



FACT SHEET

Summary of the Democratic Governance Program

BACKGROUND

USAID's Democratic Governance program assists the Government of Colombia (GOC) as it combines broader and fairer justice, with more representative, responsive governance. The program focuses on democratic governance at the national and local levels to extend the presence of an accountable, legitimate and just state, particularly to address the needs of traditionally underserved regions and populations, i.e. Afro-Colombians and the indigenous. The program is comprised of three components: Human Rights, Justice, and Regional Governance Consolidation.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- **Human Rights:** The USAID/Colombia project is the largest USAID human rights initiative in the world. Through this component, USAID supports Colombian government institutions and civil society efforts to strengthen respect for and adherence to human rights. The project provides support for prevention of and protection against human rights abuses, and for strengthening government and civil society responses. The objectives are to strengthen State capacity and accountability and independent oversight capacity of civil society organizations; improve government capacity and human rights public policy; foster a culture of human rights; strengthen civil society's role and capacity to promote public policy, dialogue, and accountability; and promote victims' rights to truth, justice, and reparations.
- **Justice:** The program supports the implementation of legal reforms at the national, regional and local levels to foster a more transparent, democratic, and effective Colombian judiciary. The purpose is to broaden access to free and timely legal services for disenfranchised, conflict impacted, and/or geographically marginalized Colombians by expanding capacity in four core areas: effective national implementation of the new Criminal Procedures Code; introduction of the accusatory system; strengthened court administration; expanded access to justice, especially for the disenfranchised including availability of public defense, legal assistance, justice houses, and alternative dispute resolution system; and improved civil society capacity to mobilize support for justice reform and monitor, assess, advocate for and assist in national justice reform processes.
- **Regional Governance Consolidation:** Through this program USAID seeks to strengthen the legitimacy of the democratic system and state institutions in historically marginalized regions of Colombia recovering from conflict. The objective is to improve the GOC's regional stabilization efforts by implementing activities that enhance the legitimacy of democratic systems and institutions. The program focuses on two components: ensure effective state presence by improving local and regional governments' ability to deliver quality health and education services as well as citizen security; and build capacity of local institutions to implement good governance practices and improved service delivery.

RESULTS ACHIEVED UNDER THIS PROGRAM (as of 11/20/07):

- **Human Rights:**
 - Early Warning System established to prevent human rights abuses.
 - Establishment of an individual protection program for human rights workers, defenders, and community and social leaders. The program has benefited 4,745 at-risk persons.
- **Justice:**
 - 45 justice houses established which have handled approximately 6.1 million cases.
 - 3 Public Defenders Offices and 2 legal aid clinics established.
 - More than 2,000 conciliators certified in alternative dispute resolution.
- **Regional Governance Consolidation:**
 - Increased transparency of 2007 municipal and departmental elections by promoting candidates' debates, implementing the GOC's "Clean Vote" initiative, and supporting civil society's Electoral Observation Mission.
 - Conducted awareness and training programs for candidates running for mayoral and gubernatorial seats on topics including health, education, citizen security, public administration, and human rights.