electoral organizations with respect to measures that encourage or hinder the participation of indigenous peoples in political and electoral processes in six countries in the region”

The progress of the research in the six countries and the draft progress reports produced, which include details of the variables selected in the work plans by each consultant to generate specialized information on the subject and produce specialized knowledge, constitute a significant contribution to the issue. They provide important data for the work of the region’s electoral bodies that will eventually enable them to take measures to facilitate the political and electoral participation of the target population.

Means of verification:

- Reports on the execution of the work plans submitted by consultants

- Draft reports on the six studies produced by the research team
- Information available online in the specialized section of the Institute's website (*Diversidades*)
- Reports and statistics compiled using the WebTrends software, confirming the number of hits and visits to the specialized section

1.3.4. Promoting access to citizenship and political participation for the Afro-descendant population

1.3.4.1. Description

Between April and June 2006, the project continued to implement activities under the first component (production of specialized knowledge). Specifically, this entailed preparing for a *Panel of Experts to Assess the Situation regarding the Political Participation of the Afro-descendant Population in Colombia*. The activity will focus on four variables: a) electoral legislation and regulations dealing with Afro-descendants; b) administrative arrangements (issuing of identity cards, registration); c) use of legal remedies and regulations by the Afro-descendant population (at the local, national and regional levels); and, d) the participation of Afro-Colombians in elections. The objective of the project is to enhance the expertise and capabilities of the Afro-descendant population and their organizations, and of advocacy organizations that monitor electoral-political processes. This will enable them to influence and monitor specific proposed legislation designed to promote the inclusion and political participation of the Afro-descendant population. The Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (IIHR/CAPEL) is collaborating with the project. As two electoral processes took place in the country (for representatives and senators, in March 2006, and to choose the next president, in May 2006), the panel of experts had to be reprogrammed for 25 July 2006. It will be held in Cali, a city where one of Colombia's largest concentrations of Afro-descendants is to be found. A technical assistance mission to Colombia was carried out 25-28 April 2006, to coordinate the logistical and academic aspects of the Panel of Experts and hold meetings with the counterparts that will be taking part in the activity, and other organizations involved with the issue. As reported previously, the Universidad Javeriana de Cali is co-sponsoring the event. A very prestigious institution, it also has excellent facilities.

1.3.4.2. Method

The project is based on the experience of Colombia's electoral organization (unique in the region) with regard to the implementation of the affirmative action mechanisms called for in electoral legislation and administrative measures instituted for Afro-Colombians. The findings will be circulated in other countries that are relatively less developed in this area, along with the good practices and lessons learned from the experience. In this way, authoritative knowledge will be passed on to the Afro-descendant organizations and population, CSOs involved with the rights of this population and electoral and related institutions. The knowledge will be made available both to countries that have advanced electoral systems and to those that have not yet developed legislation, jurisprudence, doctrine and/or administrative arrangements to foster greater participation.

Component 1 is currently being implemented. This entails the production of specialized knowledge (applied research) linked to the four variables described in section 1.3.4.1 *Description*. The methodology is the same as the one used for the research on the political participation of indigenous peoples. A wide variety of information sources is being tapped for

variables 1 and 2 (each variable is being addressed separately). They include the national constitution, local constitutions, local and national secondary legislation, local and national regulations and legal provisions, local and national electoral regulations and provisions, local and national electoral institutions, and electoral registration procedures, or their equivalent, at the national or local level; and, local and national electoral registries or their equivalent. Other data sought concerns the definition of Afro-Colombian electoral constituencies and the establishment of special rules for the indigenous population; and electoral training procedures in Afro-Colombian regions and documented experiences of administrative electoral mechanisms.

Variable 3 involved fieldwork, with a limited timeframe and spatial focus, with Afro-descendant organizations, communities and individuals, specialists, government officials, politicians, etc. It called for the compilation, systematization and analysis of studies on the use made of the legal courses of action open to the Afro-descendant population with regard to electoral and political matters. The research encompasses a wide range of political positions held by Afro-Colombians, such as (elected and non-elected) administrative posts, political appointments (government, political parties and associations) and managerial and international jobs. These are all positions to which Afro-descendants have access thanks to the legal changes instituted in the country (or because the presence of Afro-descendants led to legal changes being made). The two electoral processes carried out this year in Colombia (elections for the upper and lower house in March and presidential elections in May) were very important for the purposes of the *Panel of Experts to Assess the Situation regarding the Political Participation of the Afro-descendant Population in Colombia*.

Finally, variable 4 entailed a comparative reading of national and local election results, to gain an objective picture of the participation of Afro-descendants (turnout, abstentionism, voting behavior). The work also involved the preparation of national electoral-political maps showing this population's participation in elections; the compilation of data about party platforms, to ascertain the extent to which they include Afro-Colombian demands; and the performance of governments (administrative units) headed by Afro-Colombians.

The variables were prepared by the following consultants: 1 and 2 by Fernando Giraldo, a political scientist specializing in electoral issues and the director of the political science course of the Universidad Javeriana; variable 3, by Maura Nasly Mosquera, a member of the team of specialists of the National Afro-Colombian Conference (CNOA) and Executive Director of the organization AFROLIDER; and variable 4, by Guillermo Reyes, Vice President of the National Electoral Council of Colombia. The panel of experts will involve activities of three kinds: a) introduction; b) presentation of papers on the variables chosen; c) five contributions on the political representation of Afro-descendant communities. The specialized section (*Diversidades*) has made specialized material available and has also been disseminating information about the activity.

1.3.4.3. Background / Rationale

The activities form part of the work plan for January-June 2006. The aim is to familiarize other countries that have made relatively less progress with regard to the political participation of Afro-descendants with the good practices developed in Colombia and the lessons learned from the experience. Authoritative knowledge will be passed on to the Afro-descendant population and its organizations, CSOs that focus on the rights of this population and electoral and related institutions. The information will be made available to both countries that have advanced electoral systems and others that have not yet developed

legislation, jurisprudence, doctrine and/or administrative arrangements to foster greater participation. Both the strategies and the activities were designed to form part of a process, encompassing all the actions required to achieve the results.

1.3.4.4. Institution(s) responsible and coordination

The work plan is being implemented by the counterparts selected in Colombia. The IIHR is monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the work plan, carried out a technical assistance mission (April 2006) and is updating the contents of the specialized section of the IIHR's website (*Diversidades*). USAID will be informed of open activities included in the work plan. During this stage, the Program to Combat Racism has been coordinating the implementation of the project, working with the IIHR/CAPEL.

1.3.4.5. Intermediate steps

- The organization of the logistical, methodological and academic aspects of the activity continued
- The actors and other NGOs, CSOs and State officials were identified for the panel of experts
- The IIHR monitored and supported the process
- The implementation of the project was coordinated with the IIHR/CAPEL
- Materials were prepared for posting on line and the content of the *Diversidades* specialized section of the IIHR website was updated continuously

1.3.4.6. Results or outputs

- Final proposal regarding the logistical, methodological and academic aspects of the activity
- Mission report
- A record was kept of the sustained increase in visitors, using the WebTrends software, as shown in the comparative table for 2004-2006 (see section 1.1.3.6.)

As of 30 June 2006, 6261 items were available in the different subsections (*Acerca de nosotros, Documentos, Normativa, Vocabulario, Otros sitios, Preguntas frecuentes*), as well as a directory of 330 organizations devoted to the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and migrants. The specialized section was visited 43,308 times between 1 April and 30 June 2006 - an average of 475 visits per day that lasted an average 11:48 minutes each (statistics compiled using WebTrends software). This is a sizeable increase in the number of visits and the daily average.

1.3.4.7. Impact indicators

“NGOs, CSOs, electoral tribunals and stakeholders and decision-makers involved with the issue are more knowledgeable about the progress made and obstacles encountered in the efforts to increase the political participation of Colombia’s Afro-descendant population”

“Relatively less developed countries have been given access to knowledge concerning the experience of political participation of the Afro-descendant population in Colombia”

Having laid the groundwork for the process of producing specialized knowledge, the project is making progress toward the attainment of both impact indicators.

Means of verification:

- Studies carried out for the *Panel of Experts to Assess the Situation regarding the Political Participation of the Afro-descendant Population in Colombia*, based on four variables
- Information available online in the specialized section of the Institute’s website (*Diversidades*)
- Reports and statistics compiled using the WebTrends software, confirming the number of hits and visits to the specialized section

1.4. LESSONS LEARNED

In the case of the research on the impact of the laws on equality, the project has confirmed the importance of having flexible timeframes when the methodology used to compile information includes meetings with individuals or activities for feedback on the preliminary results. People whose input is needed or who are invited to take part in group activities are of key importance for the research, but their schedule may not coincide with the project’s program.

The electoral bodies are compiling the information for the research on quotas and the project has to be flexible in their case too. Many of them are engaged in electoral processes and the process of gathering the data for the questionnaire is time-consuming.

As was explained in the section on the political participation of indigenous peoples in six countries of the region, the fact that several of the countries under study were involved in electoral processes made it more difficult to study the four variables. On the other hand, the situation also created greater opportunities for compiling information and preparing up-to-date analyses. This proved to be a comparative advantage given the limited number of studies that have been carried out on this issue.

As reported last quarter (January-March 2006), the electoral processes in Colombia made the studies and the activity scheduled a more complex undertaking than expected (the panel of experts had to be pushed back from June to July 2006). The consultants were either involved in organizing and implementing the elections, or promoting the participation of the Afro-Colombian communities in the different processes, for which they were required to travel all over the country.

PROJECT: PROMOTING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES JULY-DECEMBER 2006

ACTIVITIES	COUNTRY	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Work Plan Indigenous Peoples	Costa Rica, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Peru						
Work Plan Afro-descendant Populations	Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama, Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay						
Technical Assistance Mission	Colombia						
Technical Assistance Mission	Panama						
Diagnostic assessment, systematization and preliminary analysis of impact of equality laws	Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia						
Research process and systematization and preliminary analysis of application of quota mechanism	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Dominican Republic, Panama & Paraguay						

B. CONFLICT PREVENTION

1. PROJECT: CITIZEN SECURITY IN LATIN AMERICA: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL AND LOCAL APPROACH

1.1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Experience in Latin America has shown that crafting a citizen security policy and providing the corresponding legal framework is one of the most pressing challenges facing the countries. Hence, the goals proposed for 2006 are:

- To consolidate the process of security sector reform as part of the implementation of the public citizen security policy in the Dominican Republic
- To enhance the institutional capabilities for defining and implementing democratic citizen security policies and for cooperation between the sub-regions of Latin America (Central America and MERCOSUR)

No specific activity was held between April and June. Instead, project staff devoted their time to the preparatory actions required to attain the second of the goals established in the Work Plan approved for July-December 2006, namely, "To enhance institutional capabilities for developing and implementing democratic citizen security policies and for cooperation between the sub-regions of Latin America." Specifically, the staff continued to coordinate the organization of the regional meetings for MERCOSUR (July 2006) and Central America (November 2006).

As mentioned in the previous report, a Meeting of Experts took place 30-31 January, in San Jose, Costa Rica. The activity was used to draft a document containing "Recommendations for the Implementation of Public Citizen Security Policies." Since the meeting, further work has been done on the document and it is to be published and presented at the first Ministerial Meeting on Security, due to be held by the MERCOSUR countries in July 2006.

During this quarter (April-June 2006), the project negotiated the arrangements for the meeting with the Human Rights Secretariat and the Homeland Security Secretariat of Argentina, since that country currently holds the Pro Tempore Presidency of MERCOSUR.

The Validation and Evaluation Seminar in the Dominican Republic was initially programmed for May (see Work Plan for January-June 2006). However, the activity had to be reprogrammed for October 2006 as the resources needed were not available. Accordingly, the seminar appears as scheduled for October in the Work Plan for July-December 2006.

PROJECT: CITIZEN SECURITY IN LATIN AMERICA: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL AND LOCAL APPROACH

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES JULY - DECEMBER 2006

ACTIVITIES	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Technical mission to Dominican Republic						
Seminal Dominican Republic						
Meeting - Regional Summit on Citizen Security - South America						
Meeting - Regional Summit on Citizen Security – Central America						
Coordination Regional Meetings						

2. PROJECT: STRENGTHENING THE OMBUDSMAN IN LATIN AMERICA

2.1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The goal set for this project is to make ombudsman's offices more accessible and independent, enhance their capabilities and increase their number in Latin America as a mechanism for protecting human rights and denouncing violations. **Following approval of the Amendment to Cooperation Agreement LAG-A-00-02-00001-00 and the corresponding Work Plan for January-June 2006, between April and June** project staff updated the Integrated Information and Communication System. Taking advantage of the Fourth General Conference of CAROA, held 15-19 May in Barbados, the staff also carried out a mission to provide follow-up to the agreements between the CCPDH and CAROA.

2.2. GOALS

Goal 1:

To enhance the capabilities of ombudsman's offices in Latin America and the Caribbean by means of an integrated information and communication system

Goal 2:

To support the ombudsman's offices in Central America by consolidating cooperation between the Central American Council of Human Rights Ombudsman (CCPDH) and the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA)

2.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

2.3.1. Updating of the Integrated Information and Communication System (Ombudsnet)

2.3.1.1. Description

One of the IIHR's responsibilities is to consolidate channels of communication among the members of the regional body.

Between April and June, project staff continued to work on the Ombudsnet and the electronic discussion forum, which are used to keep the members of the CCPDH abreast of the latest developments in the region. Used primarily to share information and news about human rights and ombudsman institutions, the Ombudsnet also serves as a mechanism for sharing experiences and as an early warning system.

Continuously updating the integrated information system enabled the IIHR to provide technical assistance to the ombudsman's offices that required it, conducting searches and posting pertinent information.

All the national and international legislation on human rights and ombudsman's offices was systematized and made available via this system. The system also contains complete, up-to-date information on every ombudsman's office in the region (national, provincial and local), including street addresses, phone and fax numbers, Web page addresses and means of contact, and specialized units and units that focus on specific issues.

During the period under review (April-June), two discussion lists were in operation, one for Spanish-speaking ombudsman institutions and another for their English-speaking counterparts. Both lists are sent information such as news updates, the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and resolutions adopted by ombudsman's offices.

2.3.1.2. Method

The information and communication system has become a useful tool for ombudsman offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, as national agents that contribute to the progress of human rights and democracy, the coordination of proposals, the sharing of experiences and the strengthening of national and regional ombudsman offices.

The IIHR constantly investigates the sources and checks the information posted on the site to confirm its relevance. It also posts new information, thus keeping the specialized section permanently up-to-date.

2.3.1.3. Background / Rationale

The IIHR has developed a complete, integrated and specialized information and communication system for the ombudsman institutions, known as Ombudsnet.

The system is used to share the latest information and news about human rights and ombudsman institutions.

It also provides a means of sharing experiences and operates as an early warning system.

2.3.1.4. Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

The IIHR's Ombudsman and Human Rights Program coordinated the support for the integrated information and communication system, working with the Institute's Information Unit and the ombudsman offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, which constantly forward new and pertinent information.

2.3.1.5. Intermediate Steps

- Data and news from different sources was systematized and analyzed
- The latest information was requested from the ombudsman offices
- Systematic review to confirm the timeliness of the information

2.3.1.6. Results or Outputs

- The different subsections of the Ombudsnet were updated
- A complete directory containing information about all the ombudsman offices in the region was updated
- An early warning system to respond to situations requiring urgent action was set up
- A culture of interinstitutional cooperation among the ombudsman offices, and between them and the IIHR was developed
- 15 bulletins in English and 26 in Spanish were distributed via the two discussion lists set up so far (for the members of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association - CAROA - and the Ombudsnet, respectively)

2.3.1.7. Impact indicators

“Capabilities of ombudsman offices in Latin America and the Caribbean enhanced by means of an integrated information and communication system”

The specialized section affords the ombudsman institutions immediate access to important information and news about human rights, an issue closely related to the work they perform.

The section offers a complete compendium of up-to-date information about all of the ombudsman offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, and human rights doctrine, legislation and jurisprudence. Ombudsman offices that visit the specialized section have access to the documentation they need to carry out their mandate and information about counterpart institutions.

“Ombudsman institutions better equipped to respond quickly to crises, conflicts and internal disturbances”

During this quarter (April-June), the early warning system did not need to be activated. However, the early warning system (which operates via the Ombudsnet) continues to be regarded as an important tool for the ombudsman’s offices. They can use it to inform their counterparts of complex situations and crises and circulate news about their activities and the human rights situation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“More visitors to the different subsections and services available in the specialized section”

According to the system used to garner statistics and analyze the IIHR’s specialized sections, the Ombudsnet section (<http://www.iidh.ed.cr/Comunidades/Ombudsnet>) received 57,380 hits between April and June (an average of 644 per day).

2.3.1.8 Means of verification:

- Log of hits/visitors to the specialized section

2.3.2. Meeting to provide follow-up to the cooperation agreements between the Central American Council of Human Rights Ombudsman (CCPDH) and the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA)

2.3.2.1 Description

On 23 February 2005, during the 29th meeting of the Central American Council of Human Rights Ombudsman (CCPDH), held in Antigua, Guatemala, the Council signed an agreement of intent with CAROA with a view to strengthening and formalizing the cooperation mechanisms that exist between the two bodies. Following up on this agreement, members of CAROA took part in the 32nd meeting of the CCPDH, held in Belize in March 2006, and invited members of the Council to participate in their biannual meeting.

The Fourth Biannual Meeting of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA) was held 15-19 May 2006 in Barbados. The theme of the meeting was “The Ombudsman’s role in the changing environment of the Caribbean. Civil liberties and democratic government.”

In response to CAROA's invitation, the CCPDH sent a group of delegates to the meeting. These were: Ramón Custodio López, National Human Rights Commissioner of Honduras and outgoing President of the CCPDH; Sergio Morales Alvarado, Human Rights Ombudsman of Guatemala and incoming President of the CCPDH; and Lorena González, of the IIHR, which operates the Technical Secretariat of the CCPDH.

2.3.2.2 Method

To further strengthen ties between the CCPDH and CAROA, the IIHR coordinated the participation of members of the CCPDH in the Fourth Biannual Meeting of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA), held in Barbados (15-19 May 2006).

During the meeting, Lorena González, the representative of the IIHR, which operates the Technical Secretariat of the CCPDH, gave a presentation on the two institutions' efforts to develop stronger ties, the permanent task of providing information in English and Spanish via the Ombudsnet, the discussion forums and the different joint meetings that the two organizations have held.

2.3.2.3 Background / Rationale

The Central American Council of Human Rights Ombudsman (CCPDH) is a regional body that was created on 19 May 1994 to uphold human rights principles. It is made up of the ombudsman institutions of Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

The CCPDH is the mechanism used to coordinate the work of the ombudsman, so they can undertake regional actions together that have an impact at the local and international levels. This strengthens the role that each national institution plays in the defense and promotion of human rights, and in democratic development and the consolidation of the rule of law in their respective countries. The IIHR has run the Technical Secretariat of the CCPDH since 1999.

The CCPDH's objectives include strengthening and developing human rights as the basic principles of the organization, by implementing policies for the promotion and protection of human rights at the Central American level. The CCPDH also endeavors to ensure that rulings on human rights issued by the different bodies specializing in the subject are complied with, to achieve real justice. The CCPDH monitors the situation in each member country to ensure that this objective is being achieved. The CCPDH also actively seeks the development of human rights policies based on the dignity of the human person. To achieve this, the Council has a series of plans, programs and work projects that are carried out with international cooperation agencies.

The Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA) is an umbrella organization of human rights defenders in the Caribbean region. Created in 1998, it began operations in June 2000, during the first Regional Conference, which took place in Saint Lucia. It comprises the ombudsman institutions of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

CAROA's chief objectives include promoting the ideals of ombudsman institutions in the Caribbean region and their recognition by the states and other human rights entities that help

to improve their work and strengthen them as institutions dedicated to the protection of fundamental rights.

Education is another of its objectives. The members of CAROA promote and strengthen the culture of human rights by sponsoring training and education programs for ombudsman's offices in the region, and gathering, storing and disseminating information and research about the ombudsman institution and human rights organizations.

Haiti is the only Caribbean country whose ombudsman's office has a mandate that includes human rights promotion and protection. In recent years, however, the members of CAROA have become interested in discussing topics related to their role in promoting and protecting human rights in general. This new area of work envisioned by CAROA has led to the gradual development of links with the CCPDH. José Manuel Echandi, Vice President of the CCPDH, and the IIHR took part in the third regional meeting of CAROA, which took place in May 2004 in Jamaica. They gave presentations on the experience of the Central American ombudsman and women's human rights, respectively.

After the meeting, the IIHR set up a discussion list in English to disseminate information about situations related to human rights.

As part of the efforts to establish closer ties between the CCPDH and CAROA, Hayden Thomas and Lawrence Laurent (Chairman and Secretary of CAROA, respectively) took part in the 29th Meeting of the CCPDH, held 22-23 February 2005 in Antigua, Guatemala. During this activity, the two organizations signed an agreement of intent for further joint work. The aim was to set up a permanent regional forum for coordination that would make it possible to strengthen ties between the Caribbean and Central America. Greater integration will permit the organizations to share their expertise, implement joint activities in areas of common interest and enhance and support each other's activities.

The IIHR has a policy of supporting institutions like ombudsman's offices that satisfactorily meet the needs of the population and promote respect for human rights and effective guarantees for enforcing them, particularly with regard to vulnerable segments of the population. Ombudsman institutions fill a gap in human rights protection and play a key role in establishing and bolstering strong, stable democracies in the western hemisphere.

2.3.2.4 Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

In its capacity as the Technical Secretariat of the CCPDH, the IIHR coordinated the follow-up meeting with CAROA. The Institute's Ombudsman and Human Rights Program worked closely with Ramón Custodio, outgoing President of the CCPDH, Sergio Morales, incoming President of the CCPDH, Hayden Thomas, President of CAROA, and Cyril Clark, Ombudsman of Barbados, whose office hosted the activity.

2.3.2.5 Intermediate Steps

- Coordinate the logistical aspects of the participation of the members of the CCPDH in the Fourth Biannual Meeting of CAROA
- Define the content of the presentation to be made by the Technical Secretariat of the CCPDH

2.3.2.6 Results or outputs

- The incoming and outgoing presidents of the CCPDH took part in the Fourth Biannual Meeting of CAROA
- The working partnership between the CCPDH and CAROA was strengthened through the sharing of experiences and the discussion of mutual concerns
- The two organizations agreed to hold a meeting with all the members of the CCPDH and CAROA, in Costa Rica in November 2006, to continue to strengthen the partnership between the two regional bodies.

2.3.2.7 Impact indicators

“Stronger ties between the CCPDH and CAROA”

The Fourth Biannual Meeting of CAROA was attended by all the Caribbean ombudsman and the outgoing and incoming presidents of the CCPDH (Ramón Custodio and Sergio Morales, respectively). All the participants agreed that the meeting was a very important step in the process of strengthening ties between the CCPDH and CAROA.

“Greater capacity for coordination between the CCPDH and CAROA and horizontal cooperation between members of the CCPDH and CAROA”

- The two organizations decided to hold a meeting of all the members of the CCPDH and CAROA, at the end of 2006 in San Jose, Costa Rica, to coincide with the hearings of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- During the Fourth Biannual Meeting of CAROA, the Ombudsman of Belize, Paul Rodríguez, was elected president of the regional body. The members of CAROA stated that, in addition to his personal qualities, the fact that Mr. Rodríguez was also a member of the CCPDH meant he would be well placed to liaise between the two regional organizations.

“Stronger mandate for the defense of human rights in the countries whose ombudsman belong to the CCPDH and CAROA”

- The Caribbean and Central American ombudsman have similar mandates with regard to human rights (i.e., to expand, promote and strengthen the culture of human rights in their respective countries by means of joint research on problems of regional concern, and the public denunciation of human rights violations). However, it was clear from the comments made by the Caribbean ombudsman that they have focused more on overseeing the public administration. Therefore, support from Central America is key to helping them consolidate and strengthen their broader mandate.

2.3.2.8 Means of verification:

- Program of the Fourth Biannual Meeting of CAROA
- Mission Report

2.3 Lessons learned

The second meeting between the presidents of the CCPDH and CAROA took place during this quarter. Although Central America has a key role to play in helping the Caribbean ombudsman do more to expand, promote and strengthen the culture of human rights, the language barrier will have to be taken into account for future meetings.

PROJECT: STRENGTHENING THE OMBUDSMAN IN LATIN AMERICA

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES JULY- DECEMBER 2006

ACTIVITIES	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Updating of the integrated information and communication system for the ombudsman offices in Latin America and the Caribbean						
Meeting of the Central American Council of Human Rights Ombudsman (CCPDH) and the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA)						

3. PROJECT: RAPID RESPONSE SYSTEM

3.1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The IIHR implements projects throughout the Americas with a variety of sectors and enjoys a great deal of credibility and legitimacy. Combined with its technical expertise, this allows it to offer case-specific, direct advisory services and assistance both to government agencies and non-governmental organizations, and to act as a mediator. This, in turn, makes it easier to respond rapidly to situations that require urgent action. The results on the two occasions on which the IIHR has so far had cause to take action under this project (Guatemala, between September and December 2003, and Colombia, in August 2005) confirmed this, as described in the respective quarterly reports.

3.2. ANNUAL GOAL

To provide a technical and academic response, from a human rights perspective, to unforeseen, critical situations that pose a threat to the rule of law and democratic governability, in at least one country in the region, when both USAID and the IIHR are in favor of such action

3.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

3.2.1 Description

During the reporting period (April-June 2006), the IIHR did not identify a country where action was needed of the kind envisaged under this project. When it does, it will draft a work plan targeted at and/or incorporating the strategically important players and governmental and civil institutions involved. (The objectives proposed in the plan will vary according to the country and situation, given that this is a “rapid response” project). The work plan will specify the activities to be implemented, the objectives, the schedule, the places where implementation will take place, the beneficiaries and the budget.

3.2.2 Method

The method proposed in the annual plan approved for 2006 was that USAID and the IIHR would identify a country where a specific situation called for an immediate technical response from the Institute. If USAID and the IIHR agreed that such an intervention was necessary, USAID would authorize the IIHR to take action under the aegis of this project.

3.2.3 Background / Rationale

As mentioned in the Work Plan for January-December 2006, the original objective of the USAID-IIHR general cooperation agreement was to develop a regional system to detect and remedy institutional weaknesses that posed a threat to human rights and democratic governability, paying special attention to the human rights situation.

The changeable situation in the Latin American and Caribbean countries was originally cited as the justification for this project. However, the information gathered by the IIHR while implementing its activities, and specific requests from various beneficiaries, USAID and other international cooperation agencies also confirmed how important it is to be able to provide a

rapid, qualified response to different situations. As a result, in August 2003 the IIHR asked USAID to approve an amendment to the original design of the project, reducing it to a system for monitoring threats to human rights, in the specific field of citizen security. The funds allocated in the budget that had not been executed were reassigned to a “rapid response” project to tackle situations that both USAID and the IIHR feel require urgent action, for the remainder of the agreement (2007).

Between September and December 2003, the first activity was implemented under this rapid response system. Targeted at the pre-electoral and electoral process in Guatemala, the direct beneficiaries were the local Elections Tribunal and the Office of the Ombudsman.

In the quarterly report for July-September 2005, the IIHR described the results of the second action carried out under this project - a mission to analyze the pre-electoral conditions in Colombia, from 15-20 August.

3.2.4 Institution(s) responsible and coordination

The IIHR’s Executive Director is responsible for identifying the target country and situation. He then asks the corresponding operating department to prepare and implement the action required. This is coordinated directly with USAID-Washington.

3.2.5 Intermediate steps

According to the Annual Plan approved for 2006, the intermediate steps continue to be:

- Identify a country and a situation that warrant a rapid technical response related to human rights
- Reach agreement with USAID-Washington, obtaining authorization to act
- Draft a work plan

3.2.6 Results or outputs

There are no results or outputs to report for this quarter.

3.2.7 Impact indicators

“Implementation of a rapid response plan of action in a specific country to reduce threats to the effective exercise of human rights”

Since no short-term, specialized assistance activity was carried out, the progress achieved with regard to this performance indicator cannot yet be evaluated.

3.3 LESSONS LEARNED

As no activities were carried out between April and June 2006, it is not possible to evaluate the lessons learned.

C. DEMOCRATIZATION OF POLITICAL PROCESSES

1. PROJECT: STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS

1.1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

During this quarter (April-June 2006), congressional and municipal elections were held in the Dominican Republic (16 May), presidential and legislative elections and elections for the Andean Parliament took place in Peru (the first round of voting on 9 April and the presidential run-off on 4 June) and a presidential election was held in Colombia (29 May).

With regard to the Electoral Network, during the second quarter of the year project staff put the final touches to the new Web page. Designed in the form of a portal, it presents the information and services available on the site in a simplified, standardized format. The IIHR will be changing the Internet server in July, in order to install the portal. The new portal should be up and running by the end of August.

The database (red-electoral@iidh.ed.cr) includes information about 614 people. A further 29 people were included in the list during this quarter, following the Twelfth Inter-American Course of Elections and Democracy. The activity took place 24-27 April in Mexico City.

1.2. ANNUAL GOALS

The Strengthening Electoral Institutions project has two annual goals:

- To consolidate the activities of the Inter-American Electoral Network aimed at strengthening the electoral bodies, basically those that will be organizing electoral processes in 2006 and 2007
- To strengthen selected electoral organizations and those engaged in electoral and political reform processes in 2006

1.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

1.3.1. INTER-AMERICAN ELECTORAL NETWORK

1.3.1.1. Description

Composed of UNIORE's member organizations, the Network provides links for regular communication and information sharing. Civil society organizations (CSOs) with a stake in electoral issues (Lima Agreement), academics and members of political parties are also involved in this activity.

The Network operates year-round. During this quarter (April-June), it continued to facilitate information sharing and communication among its members, particularly during the observation missions to Colombia, Peru and the Dominican Republic.

1.3.1.2. Method

The Network's most concrete activities take place via the IIHR/CAPEL Web page, whose new address is www.iidh.ed.cr/capel, to make it easier for users to access it. The organizations that make up the network of networks contributed information such as current national political and electoral legislation and details of changes in the composition of the electoral bodies. In its capacity as the Executive Secretariat, the IIHR/CAPEL produced the UNIORE newsletters for March-April and May 2006 (in both Spanish and English). The newsletter for June is in preparation and will be combined with the July issue. The Network continued to provide virtual communication tools, such as the International Electoral News Service (SINE). The Electoral Tribunal of Panama prepares the information and it is then disseminated widely via email.

1.3.1.3. Background / Rationale

The IIHR/CAPEL continued to systematize information in its capacity as the Executive Secretariat of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean (Tikal Protocol, 1985), the Association of Electoral Bodies of South America (Quito Protocol, 1989) and the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (UNIORE, 1991). The latter comprises the two associations plus the electoral bodies of Canada, the USA and Mexico.

The continuity of the electoral network made it possible to keep all the members abreast of the latest developments. They often express their appreciation for the political-electoral data and information from the hemisphere they receive, both in conversations and via email.

1.3.1.4. Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

The IIHR/CAPEL team of specialists, working with the associations of electoral organizations and the Electoral Tribunal of Panama (SINE). Communication and contact with members of electoral bodies and CSOs involved in political and electoral issues, and with local USAID offices, for informational purposes or to identify joint initiatives.

1.3.1.5. Intermediate Steps

- The Election Calendar and the Directory of Electoral Organizations were updated and new publications and opinion articles were uploaded to the Web page
- The IIHR/CAPEL and other institutions provided continuous input for SINE news items

1.3.1.6. Results or Outputs

The following work was done on the Electoral Network's Web page between April and June:

Associations of Electoral Organizations

a. Directory of Electoral Organizations

The data on the following electoral organizations was updated:

- a. State Elections Commission, Puerto Rico

- b. National Electoral Council, Colombia
- c. National Electoral Council, Venezuela
- d. National Electoral Court, Bolivia
- e. National Office of Electoral Processes, Peru
- f. Elections Tribunal, Chile
- g. Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Brazil
- h. Supreme Electoral Tribunal, Honduras

b. UNIORE newsletters

- Spanish version of the March 2006 newsletter uploaded to the Web page
- Spanish version of the April-May 2006 newsletter uploaded to the Web page
- English version of the April-May 2006 newsletter uploaded to the Web page

Election Calendar

- The list of electoral events in 2006 was updated and new information added.

Publications

a. Data and statistics of interest

The document "Election Results in Latin America" was updated

Links

The links to other sites were updated.

News

At least 15 news items from the SINE, on electoral and political topics related to Latin America, were posted each day.

1.3.1.7. Impact Indicators

"Network of electoral organizations in the region expanded and strengthened"

"More documentation and comparative experiences, which will be used as input for the work of the associations and research projects"

"Electoral organizations and other members of the Electoral Network have more up-to-date knowledge"

"Easier access to up-to-date political and electoral information"

Between April and June, the staff continued updating the information on several of the region's electoral bodies. The most important work done during the reporting period were the final touches to the redesign of the IIHR/CAPEL's Web page, in the form of a portal. A portal is a transparent directory of content located elsewhere. It presents both information and services in an organized, standardized format. The aim in redesigning the page is to offer information and services, and disseminate specialized knowledge, in a more integrated and uniform way.

Means of verification:

- Inter-American Electoral Network
- One UNIORE newsletter (issue 59), covering April-May (Spanish and English). The June newsletter is in preparation and will be combined with the July issue.
- Distribution lists (total of 614 people)
- IIHR/CAPEL Web page: www.iidh.ed.cr/capel

1.3.2. UNIORE NEWSLETTERS

1.3.2.1. Description

One newsletter (issue 59, covering April-May) was distributed during this quarter, in English and in Spanish. Work on the June newsletter is under way; it will be combined with the July issue.

Copies of the newsletter were sent to the members of UNIORE, CSOs involved in electoral issues (particularly those of the Lima Agreement), certain organizations belonging to the Inter-American Network for Democracy (RID), academics, members of political parties, donors and local USAID offices.

1.3.2.2. Method

The monthly newsletter was disseminated electronically in June via the specialized section of the IIHR/CAPEL, the IIHR Web page and the SINE. These newsletters continue to increase horizontal cooperation among the electoral bodies, as they are a two-way communication tool. They include articles by UNIORE members who wish to share points of interest regarding specific national situations, or discuss emerging issues. The IIHR/CAPEL receives the information and produces the newsletters.

1.3.2.3. Background / Rationale

Produced in response to repeated requests from the electoral organizations for an expeditious means of disseminating information about important electoral developments in the western hemisphere, these newsletters have helped keep the target population informed of important matters related to political rights in the Americas. The newsletters are a permanent information strategy. Combined with the electronic links and electoral news service, they ensure that information circulates rapidly.

1.3.2.4. Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

The IIHR/CAPEL, working with the members of UNIORE. The information contained in the UNIORE newsletters is sent to, and shared with, USAID-Washington. The newsletters are emailed to the local USAID offices and to the members of the Inter-American Electoral Network.

1.3.2.5. Intermediate Steps

- The project continued to compile information

- Graphic production and design of the material
- The newsletter was posted on CAPEL's specialized section of the IIHR website and the SINE
- The newsletter for June was translated into English

1.3.2.6. Results or Outputs

Between April and June, the project produced one monthly newsletter (issue 59, in English and Spanish). The June newsletter is in preparation and will be combined with the July issue. The newsletters are available in the SINE system and in the specialized section of CAPEL's Web page (www.iidh.ed.cr/capel).

1.3.2.7. Impact Indicators

“Electoral information disseminated more widely in the Americas”

“More documents and experiences shared on electoral topics and processes in the region”

“Users of the Network more conversant with electoral topics and processes in the region”

Between April and June, the UNIORE newsletters were well received both by old and new members of the Network. In emails received, they thanked the IIHR/CAPEL for sending them the information and endorsed the newsletters' content. This has been the case especially since copies of press releases from the IIHR Executive Director began to be sent to the individuals on the distribution list of the UNIORE newsletter.

Means of verification:

- Inter-American Electoral Network. Web page: www.iidh.ed.cr/capel
- UNIORE newsletter (issue 59)
- Distribution List (614 people)
- Emails received by the IIHR/CAPEL

1.3.3. HORIZONTAL COOPERATION MISSIONS

1.3.3.1. Description

Four horizontal cooperation missions were carried out during this quarter (April-June) involving the members of the associations of electoral organizations and the Inter-American Electoral Network. These missions took place in: Dominican Republic (congressional and local elections, on 16 May), with 42 international observers and two IIHR/CAPEL officials taking part; Peru (presidential and congressional elections and elections for the Andean Parliament, on 9 April, and the presidential run-off election, on 4 June), with 37 observers and three IIHR/CAPEL officials participating in the first round, and 25 observers and two IIHR/CAPEL officials in the second; and, Colombia (presidential election on 29 May), with 26 observers and two IIHR/CAPEL officials being involved. The lists of observers for the missions to Dominican Republic, Peru and Colombia (Annexes 1-3) and the respective evaluation reports (Annex 4-6) are attached.

1.3.3.2. Method

The IIHR/CAPEL promoted and facilitated these horizontal cooperation and technical support missions as a way of providing short-term support or sustained technical cooperation at the bilateral or multilateral levels.

The technical missions began roughly four days before the voting and ended one day after it, to allow the members to evaluate Election Day. This also made it possible to make recommendations about how electoral processes could be improved in the host countries. As much information as possible was garnered during the missions by means of meetings with representatives of the political parties involved in the elections, sessions held to analyze the local situation and opinion polls.

The IIHR/CAPEL provided the documents necessary to organize the observation missions with the electoral bodies concerned: the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic, the National Office of Electoral Processes of Peru and Colombia's electoral organization (the National Electoral Council and the National Registry). In the case of Colombia, the IIHR/CAPEL also collaborated with the electoral organization in holding an international forum on 25 May, entitled "*The Organization of Elections in Latin America. Current situation, outlook and comparison with other experiences,*" sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA/Colombia).

1.3.3.3. Background / Rationale

The technical observation missions to the Dominican Republic, Peru and Colombia enabled the members of the electoral associations to acquire and share technical knowledge in a specific situation. These missions serve a twofold purpose: to monitor the effective application of the basic international rules governing political rights in a specific election; and to assess the need for possible technical assistance programs that could bolster the political system.

1.3.3.4. Institution(s) Responsible and Coordination

The IIHR/CAPEL, working with senior officials of the electoral organizations selected (members of the Inter-American Electoral Network) and local USAID missions.

1.3.3.5. Intermediate Steps

- Request from the host organization
- Invite members of the Inter-American Network to take part in the mission
- Identify priority areas
- Design the work program
- Send documentation to host organization

1.3.3.6. Results or outputs

Generally speaking, the four electoral processes that took place during this quarter were conducted in a peaceful manner and voters were able to exercise their civic rights. In all cases, technical recommendations were made regarding organizational matters and electoral logistics, voter lists, the transmission of results and areas of training that could be improved for future electoral processes.

In the particular case of Colombia, international observers and judges and officials of the Colombian electoral organization received training at an international forum on the organization of elections in Latin America. A comparative approach was adopted for the activity (the experiences of other countries were considered).

The summaries of conclusions for the Dominican Republic, Peru and Colombia are attached (Annex 4-6).

1.3.3.7. Impact Indicators

“Electoral legislation or practices modified as a result of the implementation of recommendations or lessons learned from the missions”

“The members of the Inter-American Electoral Network have more comparative knowledge of electoral legislation and practices”

Given the makeup of the horizontal cooperation missions, between April and June the observers made technical recommendations related to electoral logistics, the secrecy of the vote, voter information, the transmission of results and other matters.

In the Dominican Republic, the observers acknowledged that on Election Day the voting proceeded normally. They also pinpointed many areas in which improvements could be made, however. For example, many of the polling stations visited were late in opening, due, in part, to overly complicated procedures and controls that could be simplified in other elections without undermining security. The materials were also found to be incomplete and delivered in varying quantities. They had to be counted several times and this delayed the start of the voting. The mission suggested that more clearly marked ballot papers and boxes be used,

with more colors, for easier identification. There were also reports of the indelible ink being spilt and causing stains and skin irritations among voters and polling officers. This aspect needs to be reviewed to avoid problems in future processes. Finally, the mission drew attention to the fact that the transmission of results was extremely slow. It emphasized the key importance of this issue and recommended an in-depth evaluation of what occurred with a view to adopting effective measures to prevent a similar situation in the future.

In the case of Colombia, the mission felt that the process strengthened the legitimacy of Colombian democracy but called for a comprehensive debate on the country's electoral system before further elections are held. The mission also suggested that voter information desks needed to be improved. Not all voting centers had computerized information centers and properly identified Registry officials to answer voters' questions. The observers also noted, as they did following the 12 March election, that the screens used to permit three people to vote simultaneously do not guarantee the secrecy of the vote. The mission respectfully urged the electoral agency to review the question of the use of three identity documents to vote and the restricted use of the electoral roll. The usefulness of the roll as a security and control mechanism is limited because of its exclusively numerical content. Furthermore, voters do not sign the roll, are not required to leave their fingerprints and there is no photo. This makes it very vulnerable.

Finally, in Peru the mission highlighted the fact that large numbers of the elderly and the physically challenged turned out to vote, despite the difficulty of reaching their polling stations. Nevertheless, for both rounds of voting the media in particular fueled a highly charged atmosphere and a polarization of ideas. The frictions were so great that opponents even tried to assault one of the candidates as he was voting at a university in Lima. By and large, the authorities responsible for the process did a better job during the second round of voting, have learned some lessons from the first. This was true of both the candidates' security and the transmission of the results.

No electoral reforms were enacted because of these reports but the missions continue to provide local officials with plenty of ideas for possible reforms and specific improvements to electoral practices. In the specific case of Colombia, the report emphasized the need for a wide-ranging debate on the country's election system.

Means of verification:

- Summary of the conclusions of the sessions held to evaluate the elections in Dominican Republic, Peru and Colombia (see Annexes 4-6).
- UNIORE newsletter (issue 59)
- International Electoral News Service (SINE)

1.4 LESSONS LEARNED

The IIHR/CAPEL and the Electoral Network responded well to the challenges they faced during this quarter (April-June 2006). They took part in the elections held in the Dominican Republic, Peru (two rounds of voting) and Colombia. In all four cases, they prepared the observation programs for the electoral judges and officials who visited the countries on behalf of the Electoral Network. In Colombia, they also helped organize a forum on the organization of elections in different Latin American countries, thanks to funding provided by other donors. During this quarter, the project also made the organizational arrangements required to

collaborate with electoral agencies in two countries where elections were held on the same day (2 July). General elections took place in Mexico, while in Bolivia delegates were chosen for the Constituent Assembly and a referendum was held. Once again, the IIHR/CAPEL's organizational capabilities were put to the test, in what is proving to be a very important and complex electoral year.

The IIHR/CAPEL believes that these reciprocal electoral observation activities, involving judges and officials of electoral bodies of different countries, should continue to be strengthened, provided they are channeled through the region's associations of electoral organizations and the host body's observation agenda is respected. An unfortunate incident took place during the first round of voting in Peru. Observers from the electoral bodies of Venezuela and Nicaragua failed to stick to the program and became embroiled in a political argument with one of the candidates. The National Elections Board was naturally upset and did not invite the two countries concerned to observe the second round of voting. Situations of this kind can be avoided if the observation activities carried out respect the institutional parameters established by the host electoral agency.

Another important lesson learned is that the research undertaken by the IIHR/CAPEL in recent years of is great academic value for enriching the region's doctrine on political-electoral issues. The launching of the different publications on political parties (Agenda for Strengthening Political Parties, Cuaderno de CAPEL 50 and Democratization of Political Parties in Bolivia, Chile and the Dominican Republic) has again highlighted the IIHR/CAPEL's role as an institution that creates and disseminates doctrine on current issues. These publications were disseminated at the Twelfth Inter-American Course on Elections and Democracy, which took place in Mexico (24-27 April). Financed by other donors, this event provided stakeholders with an important opportunity for to meet and discuss the challenges facing contemporary democracy. The participants included electoral judges and officials, representatives of political parties and CSOs, and academics from all parts of the region.

Finally, despite the very full election calendar (with elections already carried out and others being organized), the project was able to confirm Panama as the site of the UNIORE conference, after the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Brazil withdrew its offer to host the activity. The fact that the event will be taking place at the same time as the Tikal conference will enrich the discussions and also permit the Executive Secretariat to pool its organizational and financial resources in these key activities.

PROJECT: STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR JULY - DECEMBER 2006

ACTIVITIES	COUNTRY	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
20th Conference Tikal Protocol and 8 th Conference UNIORE	Panama		7-12				
12 th Quito Protocol	Bolivia (date to be decided)						
UNIORE newsletters	Costa Rica						
Inter-American Electoral Network	Costa Rica						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Bolivia						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Mexico						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Brazil						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Costa Rica						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Ecuador						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Nicaragua						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Saint Lucia						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Peru						
Horizontal Cooperation Missions	Paraguay						
Exploratory missions	El Salvador (to be decided)						
Exploratory missions	Nicaragua (to be decided)						

2. PROJECT: EQUAL REPRESENTATION AND POLITICAL PARTY REFORM

As mentioned in the previous report (January-March 2006), early in February the project produced a new version of the “Strategic Plan for Strengthening Political Parties in Latin America.” After the IIHR/CAPEL team had studied and approved the document, on 22 February it was emailed to seven experts: Jean Francois Prud’homme (Canada/Mexico), Flavia Freidenberg (Argentina), Delia Ferreira (Argentina), Rafael Toribio (Dominican Republic), Fernando Sánchez (Costa Rica), Alvaro Artiga (El Salvador) and Rotsay Rosales (Costa Rica). Consultant Ana Cecilia Escalante supervised and coordinated all this work. The experts were asked to evaluate the plan’s conceptualization and strategic approach, identify the countries where local actions or national projects could be implemented, and draw up a list of priorities with regard to the themes, lines of action and activities, based on the criteria set out in the document.

The results of this virtual consultation were used as the basic input for an on-site meeting of the experts involved (except for Jean Francois Prud’homme) on April 28 in Mexico City, following the Twelfth Inter-American Course on Elections and Democracy, which was held 24-27 April.

Immediately after the meeting, consultant Ana Cecilia Escalante used all the experts’ contributions and inputs to prepare a new version of the strategic plan, together with a series of annexes that includes details of CAPEL’s previous experience, a list of questions under the different thematic headings and a proposal for the IIHR/CAPEL team of specialists on how to go about implementing the plan. The proposal discusses and attempts to resolve certain key issues related to the implementation of this plan, namely:

- Internal organization of CAPEL
- Teamwork involving the technical personnel
- Team members available (consultants)
- Resources available

The proposal also includes a table to help determine the first countries where the strategy will be implemented. The IIHR/CAPEL team of specialists is in the process of completing this information and will be holding a working meeting to arrive at the final version of the document.