

NEEDS ASSESSMENT
&
INITIAL BILATERAL ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA

A REPORT TO
THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PREPARED BY
THE CONSORTIUM FOR LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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THE CENTER FOR LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT,
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AND

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INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSE OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The analysis of country-specific legislative needs, as determined in consultation with the counterpart legislature, is the vital first step in any regional and/or bilateral legislative development effort. Foremost, the needs assessment activity, or diagnostic as it is sometimes also called, is crucial to developing the whole notion of legislative development in a cooperating nation's legislature -- from establishing the fundamental premise that the legislature is a critical institution in the political and economic development of a nation to exploring the range of strategies available in a given nation for successfully enhancing its legislature's institutional capabilities.

Legislative development, or legislative institution building, may be defined as the ability of the legislative institution, acting through its leadership, to study, assess, and formulate its needs for resources and information, to develop plans and programs to acquire those needed resources, and to continuously assess those needs and develop those resources for the purpose of supporting its fundamental political *raison d' etre* -- reaching agreements within the legislature between factions and between the legislative and executive branches in the context of change and competition without institutional disruption or disintegration.

Part and parcel of the needs assessment activity discussions is development of a clear understanding about the mutual and cooperative nature of the legislative development technical assistance working relationship between the Consortium and the cooperating nations' legislatures. The ultimate goal of this cooperative effort is attainment of an in-country or in-region sustained legislative development capability, one that extends beyond the project's conclusion.

In addition to establishing the above understandings, the Consortium's needs assessment activities will jointly document with the cooperating legislatures' participation and active assistance, concrete technical, operational, and informational needs both by legislature and by sub-region of legislatures (e.g., Central America). Finally, the needs assessment activity will be used to generate interest in participation in the project's graduate degree program at the University at Albany, State University of New York, the project's internship programs in U.S. state legislatures, and the project's study tours in the U.S.

The Consortium for Legislative Development undertook this initial needs assessment of the National Assembly of Nicaragua at

the invitation of both the President of the National Assembly and the U.S.A.I.D Mission in Managua from October 21-27, 1990. The Consortium's field assessment team was comprised of the following members:

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In addition, this initial needs assessment report has benefitted from the input of MR. GERALD REED, PROJECT PROGRAM MANAGER FOR FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY. This study was greatly facilitated by background research and administrative support provided by PATRICIA ELIZONDO DE CHAMORRO of The Center for Democracy's Managua office. Every effort was made in this initial needs assessment to assure accuracy and impartiality. Since it does, however, represent an initial effort, it will probably bear correction and improvement as the needs assessment process matures. Suggestions for improvements are in the interest of the project's beneficiaries and are always welcome. As is customary, the authors remain responsible for this product.

I. THE PLACE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA

Background Introduction: 1979 to Present

On July 19, 1979, the Somoza regime fell after 43 years of rule. It was replaced by the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional/Sandinista National Liberation Front). The Sandinistas inaugurated a radically new political, economic, and social order in the country, yet they wielded total control of the governmental apparatus as had their predecessor. However, as a result of Nicaragua's free and democratic election held on February 25, 1990 for all national offices, including the National Assembly, the Sandinista's were swept from office by the UNO coalition (Union Nacional Opositora/National Opposition Union). [A list of the political parties and their members is appended.] The new democratic government was inaugurated on April 25, 1990, and the National Assembly began to organize itself.

The Constitutional Structure of the State

In 1987, the FSLN adopted a new Political Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua, and this constitution is the operative constitution today. [A copy of the Constitution of Nicaragua is appended.] It organizes the State into four independent but coordinate branches: Legislativo, Ejecutivo, Judicial, and Electoral. [Title VIII, Chapter I, Art.129]

The Legislative Branch

The constitutional provisions governing the Legislative Branch are stated in Chapter II (Articles 132-143), of Title VIII, of the Constitution. The Asamblea Nacional (National Assembly) is a unicameral body which exercises the legislative power through representative popular mandate [Art.132].

Number, Term, and Election of Representatives

The Constitution authorizes a minimum of 90 Representatives plus (their respective) Alternates, but it also provides that this number may be increased in accord with the general census

[Art.132]. The actual number of Representatives elected in February 25, 1990 elections was 100.

The Representatives of the National Assembly are elected to six year terms [Art.136]; there is no prohibition on reelection.

Representatives are elected by universal suffrage, in equal, free, and direct elections, by secret ballot, by regional districts, and by means of a proportional representation system [Art.132]. Note: the Electoral Law provides that representatives be elected from a party slate of candidates for a district rather than by individual candidate, the vote total for each party determining proportionally how many of the candidates in descending order are elected from each party list. It is also possible for un-elected Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates, depending upon the number of votes received, to form part of the membership of the National Assembly [Art.133]. This is the case with Daniel Ortega Saavedra, former President of the Republic.

Functions, Powers, and Duties

There are 26 "functions" (powers and duties) of the National Assembly enumerated in Article 138, the first among them being the drafting and approval of laws and decrees and their amendment or repeal. Other key powers and duties enumerated include:

Consideration, discussion, and approval of the General Budget of the Republic (#6). Note: the legislative budget is included and, pursuant to Article 112, the entire budget must be balanced;

Election of Supreme Court Judges and election of Supreme Electoral Council Members (#7);

Election of the Controller General of the Republic (#8);

Ratification or rejection of international treaties (#11);

Delegation of the legislative faculties to the President of the Republic when the National Assembly is in recess (#16);

Election of the National Assembly's Executive Board (the Mesa Directiva or Junta Directiva) (#17);

Determination of the political and administrative division of the country (#20);

Consideration of the economic and social development plans of the country (#21);

Authorization of foreign visits of the President of the Republic which last longer than one month (#23);

Decree the General Statute and Internal Rules of the National Assembly (#25) Note: "Decrees" have the force of statutory law and are unilaterally "enacted" by one branch. Certain constitutional notice requirements may apply and certain subjects are exempt from the reach of decrees by the legislative or executive branches.

Initiation and Enactment of Laws

Another important provision pertaining to the Legislative Branch of the Constitution declares that Representatives to the National Assembly and the President of the Republic may initiate bills, as may the Supreme Court of Justice and the Supreme Electoral Council, but only in matters pertaining to their respective jurisdictions. This right to initiate bills is regulated by the General Statute and Internal Rules of the National Assembly [Art. 140] (See above re: decree per #25, Art.138).

In order for bills to be considered for vote by the National Assembly, there must be a quorum consisting of half of its members plus one; a simple majority is required for their passage [Art. 141]. Once approved, a bill is sent to the President of the Republic for authorization, promulgation, and publication [Art. 141], although the President of the Republic may veto or partially veto a bill within 15 days of receiving it [Art. 142]. A vetoed bill or the vetoed portion of it must be returned to the National Assembly (with the reasons specified) to enable the National Assembly to override the veto by a vote of half plus one of its Representatives [Art. 143]. If the President does not veto the bill, but does not authorize, promulgate or publish it either, the President of the National Assembly shall order the law to be published anyway [Art. 142].

The Executive Branch

The constitutional provisions governing the Executive Branch are stated in Chapter III (Articles 144-153), of Title VIII, of the Constitution.

The President of the Republic

Article 144 declares that the President of the Republic is the Head of State, the Head of the Government, the Commander in Chief of the Defense and Security Forces of the Nation, and that the

President exercises the executive power. The election of the President is by universal suffrage, by equal, free, and direct elections, by secret ballot, and by the largest plurality [Art.146]. The presidential term of office is 6 years [Art.148] and there is no limitation on reelection.

The functions of the President are enumerated in Article 150. Of key importance are such powers and duties as:

Initiating legislation and exercising the right to veto enactments of the National Assembly (#3);

Enacting executive decrees with the force of law in fiscal and administrative matters (#4);

Preparing the General Budget of the Republic and promulgating it upon approval or review by the National Assembly, depending on the case (#5);

Assuming the legislative faculties delegated by the National Assembly during its recess period (#7);

Decreeing and putting into effect the State of Emergency in circumstances defined by the Constitution and forwarding the decree to the National Assembly for ratification within a period of no more than 45 days (#9). Articles 185 and 186 specify the President's authority to suspend the rights and guarantees consecrated in the Constitution (war, threat to national security, economic conditions, or national catastrophe) and which rights cannot be suspended under any circumstance.

The Vice President of the Republic

The Vice President of the Republic is authorized by the Constitution (Art.145) to carry out the functions delegated by the President and to substitute for the President during the President's temporary or permanent absences. Note: The substitution provision [Arts.145 and 149] has been a source of contention. A debate in the National Assembly, at which we were present, occurred on this issue October 25, 1990. The President's proposal to grant power to the Vice President only after a presidential absence of more than one month (such absences have to be approved by the National Assembly) was successful.

II. THE POLITICAL COMPOSITION & CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The National Assembly elected February 25, 1990 in the nation's free and democratic election represents the configuration of political forces operating in the country at the time.

The Political Parties of the National Assembly

The two electoral political parties which participated in the February 1990 election were the UNO (National Opposition Union), a broad coalition of more than one dozen parties, or fractions, and the FSLN (Sandinistas). The UNO coalition won the elections taking 60 seats to the FSLN's 39 (one seat went to MUR in a split from the FSLN). Below is a table of the two major electoral parties, plus MUR, the number of their members and, in the case of UNO, a further breakout of the number of members by coalition party or fraction.* [A complete list of the Representatives of the National Assembly and their party and fraction is appended.]

TABLE OF PARTIES & MEMBERSHIP IN THE
NICARAGUAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
DECEMBER, 1990

<u>PARTY/COALITION</u>	<u>FRACTION</u>	<u>TOTAL MEMBERS</u>
<u>UNO</u>	--	53
P.L.C. (Partido Liberal Constitucionalista)	4	
P.A.N. (Partido Accion Nacional)	3	
P.S.N. (Partido Socialista Nicaraguense)	3	
P.D.C. (Partido Democrata Cristiano)	5	
M.D.N. (Movimento Democratico		

Nicaraguense)	3	
P.S.D. (Partido Social Democrata)	5	
P.A.L.I. (Partido Neo-Liberal)	3	
P.A.N.C. (Partido Alianza Nacional Conservadora)	2	
PC de Nic (Partido Comunista de Nicaragua)	3	
P.L.I. (Partido Liberal Independiente)	5	
A.P.C. (Alianza Popular Conservadora)	6	
P.P.S.C. (Partido Popular Social Cristiano)	2	
P.I.A.C. (Partido Integracionista de America Central)	2	
P.N.C. (Partido Nacional Conservador)	5	
P.S.C. (Partido Social Cristiano/Yatama)	1	
<u>FSLN</u>	39	39
<u>MUR</u>	1	1

The Impact of Numerical Representation on the Politics of the National Assembly

The FSLN, while not needed to govern (pass legislation), could wield more significant power when constitutional issues are at stake. Since a total reform of the Constitution requires the approval of two-thirds of the total number of Representatives (Art.194), the votes of FSLN members would be required. However, for partial reform of the Constitution (clearly a gray area) only 60% approval is required, so it is conceivable that the UNO coalition could prevail within its 60% ruling majority. The FSLN's real power at this point, however, could be said to be attributable more to the experience that its members and staff acquired while holding the reins of power for the preceding decade. Many FSLN legislative staff hold positions in the new National Assembly, as fraction staff or as central staff, a circumstance which will be discussed in Part III.

The Impact of the Structure of Government on the Role Played by the National Assembly

The role a legislature plays depends upon the structure of the political system within which it operates. Within a presidential system characterized by separation of powers and by checks and balances, such as in the U.S. political system, the legislature plays an independent active role. Within a parliamentary two party system, such as the British Parliament, the legislature becomes an arena for debates but most decisions and public policy are initiated and controlled by the majority party. In the former case, the legislature develops its independent sources of information and staffing support. In the latter case, the legislature's information resources and staff support are very limited, and the political parties are the focus for information and staff support. In the case of Nicaragua, the political system is presidential, and while currently it is a two party electoral system, there are in fact numerous party fractions. Furthermore, the staffing and information resources appear currently to be housed with the parties rather than with the legislative institution. It is still too early to assess how independent and active a role the National Assembly will play, although there is every indication that its leadership intends for it to have a very active role given the appropriate resources.

III. THE ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Organizing the New National Assembly

Since UNO's member fractions constituted a working majority as result of the February 25, 1990 elections, it had the task of organizing its governance of the National Assembly, which commenced after the April 25, 1990 inauguration. The UNO did not start from scratch, nor could it, because it inherited a constitutional and statutory organizational structure for directing both the political and administrative functions of the National Assembly. It also inherited a legal framework for the conduct of the legislative process. Lastly, the new majority inherited an existing FSLN administrative organization, which, although legally susceptible to more immediate change, could not pragmatically be changed overnight.

The Political/Administrative Structure

The Mesa/Junta Directiva

The Mesa Directiva, or Junta Directiva, is authorized in the Constitution and functions as an Executive Board. Its current role and composition under the General Statute and Internal Rules of the National Assembly is akin to that of rules committees in the legislatures of the United States wherein the top official, called the President in the Nicaraguan National Assembly, exercises strong central control over both political and administrative functions of the institution. The Mesa Directiva has a total of seven members, five of whom, including the President, are elected from the UNO majority coalition, and two of whom are elected from the FSLN on a less than proportional basis. Currently, members of the Mesa Directiva are elected to a three year term and apparently without limitation on their reelection as in the case of Brazil. There may a change soon to a two year term.

The President has appointed a special commission to review the General Statute and Internal Rules of the National Assembly and to recommend changes. At this juncture, it would appear that some decentralization of the powers of the President might result from this legislation, although the final outcome of this process is unclear. As of the writing of this report, the Internal Rules reform bill has been released from committee and read in plenary.

However, further consideration of this controversial bill were temporarily suspended to accommodate deliberations on the budget.

The members of the Mesa Directiva and their titles, party, and fraction are given in the following table.

**The Mesa Directiva of the National Assembly
(December, 1990)**

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Party/Fraction</u>
President (Miriam Arguello)	UNO/A.P.C.
1ST Vice-PRESIDENT (Luis Sanchez)	UNO/P.S.N
2nd V.P. (Edmundo Castillo)	UNO/P.N.C.
3rd V.P. (Antonio Tefel)	F.S.L.N.
1st Secretary (Alfredo Cesar)	UNO/P.S.D.
2nd Secretary (William Frech Frech)	UNO/P.L.C.
3rd Secretary (Edmundo Jarquin)	F.S.L.N.

The President

The President (El Presidente) of the National Assembly, Dr. Myriam Arguello (a lawyer), is the chief executive officer of the Mesa Directiva. The current configuration of powers and duties, a legacy from the FSLN, makes the position very powerful. The other Board members provide advice and guidance to President rather than direction. On the administrative side, the President appoints all central staff of the institution. (The staff of the political fracciones, while financed from the legislative budget, are appointed by the fractions). The Chief of Staff, or Secretaria Ejecutiva, directs staff operations for the President. [An organization chart is appended.] The President also creates all comisiones (committees), of which there are currently 14 with plans to increase this number to 16 in the near future, and appoints all miembros (members) thereto. [A list of these committees and their current membership is appended.]

Another important power of the President is development of the legislative budget, which is submitted to the President of the Republic through the Finance Ministry for inclusion in the annual General Budget of the Republic as determined by the executive. The budget document was signed for transmittal to the Executive by the President during our meeting with her on Monday, October 22, 1990. The amount requested of \$10 million compares to the Assembly's current appropriation of \$3 million out of a total government budget of \$350 million. A fight over this request is guaranteed, but the President assured us that she intends to hold firm as this is an issue of the institutional independence of the legislative branch. The realistic target amount apparently is about \$5 million (which was the amount enacted). She also expressed her intentions to amend the law requiring the National Assembly to submit its budget request to the Ministry of Finance for approval and inclusion in the General Budget as if the Assembly were just another ministry.

The First Secretary

The only other position on the current Board which has any additional duties is the First Secretary. These duties relate to the legislative process and require the First Secretary to receive bills from the plenary for assignment to committees, to receive bills from committees for consideration by the Mesa Directiva for scheduling for debate by the plenary, and, in a role which appears to be a cross between a chief clerk and parliamentarian, to keep track of legislation on the floor of the plenary from scheduling speakers, to ruling on points of order in debate, to counting the votes cast for a motion or bill.

The Organization and Administration of the Legislative Process

Bill Sponsorship and Introduction: The Role of Members, the First Secretary, the President, the Plenary, and the Standing Committees

As discussed in Part I above, an important provision pertaining to the Legislative Branch of the Constitution declares that Representatives to the National Assembly may draft (initiate) and approve laws and decrees and amend or repeal them too [Art.138]. The Assembly is not alone in the exercise of the power to initiate legislation as the President of the Republic and, in matters pertaining to their respective jurisdictions, the Supreme

Court of Justice and the Supreme Electoral Council, may also do so. But, the initiatives of these branches of government, like the legislative branch itself, are regulated by the General Statute and Internal Rules of the National Assembly [Art.140].

The process of initiating bills in the case of Representatives of the National Assembly requires the sponsorship of five members. A statement of motivation and rationale must also accompany each proposed bill before it may be introduced. The process of introduction is administered through the Office of the First Secretary where sponsors get their bill on the agenda of the plenary session for initial consideration. At this stage, the full Assembly can reject a proposal without further attention to it, or, as is usually the case, it can approve its introduction and assignment to one of the fourteen standing (permanent) committees by the First Secretary.

Bills assigned to one of the National Assembly's 14 standing committees are considered in order of their arrival, unless the President directs special consideration be given to a particular measure. [A listing of the 14 Standing Committees is appended.] The committees are governed by a chairman, a vice-chairman, and a secretary, all of whom are approved by the President. The officers of the committees reportedly receive an additional stipend. The workloads of the committees apparently vary considerably (some are inordinately busy because of the establishment of the new government and its efforts to make changes in certain areas within the jurisdiction of but a few committees) as do the frequency of their meetings, but all do meet regularly.

The legal staff assigned to assist the committees will help with the organization of hearings on proposals taken up by the committees, including making arrangements for expert testimony, and with the drafting of amendments. When a committee completes action on a bill, it must prepare a committee report, called a "Dictamen", to accompany its submission to the First Secretary for discussion before the Mesa Directiva. This report need not be favorable, but a committee cannot kill a bill by not reporting it to the Mesa. In fact, committees currently must act upon a bill within 20 days, although the President may grant extensions. No such time limit applies to the Mesa, however, and it may decide to kill a bill by not scheduling it for consideration by the plenary. The Mesa may not amend a bill submitted to it, however.

Bill Passage

In order for bills introduced by Representatives to be considered for passage by the plenary of the National Assembly, the rules require that there be an aging period, or waiting period, ranging from 48 to 72 hours, depending upon the measure. While the President of the Republic may submit an initiative "with urgency" directly into the National Assembly bypassing the above outlined procedure, such measures must still age for 48 hours. All other bills initiated by executive agencies bypass the initial plenary review and go directly to a committee for consideration where all the other procedures outlined above are followed.

For the plenary of the National Assembly to act on a bill, there must be a quorum consisting of half of its members plus one. A simple majority is all that is required for passage [Art.141]. Bills may be amended on the floor by the plenary. Most votes are open, but the Assembly does have a procedure for the casting of votes by secret ballot, although this is rarely employed. (A recent occasion was a vote on whether to grant amnesty to the killers of the President of the Republic's husband.)

Executive Approval and Veto, and Legislative Override

Once approved by the National Assembly, a bill is sent to the President of the Republic for authorization, promulgation, and publication [Art.141], although the President of the Republic may veto or partially veto a bill within 15 days of receiving it [Art.142]. A vetoed bill or the vetoed portion of it must be returned to the National Assembly (with the reasons specified) to enable the National Assembly to override the veto by a vote of half plus one of its Representatives [Art.143]. If the President does not veto the bill, but does not authorize, promulgate or publish it either, the President of the National Assembly shall order the law to be published anyway [Art.142]. The effective date of laws is generally either upon publication in La Gaceta by the Department of the Interior or after they are made public (by reading on the radio, for example).

The Administrative Organization and Staffing of the National Assembly

The National Assembly's total staff of some 220 permanent employees can be divided into three general categories: core institutional staff, partisan staff, and general services staff. Both the core and partisan staff consist of professional staff and subordinate clerical staff. The general services staff is largely custodial. The basic organization of the Assembly's core staff was developed under the Sandinista-led legislature. One deputy observed that Comandante Carlos Nunez Tellez (deceased) developed the Assembly's highly structured bureaucracy to serve the near absolute authority given to him under the *General Statute and Internal Rules of the National Assembly*.

Party/Partisan Staffs

The development of separate partisan staff groups was initiated by the FSLN in the period between the February 25, 1990 election and the April 15 inauguration of the UNO administration. As militancy in the FSLN was assumed among the Assembly's staff during the past decade, there was no need previously for a separate partisan staff. Nonetheless, faced with the impending change of leadership in the Assembly, the FSLN pulled together a group of trusted and trained staff to serve its needs after the new Assembly was installed. Prior to turning the Assembly over to the new government, this staff of some twenty-five individuals built around five lawyers, two economists and one sociologist was set up in refurbished offices on one of two floors of the old Bank of America building that has functioning air conditioning.

The establishment of a separate FSLN partisan staff has had two primary effects on the staff structure of the Assembly, one of which will be discussed in this section. The first effect was to spark a fundamental decision by the UNO leadership to further redirect the Assembly's resources by creating a partisan staff corps to serve the various political parties that make up the government coalition. Each major political party within UNO has been authorized to place five partisan staff assistants on the Assembly's payroll, while smaller parties within UNO are required to share a five-member partisan staff. It is the team's understanding that these staff have been hired and are currently being paid by the Assembly. The president of the Assembly ordered that one un-airconditioned floor of the Bank of America building be modified with sufficient partitions to provide separate party offices to accommodate the some 60 members of the UNO partisan staff. It is expected that this refurbishment will be completed in early November, allowing the UNO staff to take up residence in the

Assembly. In the meantime, the UNO staff has apparently been working out of each party's headquarters. Also, an arrangement has reportedly been made whereby the number of partisan staff allowed to each "bancada" is based on the percentage of seats held in the Assembly. The team did not have access to the UNO partisan staff and therefore cannot comment at this point on their abilities or needs.

Core Institutional Staff

Although an UNO leader described the core staff of Sandinista holdovers as "large, inefficient and expensive," the team found many core staff to be competent though they were somewhat uneven in terms of their quality. The president of the Assembly and her staff have invested considerable energy, however, in taking control of and, to a lesser extent, reorganizing the Assembly's core institutional staff. Remolding what was a highly politicized staff into a core administrative and technical staff serving the legislature as an institution is a major undertaking. It is the president's expressed policy, however, not to engage in indiscriminate firings of core staff, but rather to identify and encourage individuals who are willing to operate within an institutional framework. One such staff person told the team that this process could be speeded up by exposing core holdover staff to fresh perspectives and alternative ideas to the Marxist "cassette" they're used to.

As noted above, the FSLN's creation of a separate partisan staff had two primary effects on the staff structure of the Assembly, the first being forcing UNO to make partisan staffing its own initial priority. The second effect of the creation of the partisan staffs, while far from in and of itself a bad idea, was to disrupt the core institutional staff structure and its share of the National Assembly's limited resources. Although as part of its legacy to the new government, the Sandinista leadership left an exceedingly generous labor contract for the Assembly's core administrative staff, which provided for a range of benefits including a prohibitively expensive severance pay clause, the core staff structure has nonetheless experienced significant attrition. The team was told by the Human Resources Division that several trained and highly qualified individuals negotiated a more modest severance than was promised under the labor accord and departed the Assembly to take jobs in the private sector. The team also got the impression that those hold-over staff who were not chosen to join the FSLN partisan staff were beginning to show signs of feeling abandoned by what had previously been a tightly-knit political organization. It is probable that this factor will tend to reinforce further attrition.

The relative worth of salaries paid to all staff has reportedly declined significantly due to the massive devaluation of the cordoba. This situation has been stabilized due to the government's new practice of quoting salaries in cordobas oro. As in other government ministries, Assembly employees are paid salaries which are calculated on pay day at the parallel rate and paid in a combination of the new currency and cordobas "chancheros." Nonetheless, each and every staff person, institutional or partisan, holdover or new appointee, complained loudly that their salaries were insufficient to live on. One lawyer appointed by President Arguello stated that he could earn more as a bootblack shining twenty pairs of shoes a day. "I don't work here for the money. I work here for political reasons," he explained. The President of the Assembly has submitted an optimistic \$10,000,000 budget for the National Assembly to the Ministry of Finance expecting to get \$5,000,000. The budget includes funds to buy-out hold-over staff and to increase both the members' salaries and key staff. The lower level core institutional staff is likely to face budget cuts in order to accommodate the additional personnel represented by the partisan staff and to meet the other needs identified by the new leadership.

Thus, it is likely that under this combination of poor pay and changed personal expectations, core professional staff will continue to drift away from the Assembly. While this may provide opportunities for the Assembly's leadership to appoint new talent, it also presents the danger that less ambitious, unproductive staff will remain at the Assembly, clinging to their labor contracts.

The following descriptions of the various divisions of the core staff in the Assembly and of the principal areas of support they provide are based on the organizational diagram appended to this document.

The Core Institutional Administrative Staff

General Financial and Administrative Division

The General Financial and Administrative Division is divided into three subdivisions, including the Accounting and Disbursement Division, the Human Resources Division and the General Services Division. The entire General Financial and Administrative Division is overseen by a director, assisted by a deputy.

The Accounting and Disbursement Division has three basic functions: 1) To develop and monitor budgets for each division and subsection of the Assembly; 2) To request transfers of funds from the Ministry of Finance, process payments for Assembly expenses, and provide liquidation statements to the Ministry of Finance, and 3) to develop monthly workplans and review these at monthly meetings with the various subsections of the core staff. All ledgers are kept by hand. Financial controls were not closely inspected during this assessment.

The Human Resources Division has 4 basic functions: 1) To maintain personnel records, including salary files; 2) To oversee and administer staff disciplinary actions; 3) to implement and evaluate policy guidelines established by the Assembly's leadership and 4) to mediate disputes between staff divisions. The director of the Human Resources Division has been asked to reconstruct the Assembly's personnel files which, she explained sardonically, were destroyed in a "fire" shortly before the new administration was installed.

The Core Institutional Legislative Process Staff

The General Directorate of Legal Counsel

The General Directorate of Legal Counsel is the most important staff division within the Assembly that relates directly to the legislative process.

The director and subdirector of the General Directorate of Legal Counsel were appointed by Dr. Myriam Arguello. At present, this staff is fully engaged in providing bill drafting services to the members of the Assembly. The Legal Counsel Directorate's principal responsibilities include 1) drafting bills at the request of members of the Assembly, reviewing and editing bill drafts and

committee reports; and, 2) overseeing and assisting the Committee Counsel staff in serving the permanent and *ad hoc* committees of the Assembly. The Legal Counsel Directorate provides assistance on a non-partisan basis. Bill drafts prepared by the Legal Counsel are referred to the Secretary's office which presents them to the Junta Directiva which in turn places them on the Plenary's agenda. The subdirector of the Legal Counsel Directorate indicated that of 16 pieces of legislation passed by the National Assembly, 14 had been drafted in his office.

Under the past Assembly's administration, the Legal Counsel Directorate was charged with coordinating staff training. The new administration relieved the Legal Counsel Directorate of this training responsibility. It was explained that internal training programs should be implemented by each banacada's partisan staff.

The Committee Counsel staff's principal responsibilities include: a) providing legal guidance to the committees as they debate bills; b) securing the participation of special and expert witnesses to assist the committees in their debates; c) drafting the minutes of the committee's meeting for the approval of the committee; and, d) In coordination with the Legal Counsel General Directorate, preparing committee reports for submission to the plenary. There are currently five full time lawyers serving the committees.

Also under the Legal Counsel Directorate's aegis is the Legislative Assembly's law library. The library serves as a repository of laws and information useful to the legislative process. Although open to the public, the library's primary function is to serve as a reference Center for the Legal Counsel Directorate and individual members of the Assembly. The library is directed by a lawyer, whose deputy is a trained librarian. Although working with limited resources, the library is extremely well organized. The UNO-appointed lawyers in the Legal Counsel Directorate praised the library's resources and responsiveness. Among the special projects undertaken by the library is a compilation of legislation by chronological order and by subject matter that is a very good beginning for producing a unified Code of laws for the country.

In addition, the library is responsible for planning the development of the Library's collection, preparing guides, information pamphlets and biographies, creating and developing an indexing system for users, maintaining a collection of newspaper clips and periodicals and classifying bills by theme in dossier form.

International Relations Bureau

The Sandinista regime placed particular emphasis on the maintenance of international relations. The Legislative Assembly developed a large staff devoted to interparliamentary exchanges and the distribution of information on the Government of Nicaragua. Unlike legislatures in some developed democracies, the National Assembly, through the International Relations Bureau, coordinates its efforts closely with Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The International Relations Bureau's primary functions include preparing foreign policy papers for the President and Foreign Relations Committee of the Assembly; developing plans for cooperation with other legislatures and parliamentary institutions; organizing international parliamentary events held in the country; preparing correspondence with foreign missions; accompanying the President and Representatives at meetings and following up on such interviews; and translation and interpretation work as necessary. The Bureau is divided into three major geographical directorates, including: United States of America and Socialist Countries; Latin America; Europe. All of the directorships share the same functions; what differentiates them is the geographical area they're assigned. A subordinate Department of Documentation and Translation furnishes the directorates with research and translation services.

Congressional Record and Publications Office

The General Directorate of Publications and the Congressional Record publishes a verbatim transcript of the Assembly's plenary sessions. This department also edits the minutes of each plenary session for publication in La Gaceta (which is produced by the Interior Ministry [*Ministerio de Gobernacion*]). This office is responsible for the reproduction of bill drafts, plenary minutes, committee reports and the daily agenda for distribution to Assembly members and other interested parties. The plenary sessions are tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The rough transcripts are edited for format and "clarity" prior to their publication.

Protocol Office

The Sandinista Legislature developed a separate protocol office to facilitate visits by foreign visitors and to assist members of the National Assembly traveling abroad. This office and its functions have been kept intact under UNO's leadership, with the exception that Dr. Myriam Arguello has placed the distribution of per diem to Members under the direction of a woman she recently appointed to head this office. The Protocol Office's functions include implementing logistical and protocol arrangements for guests of the National Assembly, maintaining relations and correspondence with accredited embassies and national and

international institutions of interest to the Assembly. The Protocol Office also takes care of visa and passport arrangements for members of the Assembly. The protocol office issues credentials to members and their alternates and to transient and permanent visitors.

Press and Public Relations Division

The National Assembly maintains a small but well organized press office. This office arranges for coverage of official activities, organizes and coordinates press conferences and interviews with the President, the *Junta Directiva*, the Committees, the *bancadas*, and individual members. This office also prepares news and background materials on domestic and international activities of the parliament, tends to national and foreign, cooperates with advertising agencies in obtaining special publications, arranges interviews with the President, officials, and members of the Assembly requested by the press, and prepares transcripts of interviews given to journalists by members or officials of the Assembly.

Office of Classified Information Control

The National Assembly has an office that keeps, organizes and classifies written materials. The team learned of this office through documents and it was not suggested that we visit its facilities. According to documentation collected by the team, this office is responsible for receiving, sending, and delivering internal and outside correspondence and documents. The office also registers and tracks documents through control logs and also maintains the National Assembly's legal archives. In addition, this office arranges for the distribution of documents solicited by the different areas of the National Assembly as well as purging files of expired or outdated information.

The General Services Staff

The General Services Division's responsibilities include storage, ground transportation, maintenance, purchasing, messenger and refreshment service and providing mid-day meals for all staff, deputies and journalists. Dr. Arguello indicated that she was pursuing the donation of a more modern and hygienic kitchen from the Spanish government.

IV. INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S NEEDS

In a series of intense interviews and discussions with the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Nicaragua and key staff of the President, with the Vice President of the Assembly and the First Secretary, and with individual members of the majority UNO coalition and members of the opposition FSLN, an assessment of the urgent needs of the Assembly has been made. The majority of the needs catalogued in this phase of the needs assessment involve physical and human resource infrastructure inadequacies and requirements identified by the representatives of the institution and confirmed during our on site visits. This assessment has also been augmented by the knowledge gained through intense involvement, during the past year, in the electoral process and in the early months of the new administration of the present government.

Institutional Strengths Identified

Before addressing the areas in need of strengthening within the institution, we think it important to relate several of the National Assembly's evident strengths, that is, "what it has going for it," that impressed our team during our visit. These strengths can be divided between "intangibles" and "tangibles."

Intangible Strengths

Three key and interrelated intangible strengths were evident to us during our initial needs assessment visit. Universal commitment to strengthening the institutional capacity of the National Assembly was expressed by members and staff. There is, therefore, both consensus about and commitment to strengthening the National Assembly by members and staff. This is significant because it reveals that they identify with the Assembly as an institution beyond their personal partisan political identification. A good example of these intangibles at work is provided in the "budgetary weaknesses and needs" discussion below.

Tangible Strengths

Four important tangible strengths were evident to us during our site visit to the National Assembly. The first is that the

Chamber of the Plenary, where the National Assembly meets in session, is an asset. It is large enough to accommodate the members, staff, the press, and visitors. The chamber still has needs, which will be identified shortly, but it is important to note that this is clearly an asset worthy of fine tuning assistance.

Another space related asset is the availability of office space in the Bank of America building which, with some well-placed investment, could be well-utilized overnight. The point is that facilities already exist, they just need to be restored for habitability. These needs will be identified below.

The third strength evident to us was the Law Library. It was one of the more pleasing aspects encountered during the assessment. Occupying the entire sixth floor of the Bank of America building, without elevator service, ventilation or air conditioning, proper lighting, fire protection, or humidity controls, and working within severely limited funding, the Law Librarian (a lawyer herself) and her assistants have nevertheless managed to gather a collection of legal research, archival, and support materials (oftentimes with donated materials that they were able to obtain) that are invaluable to the National Assembly.

The fourth strength evident to us was how well-organized the legislative administration of the National Assembly appears to be. A rational organizational structure, even if only skeletal, exists. Much thought has obviously gone into the organizational structure, and with some flesh to go along with it, this organizational structural vision might make even more sense than it currently does.

Opportunities for Strengthening the Institution

Numerous opportunities for strengthening the legislature were identified by the field team. An indication of some these areas for improvement was included in the above discussion of strengths. The weaknesses identified below were, importantly, all forthrightly conveyed to us by the members and staff of the National Assembly. We, of course, were able to confirm these weaknesses by our on site visits.

Budgetary Weaknesses and Needs of the Assembly

In every discussion concerning the needs of the Assembly, the paucity of the Legislative Budget was the first item mentioned. If

the National Assembly is to become an effective and constructive partner in the economic, social, and political future of Nicaragua, then a sufficient portion of the nation's budget must be invested in it and maintained. In the present fiscal year, the National Assembly is receiving approximately \$3 million out of a total government budget of \$350 million. This equates to less than 1% of the total budgeted resources (.857%) of the General (National) Budget. The legislative budget is currently submitted by the President of the National Assembly to the Finance Ministry for inclusion in the annual General Budget of the Republic. Of the \$10 million budget requested for the ensuing fiscal year, \$5 million was approved, \$2 million more than the Ministry of Finance had indicated it would recommend. The outcome of the fight over the Assembly's request which ensued was viewed by the President of the Assembly as crucial to establishing the institutional independence of the legislative branch. The President also expressed her intentions to amend the law requiring the National Assembly to submit its budget request to the Ministry of Finance for approval and inclusion in the General Budget as if the Assembly were just another ministry. But while these developments are encouraging, the internal resources available to the Assembly are still minimal.

The budgetary restraints placed on the Assembly by the previous government have resulted in the lack of funds for basic, albeit subsistence, capital maintenance, let alone necessary capital improvements. There appear to be no funds available for the acquisition and upgrading of the professional and office equipment for the Assembly. The resource restraints that are continuing under the present government have furthermore prevented the President of the Assembly from attracting and retaining the type of professional and support staff needed, or to replace holdover staff as deemed necessary. While no doubt many holdover staffers are competent and worthy of retention, those who may not be cannot currently be replaced. Without a professional staff that responds directly to the needs of the Office of the President and the Mesa Directiva, and without basic physical infrastructure support, it will remain difficult, if not impossible, for the institution itself to respond effectively to the pressing issues faces it and the country.

Physical Infrastructure Weaknesses and Needs of the Assembly

The physical space needs of the National Assembly are in critical need of resources. While the space asset itself is available, the condition of the facilities, particularly in the Bank of America building, are impeding the development of a truly functioning legislature. In the Bank of America building, none of the elevators serving those floors allocated to the Assembly operate. The air conditioning system does not work nor does the

ventilation. There may be other deficiencies too, such as safety-related ones, but these are beyond the scope of this assessment. At present, the various committees are meeting in inadequate space, there is virtually no office equipment, and no research or storage facilities. Nearly all of the administrative and support staff work in crowded offices lacking minimally acceptable equipment. Most offices do not have air conditioning. There are not sufficient typewriters, reproduction equipment, recording equipment, and in most instances there is not a functioning phone system nor a means of interoffice communication.

Physical renovation of existing space, already allocated to the Assembly, can fulfill their physical needs for the immediate future. At present there is minor renovation work under-way to provide some space, in the Bank of America building, for office and meeting rooms space for the various party caucuses and their staff. It is understood that there are additional floors available in the building that could be renovated and used to meet additional space needs, such as that for the committees or for individual deputies, who presently lack offices.

Legislative Legal-Related Weaknesses and Needs

Of immediate concern to the Office of the President and the members of the Mesa Directiva is the need for the compilation, the full indexing, and the final codification of all the laws of the Republic on the books. There presently exists no method for efficient and accurate retrieval of these statutes. Many deputies expressed a growing level of concern as to the possible misuse of conflicting legislation.

The Law Library on the 6th floor of the Bank of America building urgently needs microfilming equipment to record and preserve the daily records (gazette), and all other documents that need be preserved. It also needs to be able to purchase those key legal resource documents which it is unable to acquire through donations. It furthermore needs access to various legislative and legal data bases, including those of the other LAC region legislatures.

Human Resources Infrastructure Weaknesses and Needs

The human resources infrastructure needs identified have a financial dimension, a training dimension, and an internal tension dimension. The fact that staff cannot be paid sufficient salaries to retain the able staff or to attract new ones is not unique to the Nicaraguan Assembly, but the situation does appear to be especially acute here. While there is a lack of resources devoted to the institutional or central professional staff, including a lack of sufficient committee assistance, this may reflect in part an initial resource allocation decision to fund the party caucus staffs. This is perfectly appropriate, especially given the consensus to do so, but it raises the problem of not being able to fully or sufficiently fund either type of staff given the scarcity of resources. More resources, as discussed in the budgetary weakness section above can help, but ultimately the National Assembly will have to make choices between competing priorities just as every other legislature.

With respect to training, this was a need identified by many members and staff. The recommendation was applied to both members and staff. Members were thought to need orientation to the legislative process to be more effective (and probably so they would require less hand holding by the already overwhelmed staff). Staff were thought to need training in the use of new office technologies (once acquired) as well as in the legislative process. Centralized staff training, which had previously been conducted centrally, has now been delegated to the party fractions. Although not a weakness in itself, it could conceivably prevent the efficient application of training resources and the development of a common frame of reference or perspective about the institution of the National Assembly. The specific training needs of the Assembly and the means of accomplishing this is an area which will need to be examined in a subsequent component of the needs assessment, but clearly there is a need.

Weaknesses of the Assembly Not Identified by the Key Actors

The following "weaknesses" were not identified by the leadership and staff of the National Assembly:

Committee for the Legislature's Institutional Development

There is no bi-partisan or multi-partisan committee specifically charged with identifying the needs of the National Assembly as an institution and with helping to publicize and meet those needs. Such an entity could provide a good continuing access point for assistance, but more importantly, it could constitute the embodiment of the institution's commitment to strengthen itself on a sustained basis. The Mesa Directiva or the special commission appointed by the President to make recommendations for changing the General Statute and Internal Rules of the National Assembly could be designated to constitute such a committee.

Constituent Services

There is an absence of constituent services. Although every staff unit had a constituency it genuinely wanted to serve, members' constituents were never mentioned, not even by members. This is probably attributable to the fact that many of the Representatives are more national than local representatives largely due to the election system. The President of the National Assembly did, however, declare her interest in being able to publicize the work of the Assembly and provide the public, as a type of national constituency of the Assembly, with information about the legislative process.

University Resources

No mention was made of the possible use of Nicaraguan university resources either as a source, for example, of legislative interns (for relatively inexpensive labor and as a device for recruitment of educated staff) or for public policy research assistance.

V. NICARAGUA BILATERAL NEEDS RECOMMENDATIONS

Responding to the Identified Needs

Taking into account the current political climate within the National Assembly, the relations between the Legislature and the Executive, and the long term needs of strengthening the institution of the Assembly, it is proposed that the following identified needs of the National Assembly be contemplated for bilateral funding.

1. The National Assembly Law Library

The National Assembly's Law Library is staffed by professionals and is presently providing support services on what appears to be a universal and non-partisan basis. However, the library's capacity to provide these services is limited by scarce resources and restricted physical access. It is proposed that a fund be established for the procurement of documents and legislative related support publications from other Central American countries, and North and South America, which are vital to the Library but which cannot be obtained by donation. Additionally, a system of microfilming/microfiching and computerized indexing should be implemented on a priority basis. This would both conserve space and protect the information on these documents from further environmentally caused deterioration such as humidity and heat. Attached please find a detailed improvement plan developed by the Law Librarian. We support this proposal and recommend that it be implemented in phases over three years.

2. Technical Assistance to the National Assembly

Based on the findings of the in-country visit and analysis and discussion among the members of the Consortium for Legislative Development, we propose the following technical assistance for the National Assembly.

A. Development of a Code of Laws

The Law Library has developed an index by subject matter of the body of extant Nicaraguan legislation. This is an important first step in the development of a Code of Laws. We propose to provide technical assistance to

create of fully cross-referenced and Code of Nicaraguan Law. This program element will be implemented in phases over three years.

B. Installation & Use of Electronic Voting System

The Commodities Assistance element below recommends the installation of an electronic voting system. This program element will provide concurrent technical assistance and training in the use of this system.

C. Development of Bill Status System

This program element will provide technical assistance for the development of a bill status system. This is a system that identifies the bills that are being considered by various committees and the action that has taken place. It allows various amendments to be incorporated as the actions proceeds. This system can be developed and maintained by the Legal Counsel's office.

D. Development of Budgetary Information System

Fiscal analysis and oversight are key to the legislature's ability to exercise its constitutional mandate to review and approve the national budget. It is important that the legislature also be capable of working closely with the Controller General's office in reviewing and approving the government's year-end statement of revenues and expenditures. The creation is proposed, therefore, of a system that incorporates the yearly budget of each government agency in the way it is presented by the executive, approved by the Assembly, and spent by the various agencies. It can also include revenues by source, and expenditures by purpose and geographic distribution. This system can be maintained and developed at the National Assembly within the budget committee.

E. Management Information System

Like any institution, the Assembly needs a management information system in order to be able to operate in a timely and effective manner. As these needs are identified by the Assembly, technical assistance will provided to assist the Assembly in developing a management information system that includes, for example, a personnel component for both members and staff,

salaries and payrolls, fringe benefits, inventory, purchasing, budget and accounting, internal controls and other elements. Some components of this system are already in place, although it may prove useful for the Assembly's leadership and administrative management to review and update them.

F. Public Education, Constituent Services

All members and staff interviewed agreed that the dissemination of information about the National Assembly's functions and role was of critical importance. This is true both inside the Assembly and among the public at large. Technical assistance will be provided to develop improved deputy-constituent relations, distribution of informational materials to help improve public understanding of the Assembly's role in government.

G. Guide to the Legislative Process

The Consortium will support the development and publication of a comprehensive procedural manual to assist both members and staff in understanding and mastering the legislative process. An abbreviated version of this document could also be prepared for the general public.

H. Law Library Development

A library science expert with a background in legislative library resource development will be funded on a short-term basis. This consultant will work with the existing Law Library staff to review their recommendations in order to ensure their adequacy in the context of modern legislative applications. On-site training in providing library services to legislators and legislative staff will also be provided.

I. Legislative Assembly Internship Program

Technical assistance will be provided to work with the Assembly's leadership in the development of a legislative internship program in cooperation with Nicaraguan academic institutions. Students in their final years of study will be provided the opportunity to work in the Assembly offering assistance to leadership offices, committees, and legislative support staff. Several

benefits for the Assembly would derive from this program, namely, an inexpensive pool of staff assistance, recruitment possibilities, and a practical introduction to the role of the legislature's in the country's democratic process.

3. Training

Both short and long term training will help strengthen the National Assembly.

A. Short Term Training

1. Short term training should consist of a series of two seminars on the legislative processes of the National Assembly for members and staff. Among the topics which could be discussed, to be negotiated with the leadership of the Assembly, could be: (a) the committee process, (b) the oversight role, (c) budgetary review, and (d) constituent relations. The field team was told repeatedly that the legislative process was adversely affected by the fact that many members lack prior legislative experience. It was also pointed out that many staff members could benefit from structured participation in a seminar on legislative practices and procedures.

2. A complementary component of this short term training would consist of two-week observational training visits to other legislatures at the national and state levels, including the United States. These observational visits will be useful in the development of the technical assistance options described above and would focus on specific training issues such as bill drafting.

B. Long Term/Ongoing Training

It is recommended that long-term staff development be accomplished through participation in a Master's Degree Program in Public Administration with a special concentration in legislative administration administered by the Consortium's university partners, Florida International University and/or University at Albany, State University of New York. Students in these programs will also participate in a legislative internship program. It is recommended that three students be enrolled--one per year--with bilateral assistance. Degree candidates must meet professional and academic criteria described in the original proposal submitted to USAID.

C. Participation in Regional Training Activities

It is recommended that bilateral support--primarily airfares and per diem--be made available to facilitate Nicaraguan participation in regional program activities supported by the LAC hemispheric project. This would include professional staff participation in the *Asociación de Tecnicos Legislativos (ATELCA)*.

4. Legislative Office Equipment Commodities Assistance

It is understood that AID is financing a large unified procurement of standardized commodities for the entire government. This will be an invaluable assistance to the Assembly. A lack of general office equipment was one of the immediately identified needs, and one that was most reiterated. During the first phase of the proposed activities, it is suggested that the additional office equipment, not included in the general government wide procurement program, and urgently needed by the Assembly to facilitate the improvement of the legislative process, be procured. This would include but not be limited to, special office equipment for the Office of the President and the Mesa Directiva, an electronic voting and attendance system for the Plenary, and an improved sound and debate recording system. One of the greatest needs of any legislature is the capability to produce and replicate with accuracy, large quantities of documents in a limited amount of time. Off-set printers, copy machines, and binding equipment will all be needed to compliment the general office equipment that is to be made available.

Microfilming of all the legislative documents must be one of the final steps of the codification of existing laws. Microfilm/microfiche combined with a computerized index for accessing could be one of the more important services that could be done for/by the National Assembly. Not only will it provide a secure method of preserving vital documentary information, it will also provide a ready access to legislators and researchers.

5. Other Important Recommendations

The Consortium team noted two important needs which although not within the Consortium's purview are nonetheless considered essential for the efficient functioning of the National Assembly.

A. Elevator and Air Conditioning Systems Repair

In order to make full use of the office space presently allocated to the Assembly, and to provide the legislators and staff ready access to the party caucus areas and Library and research facilities, it is proposed that the elevator system and air conditioning system in the Bank of America building be renovated.

B. Multipartisan Development Committee

The Consortium believes that the National Assembly may wish to create a special bipartisan committee to carry out legislative institutional analysis and development on an ongoing basis and to review important institutional development issues such as committee support services. Should the President and Junta Directiva decide to create such a body, this committee could be charged with reviewing the implementation of the various recommendations made here. The Assembly successfully appointed a bipartisan, *ad hoc* committee to review the Internal Statute reform bill mentioned earlier in this document, which indicates that such bipartisan cooperation is feasible. Consideration should also be given to designating top staff to work with this committee.

VI. ILLUSTRATIVE THREE YEAR BILATERAL BUDGET

NICARAGUA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
PROPOSED USAID BILATERAL ASSISTANCE

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Law Library

Library upgrade package (see library list)	\$ <u>75,000</u>
 SUB-TOTAL	 \$ 75,000

Technical Assistance

Electronic voting and attendance system (2wks @ \$1K/day)	\$ 14,000
Bill status system (30 days @ \$1K/day)	\$ 30,000
Budgetary information system (30 days @ \$1K/day)	\$ 30,000
Management information system (60 days @ \$1K/day)	\$ 60,000
Public education, constituent services (30 days @ \$1K/day)	\$ 30,000
Guides (internal and external) to the legislative process	\$ 50,000
Law library development expert (7 days @ \$1K/day)	\$ 7,000
Legislative Assembly internship program (30 days @ \$1K/day)	\$ 30,000
Development of a code of laws	\$ <u>90,000</u>
 SUB-TOTAL	 \$ 341,000

Training

Short Term

Two seminars on legislative processes	\$ 100,000
Two-week observational visits (5 participants)	\$ 25,000

Long Term

Masters Degree Students (3) \$ 90,000

Regional

ATELCA (25K/yr) \$ 75,000
Members (25K/yr) \$ 75,000

SUB-TOTAL \$ 290,000

PROGRAM SUB-TOTAL \$ 706,000

Managua Office Rent \$ 36,000
Communications \$ 30,000
Local Expenses (Equip rental, Etc.) \$ 25,000

Resident Program Manager (U.S. Citizen) \$ 120,000
Fringes 21.2% \$ 25,440
Allowances \$ 50,000

Program Assistant (foreign national) \$ 36,000
Secretary (foreign national) \$ 18,000
Driver (foreign national) \$ 10,800
Fringes 21.2% \$ 45,538

Consortium Salaries \$ 85,000
Fringes 21.2% \$ 18,020

SUB-TOTAL \$ 499,798

TOTAL MODIFIED DIRECT COST \$1,205,798

OVERHEAD (38%) \$ 458,203

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST \$1,664,000

Equipment Estimates (for example, electronic voting and attendance system, improved sound and debate recording system, codification equipment, off-set printers, copy machines, binding equipment, etc.) to be determined pending allocation of general government-wide procurement program.

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

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* Denotes UNO-appointed staff

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