

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the regulations of Grant No. LAG-A-00-97-00019-00 of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR or the Institute), the IIHR submits its annual report on the activities that took place from January 1 through December 31, 2000 that were in whole or in part funded by USAID. The overall period of the Grant is from September 24, 1997 to ~~December 31, 2000~~. February 28, 2001.

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 explain 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 this field, which, being one of the main areas of political consensus of modern times, also allows for different perspectives and is a source of strong internal tensions.

III. CURRENT STRUCTURE

The Institute's Board of Directors is its highest governing body and, as such, is responsible for establishing general policies. Its members are acknowledged authorities on human rights from all parts of the hemisphere. The Board meets once a year, while the Permanent Commission, a group that advises the Executive Director, usually meets several times a year. The person directly responsible for implementing the Institute's projects is the Executive Director. The post of Executive Director is currently held by Roberto Cuéllar, a native of El Salvador.

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 carries out 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 on electoral matters to organizations responsible for organizing 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.

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

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.

Institutional Development Unit: proposes and implements policies regarding the Institute's relations with donors, external promotion and the control of the quality of the Institute's products.

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 wishes to place 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 propose 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.

IV. USAID-FUNDED ACTIVITIES

A. ACTIVITIES IN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. EIGHTEENTH INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1.1 General framework

The holding of the Eighteenth Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights coincided with two events of great importance in the institution's history: IIHR's twentieth anniversary and the culmination of a long process of evaluation, reflection and critical analysis of the Institute's role in the region, and the definition of new perspectives and goals for its work in the coming years.

In line with its original mandate, the Interdisciplinary Course aims to respond to current training needs, taking account of the situation in the region and the priorities of its peoples.

IIHR has also tried to reinforce thematic and professional unity within overall diversity, as an essential means to identify different roles and contributions and, at the same time, promote knowledge and mutual collaboration among the Course participants and between them and the Institute, in order to facilitate the implementation of future actions in the defense and promotion of human rights in the Americas. To this end, three basic criteria were put into effect:

- a. Applications were invited from individuals of different disciplines and sectors.
- b. Selected applicants were asked to describe a successful professional experience in the field of *access to justice* within an integrated perspective.
- c. A methodology based on an interdisciplinary approach and the exchange of experiences was implemented.

To achieve its objectives, the Course enlisted the support of the invited experts, the participants and IIHR's own staff, in order to highlight the factors that determine the different possibilities of access to justice available to individuals from all sectors of society.

1.2 Objectives

General objectives:

- Create an interdisciplinary and intersectoral space for discussion of human rights with an emphasis on the situation in the Americas.
- Establish links between the participants, IIHR and other institutions with a view to developing an inter-American network of groups and individuals interested in the promotion and defense of human rights.

Specific objectives:

- Identify aspects of *Access to justice* both as a concept and in real terms, in the context of human rights.
- Recognize the achievements and challenges of *Access to justice* from the perspective of its progressive implementation.
- Participate in discussion, analysis and exchange of experiences to generate local and regional initiatives for the purpose of strengthening *Access to justice*.

1.3 Preparatory activities

1.3.1 Thematic definition

In accordance with the Institution's strategy for this triennium, three thematic areas or core topics were chosen for the Interdisciplinary Courses of the years 2000, 2001 and 2002: access to justice, political participation and human rights education, respectively.

For the purposes of the Course, *Access to justice* is understood as “having effective recourse to systems, mechanisms and bodies to determine rights and resolve conflicts.”

In that regard, the Course paid particular attention to the results of a study carried out in Latin America, by IIHR and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), aimed at identifying successful experiences to extend *access to justice* to the least privileged sectors of society.

1.3.2 Design of the Academic Program

The design of the academic program was accomplished with the support of a committee constituted by IIHR staff with expertise in different aspects of the core topic. This process enriched the content and scope of each lecture and helped to ensure a coherent and balanced approach to the topic.

1.3.3 Notification of the Course

Having defined the thematic content of the Interdisciplinary Course, IIHR proceeded to invite applications from candidates, using three formats: the Institution’s web page, e-mail and promotional posters. A basic introduction about the Course was prepared, describing the objectives, the core topic, the lectures, application requirements and procedures, together with other necessary information such as deadlines for the receipt of applications.

The IIHR’s web page was regularly updated with detailed information regarding the organization and implementation of the Course. In addition, e-mail messages were sent to more than 700 addresses, including those of counterparts, former students and other organizations and individuals associated with IIHR. The illustration selected for the poster shows a detail of the stained-glass window that adorns the building of the Supreme Court of Justice of Venezuela, an image that was used in all the materials produced for this inter-American forum. The poster was sent out to more than three thousand addresses - including universities, international organizations, NGOs, governmental organizations, churches and human rights activists - in countries throughout the American continent and to several European countries.

1.3.4 Selection of instructors

As is now customary, IIHR recruited a team of distinguished lecturers and experts for the Eighteenth Inter-disciplinary Course in order to guarantee a high academic level. So as to ensure a coherent and unified approach to the Course, all lecturers were briefed on the core topic and on the main objectives. It was also recommended that they prepare a breakdown of the points to be covered in their lectures. Similarly, the instructors were asked to incorporate some of the essential themes that cut across all of the Institute’s actions and policies, such as gender perspective.

1.3.5 Reception and processing of applications

Even before IIHR had initiated the notification process, a large number of applications were received for the Course. However, from the moment the promotional information was sent out, the number of applications began to increase steadily, arriving at a rate of

between 15 and 20 daily. In the end, despite the very specific and clearly defined nature of the Course's contents, a total of 723 applications were received.

Each application was carefully scrutinized to extract the most relevant points of the applicant's *curriculum vitae* and the information pertaining to the requirements stipulated for the Course. This information was incorporated in a registration card and was subsequently entered in a database designed specifically for this process.

This system of processing the applications facilitates the rapid search for and retrieval of information, according to different criteria, and the printing of consolidated reports with the relevant data that should be taken into consideration during the selection process.

1.3.6 Profile of the participants

The selection process considered the applicants' *practical and academic experience* in relation to the central theme of the Course. Participants were required to have a *minimal degree of specialization* in human rights, with some experience in local justice, constitutional justice or international justice.

Given the nature of the Course, participants from different disciplines and backgrounds were selected, regardless of their connection with the theme of access to justice.

1.3.7 Pre-selection of participants

The process to select Course participants was undertaken with the support of an *ad hoc* committee, composed of IIHR staff members from various programs. The selection procedure was based on criteria that would guarantee a well balanced and representative group of participants, in terms of gender, professional experience, field of work, social sector, urban–rural background and geography.

After several meetings, the committee selected a group of 114 participants and seven observers drawn from different NGOs, governmental bodies, judicial and legislative bodies, international institutions, cooperation agencies, churches, indigenous organizations, Afro-American organizations, universities and human rights activists, from a total of 23 countries.

1.3.8 Final selection of participants

About 93% of the participants received a full scholarship to take part in the Course. The scholarship covered all the students' expenses, except for the registration fee (US \$200), which was paid by each participant.

As a requirement for final acceptance, each candidate was asked to carry out a study or research project on access to justice, and submit a written paper on some national or local problem related to this subject.

The work was to be based on certain requirements of substance and form, which were described in a guide sent to each candidate.

1.3.9 Systematization of studies on access to justice

The research projects submitted by applicants were carefully checked to ensure that they complied with the established parameters. In a few cases where one or other of the requirements of substance or form was omitted, the applicant was asked to revise his/her work.

All the projects were then systematized in a document that served as a basis for further discussion in the workshops programmed during the Course. This document was published and distributed to all participants in order to provide them with a general overview of the problems of access to justice in the region and enable them to acquire more elements for discussion and the exchange of experiences.

1.3.10 Production, selection and compilation of materials

A 'learning kit' was prepared for the students, which included materials specially designed for the Course and IIHR publications related to the various topics to be covered.

The special materials consisted of:

- *Information guide*: containing an introduction to the Course, the methodology, the objectives of the lectures, biographical notes on members of the teaching team, Course Regulations and Administrative Rules, plus general information.
- *Learning support materials*: A selection of useful texts to provide students with an overview of different aspects of the Course, such as the fundamentals of human rights, the application of social, economic and cultural rights; the inter-American system of protection of human rights, etc.
- *Bibliography*: a compilation of specialized bibliographical notes, ordered by theme, according to the development of the Course. The bibliography included books and documents that are readily available through the IIHR Documentation Center and the Joint IIHR- ICHR Library (Inter-American Court of Human Rights).
- *Comparative analysis of situations and solutions on the subject of Access to justice*: this material is a compilation of the research projects submitted by the participants themselves.

The 'learning kit' also included several IIHR publications, such as:

- International Instruments for the Protection of Human Rights
- Access to Justice and Equity in Latin America
- From Constitutional Protection to Inter-American Protection, Institutes for the Protection of Human Rights.
- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: An Ineluctable Challenge.
- Report of the Second Inter-American Seminar on the Administration of Justice and Indigenous Peoples.
- Perspectives on the Administration of Justice and Indigenous Peoples.
- The use of Convention 109 of the ILO to protect the rights of Indigenous Communities.

- Manual on Human Rights Education
- Optional Protocol (CEDAW)
- IHR Revista Nos. 27 y 28

Additional materials were contributed by international organizations such as UNHCR, ICRC, UNICEF and CEJIL; the Inter-American Court of Human Rights provided jurisprudence and other documents; the promotional and educational materials submitted by the participants themselves were also made available to students.

In order to expand and update the collection of laws at the IHR Documentation Center, each participant was asked to contribute various national laws from their respective countries, including: the Constitution, laws regarding habeas corpus, civil code and civil procedures, criminal code and criminal procedures and the law of public administration, among others.

1.3.11 Logistical organization

A specialized team was responsible for organizing all logistical aspects of the Course, such as hotel reservations, purchasing and sending air tickets to participants, internal transport, arranging the rooms used for lectures and workshops, organizing special activities, contracting audio, video and photography services and generally attending to the needs of the participants, etc. With support from the travel agency and the Accounting Unit, the team also took charge of reimbursements, the payment of per diems, payment of lecturers' fees, collection of registration fees, flight reservations, etc.

1.4 Implementation of the Course

The Course consisted of a combination of lectures, workshops, discussion panels and summing-up or review sessions. These varied activities provided an opportunity to create different learning experiences and facilitated the effective exchange of knowledge and experiences, in an academic and democratic atmosphere, respectful of diversity.

1.4.1 Lectures

The Course Lectures are given by experts in different fields or subjects, in which certain relevant theoretical aspects are considered and linked with everyday life. A special period is set aside for participants to ask questions or make comments related to the subject of the lecture.

During this edition of the Course, the following lectures were imparted:

- *Basis and content of Human Rights.*
- *National Protection of Human Rights.*
- *Constitutional Jurisdiction.*
- *Common Law and Positive Law: the case of Indigenous Law.*
- *Universal System of Protection of Human Rights.*
- *Inter-American System of Protection of Human Rights.*
- *International Criminal Justice.*
- *Reparation to victims.*

- *Education in and for Human Rights and Justice.*
- *Children and the lack of Legal Protection.*
- *Refuge, Asylum and Displacement.*
- *International Humanitarian Law.*
- *The Rule of Law from the Perspective of Access to Justice.*
- *Judicial Reform in Latin America.*
- *Access to Justice and Equity in Latin America.*
- *Discrimination and Social Exclusion.*
- *Women's Human Rights.*
- *The Churches and Justice in Latin America.*
- *The Ombudsman as a channel of Access to Justice.*
- *Individual Access to International Tribunals.*
- *International Criminal Jurisdiction: Balance and perspectives.*

It is important to mention the participation of the distinguished figure from the Spanish judiciary, Judge Baltasar Garzón Real, who gave the closing lecture in which he discussed the subject of *Challenges of International Criminal Justice*. This event was open to the general public and took place in Auditorium of the Children's Museum, with an audience that greatly exceeded the capacity of the lecture hall. In anticipation of this eventuality, a screen was placed outside the auditorium so that those unable to enter would have the opportunity to follow the lecture.

1.4.2 Workshops

The four Workshops were designed as an integrated methodological strategy, aimed at obtaining concrete proposals for action.

From the perspective of this unified process, the workshops sought to enable participants to accomplish three general objectives:

- Make a preliminary diagnosis and evaluation of the present situation regarding the right to access to justice in the countries of the hemisphere;
- Formulate concrete and viable proposals for action to advance towards the effective fulfillment of this right in each country, and
- Assume commitments and coordinate efforts among themselves, by country, to implement some of these proposals when they return to their respective institutions or workplaces.

The implementation of the workshops consisted of three different stages:

- **Before the Course:** Each participant was asked to prepare and submit to IIHR a study on the problem of access to justice in his/her own country, together with proposals for solutions. These studies were systematized in a document to facilitate a general diagnosis of the situation in each country and in the region as a whole.

- During the Course: Each workshop involved simultaneous work by six parallel groups of participants. The participants were divided into national subgroups during the first workshop, and remained in these same groups for the rest of the workshops.

The purpose of dividing the groups in this way was to accomplish the general objective of guiding students towards the design of a *viable work proposal* that could be implemented in their respective countries, once the Course had ended. The idea was to design a simple and feasible proposal that would respond to a particular need identified in each country and one that could be implemented by coordinating the efforts of all participants from the same country.

Given the objectives of the workshops and the activities of diagnosis and analysis that took place, each group worked with two facilitators: an academic facilitator, who focused more on the objectives and educational aspects, and another facilitator - an expert on content – who guided the students on points of substance and clarified any doubts that might arise concerning the problem of access to justice.

- After the Course: Follow-up will be given to the country proposals submitted by the participants. In some cases - depending on the activities and projects IIHR has planned by region and by country - efforts have been made to encourage cooperation and exchange between participants and former participants, in order to enhance the implementation of work proposals based on the Interdisciplinary Course.

The follow-up evaluation on all participants will include a section to determine whether the proposals formulated during the Course were put into effect and to what extent, and to assess the progress achieved and the difficulties or limitations encountered, etc.

This follow-up evaluation will also determine to what extent the experience of the Course facilitated contacts and cooperation among former participants of the same country (and among their respective organizations), and how far they were able to implement joint actions aimed at strengthening access to justice and the effective exercise of human rights.

1.4.3 Summing-up sessions

In order to help participants gain a better understanding of the interrelationships and unity among the different topics, four summing-up or review sessions were programmed. These were led by the teaching team of the Course: the Academic Director, the Teaching Director and a specialist-consultant on the incorporation of gender issues. Each summing-up session also included an expert on the particular subject under discussion:

- Protection systems for human rights.
- Current problems in the protection of human rights
- Justice and justice systems.
- Access to justice and protection of human rights (final summing-up session with period for conclusions).

This innovation in the Academic Program was of the utmost importance in helping to achieve coherence and thematic balance in the Course. The review sessions also provided an opportunity for further discussion of certain points of special concern or interest and facilitated relaxed exchanges between the teaching team and the participants.

1.4.4 Case studies

Case studies provide an opportunity to examine, in a practical way, a set of cases on human rights. To a certain extent, these are hypothetical situations that exemplify different facets of the human rights situation in Latin America. It is hoped that through the study and analysis of these cases, Course participants will familiarize themselves with the institutions and norms applicable for the protection of human rights.

This part of the Course began with a plenary session in which students were given some general guidelines and any doubts that arose were clarified. Each group received a package of reference materials on substantive and procedural aspects such as the *Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights*; *The Future of the System of Protection of Human Rights*; and the book *Present and Future of Human Rights: A Tribute to Fernando Volio Jimenez*.

In addition, a Reference Room was set up, with bibliographical material and the advisory services of experts in the inter-American system on protection of human rights.

After the first week, the groups were broken down into three sections, each one led by a facilitator. Each group was randomly assigned a topic or position to argue and defend. The facilitators evaluated the groups' presentations and made recommendations and suggestions, both of substance and form, during a discussion led by the participants themselves to develop theoretical and practical aspects on the protection of human rights.

1.4.5 Other activities

Additional activities were included in the Program of the Interdisciplinary Course, many of them organized as part of the Institute's twentieth anniversary celebrations:

- *Inauguration*: The inaugural ceremony of the Eighteenth Interdisciplinary Course, which coincided with the official celebrations of IIHR's twentieth anniversary, was attended by the President of Costa Rica, Miguel Angel Rodriguez, the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Luis Paulino Mora, the President of the Legislative Assembly, Rina Contreras, and the President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, Oscar Fonseca. Representing IIHR on the rostrum were the Chairman of the Board of Directors of IIHR, Pedro Nikken; the Vice-president, Sonia Picado Sotela and the Executive Director, Roberto Cuellar.

The event took place in the Auditorium of the Judicial Branch of Costa Rica and was very well attended by a large audience that included the former President of Honduras, Carlos Roberto Reina, and the President of the Constitutional Court of Costa Rica, Rodolfo Piza, both members of the Institute's Board of Directors; the Diplomatic corps accredited in Costa Rica, Costa Rica's Ombudswoman, Sandra Pizsk, other senior government officials and representatives of international organizations.

During the ceremony, the President of Costa Rica acknowledged the important role that IIHR has played in the promotion, research and education in human rights in the Americas.

- *Presentation of two books:* a) the book *Access to Justice and Equity in Latin America*, whose contents largely provided the basis for the academic design of the Course; and b) the second edition of the *Electoral Dictionary*, during a ceremony held in the auditorium of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Costa Rica.
- *Presentation of the Jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights:* the Judges of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights presented the latest collection of inter-American jurisprudence to the participants.
- *Public Hearing in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights:* the dates of the Interdisciplinary Course coincided with a session of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In coordination with the Court Secretariat, arrangements were made for participants to attend one of the public hearings so that they would gain a closer insight into the working of the Court.

1.4.6 Certificates

IIHR awards a certificate of participation to all those who participate in the activities of the Interdisciplinary Course, while observers receive a certificate of attendance to the lectures. The difference between one and the other has to do with the fulfillment of certain previous requirements and the fact that observers merely attend the lectures, without participating in the discussions, save with the express authorization of the Academic Director.

1.4.7 Academic certificate

To opt for the academic certificate of the Eighteenth Interdisciplinary Course in Human Rights, participants must prepare a research project on a subject related to the Academic Program of the Interdisciplinary Course, which must be approved before the end of the Course. The requirements are as follows:

- To be admitted to the Course and complete the registration procedures.
- Obtain the attendance certificate
- The subject of the study must be approved by IIHR.
- Submit a paper according to the guidelines and specifications described below.

On this occasion more than 70 applications were received to participate in the academic work, an increase of more than 100% compared with last year, when the previous highest number of requests were received.

A total of thirty academic works were received this year.

1.5 Evaluation

Several evaluation activities have been designed for the Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights to determine to what extent the proposed objectives have been achieved. To this end, the following modalities are used:

- **Pre-test:** at the beginning of the Course, students are given an initial test on some of the basic Human Rights concepts that are to be covered during the program. The idea is to gather information about each participant's previous knowledge.
- **Daily monitoring:** this form of assessment seeks to evaluate each of the academic activities in terms of their content, clarity, methodology, practical utility, resources, etc.
- **Intermediate evaluation:** during the Course, several evaluation meetings are held with a group of students selected at random. These meetings are used to discuss certain academic and logistical aspects that are of special importance to the organization of this activity and that cannot necessarily be inferred from the written evaluations.
- **Post-test:** at the end of the academic activities of the Course a final evaluation or post-test is given to students on different topics covered during the lectures and workshops. The purpose is to contrast the results with the initial evaluation or pre-test, as a means of measuring the level of learning and application of knowledge.
- **Final evaluation:** as with the post-test, this takes place on the last day of the Course. This evaluation covers all the most important logistical and academic aspects that should be taken into consideration for the next edition of the Course. It includes aspects of the most diverse nature such as academic content, teaching aids and support materials, as well as the lectures, workshops, case studies, review sessions, accommodations, meals and the attention provided by IHR staff, etc.
- **Follow-up evaluation:** six months after the Course, each participant will be sent a questionnaire to fill. The objective is to evaluate the results and immediate impact of the training.

It is important to mention that this year major efforts have been made to redesign and adapt the evaluation instruments, separating the really important information and making these assessment tools easier to apply, while preserving their usefulness and scope.

1.6 Follow-up to the Eighteenth Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights

Two specific actions related to the Eighteenth Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights were carried out during the last quarter of this year.

The first involved the systematization and interpretation of the results of the short-term evaluations carried out during the course. These results are very important, inasmuch as they point up both the positive aspects of the course that should be retained and strengthened, and weak areas that need to be corrected. The criticisms, comments and suggestions made by the participants regarding logistical and academic aspects of the

course also provide very useful input for the design of future courses. The evaluation process will be completed in February 2001. The medium-term evaluation, conducted six months after the end of the course to gauge the continuing impact of the activity, has yet to be concluded.

Secondly, the proposals drawn up by the national groups during the workshops have been systematized. The object of this exercise is to provide the participants with a record of the group work, including observations and recommendations aimed at improving and enhancing the impact of their respective projects. A document containing the systematized information has been sent out to all the participants, together with another containing a comparative analysis.

So far the Institute has received the results of 26 research projects submitted by the students who wish to obtain the Academic Certificate. A total of 30 are expected. This is a 100% increase in the number of research projects compared with other courses in recent years. Over the next few weeks a team will be studying and grading the research papers. Certificates will then be sent to all the participants whose papers meet the pre-established requirements in terms of form and substance.

2. INCORPORATION OF A GENDER-BASED PERSPECTIVE INTO ALL IIHR PROGRAMS

During the first quarter, priority was given to coordination with the recently created Applied Research Unit, which is now responsible for supervising the cross-cutting perspectives (gender, ethnic diversity and civil society). Advisory assistance was also provided by the Educational Unit.

Following work sessions involving the Women's Human Rights Program, the Applied Research Unit and the Educational Unit, it was decided that the Committee for the Incorporation of a Gender-based Perspective should be transformed into the IIHR Committee on Cross-cutting Issues. Under the new arrangement, the IIHR's support units, whose role is to collaborate with the operating departments, will be assuming responsibility for the issue of gender equity. It was also agreed that the following decisions would be put into effect as of January 2001:

- the heads of the operating departments will sit on the IIHR Committee on Cross-cutting Issues;
- meetings will be held for internal discussions involving the staff (the first of these will be held on the afternoon of January 30, 2001); and,
- efforts will be made to further incorporate the gender perspective into the entire process of preparing, implementing and evaluating the Inter-American Course on Human Rights, which in 2001 will be held in June.

Other concrete results of the project Incorporation of a Gender-based Perspective into all IIHR Programs in 2000 were as follows:

- A glossary was produced containing a selection of the main terms used in relation to gender issues. This is intended to help create an institutional culture with respect to the gender approach.
- The design of an icon related to the gender issue was completed and the icon installed on the desktop of the computers of selected IIHR officials. By simply clicking on the icon, these staff members now have direct access to a set of basic tools that can be used to incorporate the gender perspective into projects. The icon provides access to a table of contents, the glossary already mentioned, and a questionnaire-guide to the preparation of projects.
- Taking advantage of a staff meeting organized by the Executive Directorate to evaluate the current administration's first year of work, the Women's Human Rights Program, in collaboration with the Information Unit, gave a presentation on the different components of the new tool, which is still being validated (the deadline for completing the process was extended to January 31, 2001). Once the final observations have been incorporated, it will be installed on the IIHR's internal network.
- Reformulation of the document *Gender perspective and human rights. Frame of reference and operating strategy*. A new round of consultations was conducted with the staff, including meetings with departments and with individuals. The two most important criteria that were used in reorganizing and rewriting the document were: that it should be adjusted to bring it into line with the new structure of the IIHR; and that the chapters included should be those that have intrinsic value and that can be updated at a later date, namely: *The process of incorporating the gender perspective at the IIHR; Concepts and their application in the IIHR's activities; Strategy and methods for incorporating the gender perspective at the IIHR; and The toolbox: working with the gender perspective*. The members of the Committee on Cross-cutting Issues and the Director of the Department of Civil Society Entities received copies of the new version of the document, so that they could make their final observations. It will be validated during the first quarter of 2001.
- This issue was also studied at the Inter-American Course on Civil Society and Human Rights held in 2000. The teaching staff were asked to incorporate the gender perspective into their lectures, the topic was included as one of the components of the workshops and working groups, and it was the theme of the public lecture held during the course. Entitled *The gender perspective as an articulator of human rights*, it was given by ECLAC official Sonia Montaña.
- Advisory assistance was provided to the Ombudsman Program during the preparation of the Annual Congress of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen, held November 22-24 in Mexico. This support was particularly important in view of the fact that a project promoted by the IIHR a few years ago, aimed at creating a network of units responsible for dealing with women's issues within ombudsmen's offices, had to be suspended due to lack of funds. The aim at this year's congress was, therefore, to sensitize the ombudsmen (most of whom are men) to the need for their institutions to place greater emphasis on women's issues. The ombudsmen were presented with specialized materials, to which they responded very positively. Further assistance to the Ombudsman Program is planned for next year.

After evaluating the work carried out over the last twelve months, it is fair to say that the Department for Civil Society Entities is the one that has done most to incorporate the gender perspective. Worthy of special mention are the projects being implemented on indigenous issues, where special attention is given to the interests and needs of indigenous women at training activities; and the IIHR's sponsorship of a delegation of equal numbers of indigenous, Afro-Latin American and Caribbean representatives to actively participate in the Preparatory Conference on Racism, held from December 5-7, 2000 in Chile.

3. TARGET GROUPS

3.1 Course on International Protection of Women's Rights (San Jose, Costa Rica, November 6-11, 2000)

The *Second Course-Workshop "Strengthening the promotion and international protection of women's human rights"* was held November 6-11 in San Jose, Costa Rica. It was attended by 28 of the 30 women attorneys who took part in the first course, all of whom were from Latin America or the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Originally scheduled to be held in October, the course had to be postponed as the dates clashed with the sessions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Advantage was therefore taken of the opportunity to complete the follow-up work with the participants in October. This effort involved IIHR staff members, the team from CEJIL and Cecilia Medina, the Chair of the UN Human Rights Committee and the IIHR's consultant in this process.

The review of the cases and reports, and an evaluation of the support provided since October 1999, provided input for the design of the methodological strategy used during the course. The participants studied the practical aspects involved in handling the cases documented and evaluated reports that pointed up repeated violations of women's human rights.

Since it was important for the participants to have an academic experience that would prepare them to present cases or reports within the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights, the organizers created an Academic Tribunal and a Committee for Receiving Reports. The members of these bodies were renowned experts in the fields of women's rights and international, inter-American and domestic law. They included: Domingo Acevedo, Alda Facio, Pilar Noriega, Enrique Sosa, Soledad García, Héctor Faúndez, Liliana Tojo and forensic expert Morris Tidball, a documentation specialist.

The inaugural address at the course was given by Ambassador Aida González, the Chair of the UN Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. During the three days that followed, 11 cases and 17 reports were presented that focused on: the State's obligation to ensure equal protection, guarantees and respect without discrimination; the State's obligation to guarantee women a life free from violence; and women's sexual and reproductive rights.

Coordinated by Cecilia Medina and Viviana Krsticevic, informal discussions were organized to provide the participants with an opportunity to go over theoretical and practical aspects of the cases and reports presented. Members of the Tribunal and the Committee also provided assistance on a one-to-one basis and made specific recommendations.

During a session with Uruguayan journalist Lucy Garrido, the participants expressed their determination to ensure that women's organizations continued to learn from one another and coordinate their efforts, in order to protect the human rights of women, who make up one half of the hemisphere's population. Gilda Pacheco and Line Bareiro, Director of the Department of Civil Society Entities and an official of the Women's Human Rights Program, respectively, analyzed the different ways in which the work could be continued, since, although this was the last on-site course for the group, it was not the end of the process.

An initial evaluation of the Second Course suggests that:

- Having the participants submit cases and reports to the Academic Tribunal and the Committee, respectively, proved very useful. As a result, they received advice about the limitations and weaknesses of their arguments, and how they could improve aspects that were well prepared.
- This exercise also exposed and sensitized the members of the two bodies to the issue of gender equity. In addition to gender experts, they included a supreme court judge, one of the most distinguished authors of works on the procedures of the inter-American protection system, a former deputy secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and a forensic expert.
- The presentations gave the participants the opportunity to apply the knowledge they had acquired and existing jurisprudence, and to draw on other sources of law and information that can be very useful for preparing legal arguments.
- The participants also came to realize how complex a task it is to demonstrate that discrimination against women is a human rights' violation.
- By studying the different documents, which demonstrated various types of violations of women's rights, and the specific characteristics of existing legislation in the Latin American and Caribbean countries represented at the course, the participants were able to gain an over-arching vision and make comparisons. This also paved the way for the coordination of joint strategies for support and work.

Based on the experience acquired through this academic initiative, which got under way last year, it is clear that there is a need for further, more comprehensive training programs and advisory assistance on international instruments for the protection of women's human rights. This learning process, designed to increase the knowledge and use of human rights protection systems by civil society organizations, based on the principle of equality and equity between women and men, has proven to be a truly innovative effort.

The next step will be to select four of the participants for in-service training at the offices of CEJIL in Washington, in 2001. The women chosen will undertake a practical exercise involving the preparation of a case for a possible hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; provide support to the victims and advise the organizations presenting the case; and develop a strategy for communication and coordination with the other organizations participating in this initiative.

Finally, as part of the strategy for disseminating the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW and securing its ratification, further activities were organized to present the book on the protocol. Activities were held in 13 Latin American countries between August and November 2000. The participants in the course on protection and the organizations that they represent played a key role in organizing these activities. In many of the countries,

the book was launched in collaboration with the national legislature and different civil society bodies. These activities received extensive coverage in the media and the political class expressed considerable interest.

4. OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The IIHR Editorial Unit produces some 40 publications each year in support of all the programs of the Institute. The range of publications include books, journals, newsletters and teaching materials.

The institutional publications financed by the USAID grant are those that are issued periodically in the area of education and promotion of human rights and related topics. These publications contribute to institutional strengthening as they inform on the activities of the Institute.

4.1 Boletín IIDH/IIHR Newsletter

The Newsletter, published every three months in two languages (Spanish and English), is one of the instruments that the IIHR uses for dissemination purposes. Regional in scope, it offers information on the activities carried out by the Institute's programs during the corresponding period. The Newsletter also reports on relations between the Institute and other cooperation agencies and the governments.

Issues 57 to 59 were published and distributed both in Spanish and English.

The layout work/editing of Boletín No. 60, covering the months of September, October and November 2000, also began during the period covered by this report. It will be printed and distributed in the first quarter of 2001.

4.2 Revista IIDH

This publication is another instrument for the dissemination of human rights doctrine. Since it was created in the early days of the Institute, its academically-oriented articles have been of great interest to scholars, researchers, students and institutions involved in the defense of human rights. In addition, a large number of libraries subscribe to this semi-annual magazine.

Revista No. 28, covering the period July-December 1998, was distributed during the first quarter of 2000. Issue No. 29 is scheduled to be distributed during the first half of March 2001.

4.3 Publication and video commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the IIHR

As part of the activities organized to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the IIHR, during the period under review the Executive Directorate produced a publication and a video on the origins of the Institute and its development over the last two decades.

The official presentation of both the publication (entitled *Twenty years: the political dimension of human rights education*) and the video took place in San Jose on December 10, Human Rights Day.

5. DOCUMENTATION CENTER AND JOINT LIBRARY

5.1 Documentation Center

5.1.1 Data base of bibliographic materials for human rights education and on the situation of human rights in Latin America

This year 1000 entries containing references to documents on the human rights situation in the region and human rights education were keyed into the Model data base (<http://www.acceso.co.cr>). This data can also be accessed via the link to the electronic library on the CAPEL portal on the IIHR's web site (<http://www.iidh.ed.cr>).

All entries related to documents containing out-of-date information were deleted. The staff also concluded an inventory of the information stored in the data base, another control mechanism used to ensure that every document is available for consultation. The data base currently contains a total of 11,200 entries.

The Documentation Center acquired the new version of the Microsis software for Windows. Since this program is very user-friendly, visitors to the Center should be able to conduct searches with little or no assistance on either of the two computers available for use by members of the public. To support this process, the staff of the Center and the Joint Library received training in the use of the new program.

The Documentation Center also contributed to the creation of the Institute's virtual library, providing the IIHR's different programs with the relevant entries from its data base for incorporation into their respective web pages. CAPEL was supplied with 1900 entries, the Ombudsman Program with 240 and the Gender Program with 900. These can all now be accessed via the library or the programs' web pages.

A total of roughly 800 queries were received and processed over the course of the year (an average of four per day, based on the number of days that the Center was open). These included queries from visitors to the Center and others received by phone and email (from both IIHR personnel and members of the public). The average was lower than the 6.5 received in 1999. This was due to a decline in the number of queries from IIHR staff members in the first months of the year on account of the internal changes that took place. The Center was also closed during the months of June and July, and part of August, when it moved premises.

In September, the Center's opening hours were extended (it now deals with queries from external users from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

As is customary, the Center prepared the bibliographies for the Eighteenth Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights, the Second Inter-American Course on Civil Society and Human Rights, and for the meetings of experts on economic, social and

cultural rights and the right to education. Specialized bibliographies were also prepared for the Fifth Annual Congress of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsman, held November 22-24 in Mexico.

The Center also documented research, seminars, courses, project proposals, missions to the countries and papers related to the work of the Institute and other international and non-governmental organizations active in the field of human rights. Support was also provided to research projects and to students working on theses and dissertations on human rights topics; and information was supplied to the legal department of the Inter-American Court.

5.1.2 Data base of human rights organizations on the Internet

The directory of human rights organizations in Central America was updated during the period under review. Some 600 forms were sent out by email and fax. A total of 433 were returned and the data they contained verified. This information was keyed into a data base that will be linked to the IIHR's web site in January 2001.

5.1.3 Publication of the guide to human rights organizations

One thousand copies of the Directory of Human Rights Organizations in Central America and Panama were printed and distributed in November and December 2000.

5.1.4 Map of Human Rights

Semiannual reports on the six Central American countries were drawn up, dealing with the economic, social and political situation, and the latest developments in regard to justice administration, the institution of the ombudsman, the military and the rights of segments of the population that suffer discrimination (women, children, indigenous peoples, the disabled and migrants).

5.2 Joint Library

The Joint Library serves internal users (staff of the Inter-American Court and the IIHR) and external users (professors and students of law schools and related disciplines from universities in the Americas and Europe, graduate law students, NGOs, government offices, ombudsmen's offices, law firms, embassies, courts and students at all levels).

Similar to other years, the Library has been receiving support from students of law and modern languages from both state and private universities, as the community service required of them by their respective institutions.

5.2.1 Acquisitions

The Joint Library has continued to exchange publications, which makes it possible to update the IIHR's collection of periodicals related to the subject areas in which the library specializes. Both books and magazines are obtained via exchanges and donation.

5.2.2 Systematization of the information

The Joint Library processes the bibliographic materials that are of great importance for its collection. The bibliographic materials produced by the IIHR and the documentation provided free of charge by the judges of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights are processed first.

The Library also offers specialized information services to internal and external users, both at the national and international levels. To this end, the “vertical file” (gray literature), which contains much useful information on the topics in which the library specializes, is updated constantly.

Specialized searches are conducted in national and international documentation sources. The bibliographic data bases of the UN, OAS and SIABUC are one of the Library’s most important assets. One of the priorities for the Library at the present time is to purge these data bases; to this end, joint efforts continue to standardize the terminology used for analyzing the existing documentation.

Another priority area is the documentation of the OAS and UN, which is of great value to the judges of the Court and the academic staff of the IIHR.

B. CENTER FOR ELECTORAL PROMOTION AND ASSISTANCE (CAPEL)

1. OBSERVATION MISSIONS

1.1 Observation Mission to the presidential elections in Chile (second round of voting, January 16, 2000)

Under the Chilean electoral system, a second round of voting must be held if no candidate obtains an absolute majority in the first round, as was the case in the presidential elections held on December 12, 1999. The candidate of the *Concertación Nacional* party, Ricardo Lagos, obtained 47.96% of the votes and Joaquín Lavín, of the *Alianza por Chile*, 47.52%.

CAPEL sent a mission to observe the second round of voting. The members of the mission were: IIHR Board members Mariano Fiallos and Claudio Grossman; Carlos Urruty, President of the Electoral Court of Uruguay; Eduardo Valdés, President of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama; Erasmo Pinilla, a member of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama; and Eduardo Núñez, Coordinator of CAPEL Programs.

Other members of the mission included: Jacqueline Peschard, a member of the General Council of the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico; Eloy Fuentes and José Luis Díaz, a member and the Secretary, respectively, of the Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Branch of the Federation of Mexico; and Alberto Ramírez Zambonini, President of the Superior Court of Electoral Justice of Paraguay.

The delegation’s agenda included meetings with representatives of the campaign managers of the *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia* and the *Alianza por el Cambio*, Chile’s electoral bodies (the Electoral Service and the Electoral Tribunal), the Political Science Institute of the University of Chile and the *Corporación Participa*.

1.2 Observation mission to the election of members of the Legislative Assembly, the Central American Parliament and Municipal Councils (San Salvador, March 12, 2000)

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador invited CAPEL, in its capacity as the Executive Secretariat of the Tikal Protocol, to take part in the mission that observed the elections for members of the Legislative Assembly, the Central American Parliament and Municipal Councils, which were held on March 12.

The IIHR/CAPEL mission was made up of the following observers: Mariano Fiallos, a member of the IIHR's Board of Directors; Roberto Cuéllar, Executive Director of the IIHR; Angel Díaz Ortiz, President of the Regional Chamber of Toluca of the Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Branch of the Federation of Mexico; José Thompson, Technical Secretary of the Commission on the Repositioning of CAPEL; CAPEL program officer Sofia Vincenzi; and Andrés Araya, a CAPEL consultant. They accompanied the representatives of the Tikal Protocol.

The mission began with a meeting with representatives of the Eugenia Dueñas Institute for the Blind, who explained the materials and the mechanism being used for the first time to permit blind Salvadorans to cast their ballot in secret. This activity sparked a lot of interest since El Salvador is one of the few countries that has addressed this situation and introduced mechanisms to overcome the difficulties involved.

This was followed by a lengthy meeting with the members of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the group of officials involved in the Commission for Monitoring the Electoral Calendar. Technical aspects of the process were discussed and members of the Tribunal responded to the issues raised and questions asked by the observers.

The members of the mission also met with representatives of the main political parties: the *Partido Demócrata Cristiano*, the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional*, the *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista*, the *Partido Acción Nacional*, the *Partido de Conciliación Nacional*, and the *Partido Demócrata*.

On election day the observers visited polling stations in the central and western regions of the country and the metropolitan area, known as "Greater San Salvador." At the end of the day the members of the IIHR mission visited the premises of the National Vote-counting Center and were on hand when the first official results were announced.

Finally, the IIHR delegation took part in an evaluation meeting involving all the electoral officials invited to observe the process by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, and the members of the Tribunal.

1.3 Presidential Elections in the Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo, May 15-18, 2000)

At the invitation of the Central Elections Board, CAPEL organized a mission to observe the presidential elections in the Dominican Republic on May 16. The mission was led by Rodolfo Piza, a member of the IIHR's Board of Directors. He was accompanied by Edgar Castellanos, a judge of the National Elections Council of Colombia; Ricardo Valverde, an attorney and IIHR consultant; and CAPEL program officer Sofia Vincenzi.

After the elections, which national and international observers, the media and political actors described as free, fair and fiercely contended, the political parties conducted an exhaustive and lengthy review of the returns and results to determine what their prospects were likely to be in the event that a second round of voting were held. This possibility was ruled out when the Democratic Liberation Party (PLD) failed to secure the support of the Christian Social Revolutionary Party (PRSC) for the second round.

As a result, the candidates of the PLD informed the Central Elections Board that they were renouncing their right to participate in the second round. Hipólito Mejía Domínguez and Milagros Ortiz Bosch were then officially declared to have been elected as President and Vice-president of the Dominican Republic for the period 2000-2004.

1.4 Presidential elections in Venezuela (Caracas, May 27-30, 2000)

The process scheduled to culminate with the presidential elections on May 28 had to be postponed after two Venezuelan civil society organizations, *Queremos Elegir* and *COFAVIC*, filed on May 25 an application for *amparo* with the courts, alleging that the technical conditions did not exist for the elections to take place and that the electorate did not have sufficient information to exercise their civil and political rights.

Since the members of the IIHR's observation mission had arrived the day before, it was decided that the meetings scheduled in the agenda would be attended to learn about the points of view of the different political and social actors. This mission was composed of Rodolfo Piza, a member of the IIHR's Board of Directors; Roberto Cuéllar, IIHR's Executive Director; Félix Castillo Milla, President of the Supreme Elections Tribunal of Guatemala; Luis Arias, a judge of the Central Elections Board of the Dominican Republic; María Marta Valladares, a former member of Congress, from El Salvador; Rafael Villegas, former President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Costa Rica; and Ileana Aguilar, a CAPEL program officer.

The meetings held proved that that the decision to postpone the elections was the right one, if they were to be free and fair.

1.5 Observation mission to Ecuador (Quito, May 21, 2000)

The Supreme Elections Tribunal of Ecuador invited CAPEL, in its capacity as the Executive Secretariat of the Quito Protocol, to form part of the mission that would be observing the local elections on May 21, for mayors, prefects and provincial, municipal and parish councilors in rural areas.

These elections were important because they were the first to be held since President Jamil Mahuad was removed from office, amidst a serious economic crisis, social unrest and large-scale demonstrations, particularly by indigenous groups. In spite of the situation, the Supreme Elections Tribunal was able to conduct the process in an orderly and transparent fashion, demonstrating that the election system has not been affected by recent events.

The Institute's representative was CAPEL program officer María Lourdes González.

1.6 Technical support on electoral matters to the Office of the Ombudsman of Peru (Lima, May 16-22, 2000)

In the run up to the second round of voting in the presidential elections, the Office of the Ombudsman of Peru requested the IIHR's assistance in implementing a training program for the Office's supervisors and technical collaborators, and in verifying the logistics of the elections. The National Office of Election Processes of Peru (ONPE) planned to conduct trials and simulations of the transmission and tallying of results.

The IIHR's technical team was made up of a specialist in electoral informatics, Gustavo Villamil, and an expert in electoral administration and logistics, Orlando Tapia.

Following an induction program for the staff of the Ombudsman's Office that would be taking part in the simulation, at midday on May 18 the first technical trial was carried out of the computer system developed to process the election results. In view of the difficulties encountered, the ONPE decided to conduct three further observation exercises on May 18 and 19, prior to the national simulation programmed for May 21.

Regrettably, the test on May 21 failed to achieve the objectives of a simulation of this kind. There were several reasons for this. The computerized system consisted of four modules (processing of statements of votes, transmission and receipt of data, and consolidation and dissemination of results), but only the first was tested. The plan for collecting and transporting the electoral material was not tested and the decentralized vote-counting centers did not participate simultaneously.

The test was observed by representatives of the Organization of American States, the ONPE, the National Elections Board, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Peru 2000 political movement.

The limited time available between the delivery of the software for the technical trials and the second round of voting made it impossible for the IIHR's team of experts to conduct an exhaustive audit to determine whether the system was secure and reliable. Nor did the consultants have access to three of the components (those to be used for the transmission, receipt and consolidation of the results). Therefore, they were only able to verify the efficiency of part of the system.

1.7 Observation Mission to the General Elections in Mexico (July 2, 2000)

On July 2, simultaneous federal elections took place in Mexico to elect the President of the Republic, 500 members of the Chamber of Deputies and 128 members of the Senate. There were also local elections in 10 federative bodies.

CAPEL organized an Observation Mission, headed by Pedro Nikken, President of the Board of Directors of IIHR, Sonia Picado and Carlos Roberto Reina, Vice-president and member of the Board of Directors of IIHR respectively, and members of Electoral Bodies of Costa Rica, Colombia, Guatemala and El Salvador.

Between June 28 and July 3, the Mission held meetings with the main actors in the country's political and electoral process and with political analysts, and participated in the

Information Exchange Forum on Electoral Issues organized by the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) and the Electoral Tribunal of the Federation's Judicial Branch (Electoral Tribunal).

Mission delegates also visited the installations prepared by the IFE for the transmission of the election results. As a closing activity, an Evaluation Meeting was organized to allow members of the Mission to share their impressions on final part of the electoral process and on the counting of the ballots in Toluca, the State of Mexico, Morelos and the Federal District of Mexico City.

In the words of the President of IIHR, it was the IFE, a member of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (UNIORE), "that scored the greatest triumph, given the effectiveness and discipline with which it led and guided the electoral logistics and organization." In this regard, it is important to mention that CAPEL has been providing technical assistance to the IFE since 1993, the most significant actions being the institutional reforms applied in the elections in the State of Guanajuato – when Vicente Fox was elected Governor – and the invitation extended by CAPEL to the leaders of Mexico's main political parties to participate in the *Inter-American Course on Elections* of 1995.

This year CAPEL received a special invitation from the IFE and the Electoral Tribunal to participate in the final certification of the results of the July elections, at a ceremony held on August 2 in Mexico City.

1.8 Observation Mission to the General Elections in Venezuela (July 30, 2000)

As mentioned in the previous report, the elections scheduled for May 28 were postponed after two organizations of civil society, *Queremos Elegir* and *COFAVIC*, lodged an appeal, arguing that the necessary technical conditions were not in place to hold a ballot and that voters did not have sufficient information at that time to exercise their civil and political rights.

For this reason, the ballot to elect the President of the Republic, a new unicameral legislature, governors and mayors, was rescheduled for July 30.

On this occasion, Eduardo Valdez, President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Panama, headed the Mission organized by CAPEL. He was accompanied by a group of observers that included Rafael Villegas, former President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Costa Rica; Luis Arias, Magistrate of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic; and Ileana Aguilar, a CAPEL official. The Mission members had an opportunity to meet with the Venezuelan Foreign Minister, Jose Vicente Rangel; the Secretary of the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela, Monsignor Hernán Sanchez Porras; Lilliana Ortega, Mercedes de Freitas and Andrés Coba, representatives of organized civil society; and the presidential candidate Francisco Arias Cárdenas. The Mission also participated in an information session on the system used to transmit the electoral results, organized by the National Electoral Council.

On July 30, the observers fanned out through different districts of Caracas to observe the elections. The observation process concluded with a meeting to exchange opinions on the electoral proceedings.

1.9 Observation mission to the Elections of Vice-president in Paraguay (August 13, 2000)

On August 13, Paraguayans went to the polls to elect a Vice-president, in accordance with Decision N° 191 of 27 April of 1999, issued by the Supreme Court of Justice of Paraguay, resolving that the Superior Tribunal of Electoral Justice of Paraguay (TSJE) should convene the corresponding elections.

The TSJE, with the technical support of CAPEL, invited different electoral authorities of the hemisphere to witness the elections, including representatives of the Federal Institute of Elections of Mexico, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador, the Electoral Tribunal of Panama, the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic, the National Electoral Council of Colombia, the National Organization for Electoral Processes and the National Board of Elections of Peru, the Electoral Tribunal of Brazil, the Electoral Tribunal of Chile, the Electoral Court of Uruguay, the Electoral Board of the Province of Formosa, Argentina, the National Electoral Chamber of Argentina and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) a non-governmental body that promotes electoral democracy around the world.

The observers' agenda included interviews with the President of the Republic, Luis Angel González Macchi and with the three candidates to the Vice-presidency, Félix Argaña (National Republican Association), Ricardo Buman (Humanist Party) and Julio César Franco (Liberal Radical Authentic Party).

On Election Day, the mission divided up into smaller groups to observe the electoral proceedings in three of the seventeen departments of Paraguay - Central, Cordillera and Paraguari - visiting a total of 124 polling stations.

In a technical report made public at a press conference on Monday 14 August, the Mission summarized its general considerations as follows: "The Members of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies consider that the vote held by the Paraguayan people to elect the Vice-president of the Republic has complied with the basic conditions required to guarantee free, transparent and reliable elections. We consider that, in accordance with the variables analyzed in the sample observed, it may be argued that the 2.059.181 registered voters who had the opportunity to vote at the 10.312 polling stations, had the necessary infrastructure, organization and human resources to be able to decide who will be the next Vice-president of the Republic."

Finally, it is important to mention that the Supreme Electoral Tribunal implemented the process with organization and transparency, providing the necessary conditions and safeguards to guarantee citizens the full exercise of their civil and political rights.

1.10 Plebiscite in Sarapiquí, Costa Rica (September 24, 2000)

The Municipal Council of Sarapiquí, in the Costa Rican province of Heredia, organized a Popular Ballot on September 24 to allow local residents to decide whether the Sarapiquí River Valley should be declared a *Natural Heritage Site*. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal advised the Municipal Council on the organization of the ballot.

In response to an invitation from the Municipal Mayor, CAPEL sent a delegation of officials to observe the process, which passed off in a calm and orderly manner, though with a low turnout by voters.

1.11 Observation mission to Colombia. Municipal Elections (October 27-30, 2000)

The hopes and expectations aroused by the government's proposed "Plan Colombia" provided the backdrop to the municipal elections held in nearly every region of Colombia on October 29. Voters were asked to elect 30 provincial governors, 502 deputies to the municipal assemblies, 965 municipal and district mayors, 12,000 town councilors and 6000 members of local administrative boards.

The civic spirit demonstrated by the Colombian people in these elections was exemplary, reaffirming their interest in and determination to strengthen and extend the democratic system, respect for human rights and the culture of peace and reconciliation. The electorate, the political parties and movements, the candidates, the media and, in particular, the Colombian electoral authorities, made a tremendous effort to organize and/or participate in a fair, hard-fought contest. That was the conclusion of 23 electoral judges and officials from 10 Latin American countries who, in line with the decisions and resolutions adopted by the associations of electoral bodies (the Tikal and Quito protocols and UNIORE), made up the mission of international observers to these elections. They were accompanied by other special guests invited by the electoral body of Colombia.

Over 10 million Colombians turned out to vote and the abstention rate was 51%.¹ Paradoxically, the trend was towards a strengthening of the two-party system. Although there were numerous independent candidates, the big winners were the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, which currently controls the Executive Branch. On this occasion, the Liberal Party triumphed over its chief rival.

1.12 Observation Mission to Puerto Rico. General Elections (November 5-8, 2000)

In its capacity as the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (UNIORE), CAPEL was invited to attend the general elections held in Puerto Rico on November 7.

Organized by the State Elections Commission of Puerto Rico, the members of the mission met with the Governor of Puerto Rico, the main gubernatorial candidates, academics, and the president and other members of the State Elections Commission.

¹ The rate of abstentionism declined in this election. In the municipal elections in 1997 it reached almost 57%.

The mission was composed of: Carlos Urruty, President of the Electoral Court of Uruguay; Félix Castillo Milla, President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala; Eloy Fuentes, a member of the Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Branch of the Federation of Mexico; Luis Arias, a member of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic; Carmen Gloria Valladares, Secretary-Rapporteur of the Elections Tribunal of Chile; Manuel Carrillo, Coordinator of International Affairs of the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico; Rafael Villegas, former President of the Supreme Elections Tribunal of Costa Rica; Ileana Aguilar, a CAPEL program officer; and Alejandro Vicini, Head of Protocol of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic. The mission also included representatives of electoral organizations from Argentina, Peru and Paraguay.

1.13 Observation mission to Venezuela. Municipal elections (December 1-4, 2000)

The elections for town and parish councilors held December 3 marked the second phase in the process under which elections are to be held for all branches of government, in accordance with the new Political Constitution that came into force this year. Elections were held in all the municipal districts of the metropolitan area and the rest of the country, except for the *Alcadía Mayor* (Board of Alderman), whose members were elected on July 30. The rate of abstentionism was high. Two referendums were also held: one in Chacao, to decide whether bingo halls and casinos should be licensed to operate in the district, and another on the renewal of the country's union leadership. The latter sparked a debate among different sectors as to whether it was an attempt to curb union freedoms.

The members of UNIORE who took part in this observation mission, organized by the National Electoral Council, were: Eduardo Tomasino, an alternate member of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador; Danville Walker, Director of Elections of the Electoral Advisory Committee of Jamaica; Félix Castillo Milla, President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala; Manuel Morel, President of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic; Eloy Fuentes, a member of the Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Branch of the Federation of Mexico; Ivan Duque, National Registrar of Colombia; Orlando Solano, a member of the National Electoral Council of Colombia; Rafael Villegas, former President of the Supreme Elections Tribunal of Costa Rica and an advisor to CAPEL; and Maria Lourdes González, a CAPEL program officer.

2. EXPLORATORY MISSIONS AND HORIZONTAL COOPERATION

2.1 Visit to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador (San Salvador, September, 25, 2000)

On Monday September 25, Roberto Cuéllar and José Thompson met in San Salvador with the President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador, TSE, Jose Sergio Mena Mendez. The meeting resulted in a fruitful exchange of ideas regarding present needs of the political systems, such as the electoral reforms to modernize the rules and procedures of the electoral processes. The TSE arranged for a technical mission to visit CAPEL to explore various forms of collaboration between the two institutions on the issues under discussion and to learn more about the projects and activities undertaken by CAPEL in the region.

2.2 Technical Mission to Peru (Lima, December 10-13, 2000)

In accordance with the decision of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (UNIORE) to support the efforts of the new electoral authorities in Peru during the different stages of the electoral process that will be taking place in that country in 2001, CAPEL organized a technical mission that visited Peru from December 10 to 13.

The members of the mission were Mariano Fiallos Oyanguren, an IIHR Board member and former President of the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua; Eduardo Valdés Escoffery, President of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama, José Thompson, the delegate of the Executive Directorate for CAPEL, and IIHR/CAPEL consultant Orlando Tapia.

The purpose of the Mission was to study in detail the progress being made with the electoral process and the current strengths and weaknesses of Peru's electoral bodies (the Central Electoral Board, the National Office of Electoral Processes and the National Registry) vis-à-vis the administration, planning and implementation of the electoral process.

The members of the mission also explored possible areas for joint technical assistance with the electoral bodies in question, involving other government agencies such as the Office of the Ombudsman, civil society organizations such as *Transparencia* and international institutions that provide financial assistance for electoral processes, such as USAID/Peru and the European Union.

3. ASSOCIATION OF ELECTORAL BODIES

3.1 Extraordinary Meeting of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (UNIORE)

In the context of the Observation Mission to Mexico, a special meeting of UNIORE was convened with the collaboration of the host electoral bodies.

The event was attended by delegates from the electoral bodies of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela. Also present were Pedro Nikken, President of IIHR; Sonia Picado, Vice-president of IIHR; Carlos Roberto Reina, member of the IIHR's Board of Directors; Roberto Cuéllar, Executive Director of IIHR and José Thompson, in charge of CAPEL.

The main themes on the agenda were: the repositioning of CAPEL, including a presentation and detailed explanation of the findings and recommendations made at the consultation meeting of April 26 and 27, summarized in the document entitled "*Summary of Conclusions: Consultation Meeting on the Repositioning of CAPEL*"; and the selection of a new venue for the Fifth Conference of UNIORE, given that the State Commission for Elections of Puerto Rico will be unable to host this event, due to its electoral obligations for the year 2000. By general acclaim, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala was chosen to host the event.

3.2 I Preparatory Meeting of the Fourteenth Conference of the Tikal Protocol and the Fifth Conference of UNIORE

According to Resolution No. 21 of the Thirteenth Conference of the Tikal Protocol, Guatemala was designated as the venue for the Association's Fourteenth Conference. Since UNIORE had also selected Guatemala as the venue for its Fifth Conference, both events are to take place consecutively.

In order to take the necessary decisions to begin organizing both meetings, Roberto Cuéllar, Executive Director of IIHR, and Sofía Vincenzi, Program Officer of CAPEL, were received by the plenary of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala on July 21.

CAPEL, as Executive Secretariat, has proceeded to consult its member Electoral Bodies regarding the provisional dates for these meetings, suggesting the period between November 19 and 23.

3.3 The Fourteenth Conference of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean (*Tikal Protocol*), the Fifth Conference of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (*UNIORE*) and the Special Meeting of the Association of Electoral Bodies of South America (*Quito Protocol*). (Antigua, November 20-22, 2000)

The Fourteenth Conference of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean (*Tikal Protocol*), the Fifth Conference of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (*UNIORE*) and a Special Meeting of the Association of Electoral Bodies of South America (*Quito Protocol*) were held consecutively in Guatemala City, from November 20 to 22.

The event was organized by CAPEL and the Supreme Elections Tribunal of Guatemala, which hosted the activity.

Most of the region's electoral bodies were represented. Some did not send delegates because they were engaged in organizing electoral processes around the same time (i.e., Antigua and Barbuda, Canada, the United States, Nicaragua and Venezuela). The electoral bodies represented were those of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama and St. Lucia, all members of the *Tikal Protocol*; and Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, all members of the *Quito Protocol*. The *Conference of UNIORE* was attended by representatives of all the countries already mentioned, plus Mexico and Puerto Rico.

The conferences were inaugurated by the former President of Costa Rica, Rodrigo Carazo, who spoke about the challenges faced by, and the outlook for, democracy in the twenty-first century. Argentine attorney Daniel Sabsay introduced the topic of electoral reform, which was then discussed on a country-by-country basis. The President of the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico, José Woldenberg, analyzed the situation in his country. Electoral judge Mario Roberto Guerra then dealt with Guatemala, judge Eduardo Valdés with Panama, and Renán Rodríguez, Vice-president of his country's Electoral Court, with Uruguay. Paraguayan attorney and political scientist Line Bareiro then

addressed the issue of political parties as mediators between the demands of the people and the power structure. This was followed by analyses of the following countries: Guatemala (by electoral judge César Conde), the Dominican Republic (by Manuel Morel, President of the Central Electoral Board), Colombia (by judge Orlando Solano) and Bolivia (by Alfredo Bocángel, Vice-president of the National Electoral Court).

The members of the different associations also expressed their support for the new guidelines established for the work of CAPEL, in its dual role as a Specialized Program of the IHR and the Executive Secretariat of the electoral bodies.

Some of the most important decisions taken at the conferences were as follows:

3.3.1 Fourteenth Conference of the Tikal Protocol

The members were unanimous in expressing their satisfaction with the communication issued by the Executive Secretariat concerning the entry into force of the modifications to the Charter of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean.

They also pledged their unwavering commitment to the preservation and gradual strengthening of the electoral institutional framework in their respective countries, particularly as regards the financial and operational independence of electoral bodies in the region.

The members of the association also agreed to press the governments of their respective countries to issue a declaration concerning the financial and operational independence of electoral bodies at the next Summit of Presidents of Central America and the Caribbean.

The Executive Secretariat was asked to use its good offices to seek the adoption of a similar declaration at the next General Assembly of the OAS, scheduled to be held in San Jose, Costa Rica, in 2001.

The Conference also pledged its full support for the efforts of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala to maintain and strengthen its independence.

With respect to election observation missions, the delegates agreed to continue to foster joint technical missions by the members of the association and the Executive Secretariat, and reaffirmed the usefulness of such missions in increasing horizontal cooperation among electoral bodies.

3.3.2 Special Meeting of the Quito Protocol

The special meeting of the Quito Protocol was held to prepare for the Ninth Conference of this association, scheduled to be held in Quito, Ecuador, during the first half of 2001.

The delegates asked the Executive Secretariat to design a civic-electoral training program to orient the work of the electoral bodies.

They also decided to make "*Institutional Strengthening*" the theme of the Ninth Conference. It was suggested that the Executive Secretariat and the country hosting the event should draw up a program that included issues such as voter lists, territory and its bearing on voting, and the phenomenon of impeachment.

3.3.3 Fifth Conference of UNIORE

Following the Conference of the Tikal Protocol and the Special Meeting of the Quito Protocol, the members of UNIORE met to discuss the role of the Executive Secretariat in the Union and a number of projects that it could promote that would benefit the political and electoral systems of the countries concerned.

The delegates reaffirmed the key role that education should play in democracy, and particularly in any future plans designed to consolidate the political systems of the hemisphere. They also urged the Executive Secretariat, with support from the electoral bodies themselves, to address the following issues in its studies, research and academic events:

- Political participation of minorities.
- Systems of representation and their bearing on the image of public institutions.
- Citizen control over the government.
- Geography, territory and electoral participation.
- The work of the legislative branch and how it is viewed by the media - in particular, how the reputation of this branch of government has been tarnished.
- Guidelines for and lessons learned in regard to electoral reform.

The members of UNIORE also decided to use the technical resources of the Integrated Ibero-American Information System (SIII) to create specialized modules on the electoral justice system, drawing on the experience of and input from the member organizations whose functions include the administration of electoral justice.

The members also approved a proposal put forward by the federal electoral authorities of Mexico. This called upon the electoral bodies to help coordinate forums for discussing specific issues. The following forums were created and responsibility for coordinating them assigned to the electoral bodies mentioned:

- Electoral Training, under the aegis of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama.
- Electoral Informatics, under the aegis of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador.
- Mixed electoral systems, under the aegis of the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico.
- Electoral Justice, under the aegis of the Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Branch of the Federation of Mexico.

The purpose of these forums will be to keep the electoral bodies abreast of the latest developments regarding the issues in question. The coordinators will monitor and evaluate the topic for which they are responsible, convene regional meetings and make use of the system of forums created under the SIII.

The members of UNIORE also instructed the Executive Secretariat to provide support to the new electoral authorities in Peru during the different stages of the electoral process that will be taking place in that country in 2001.

Finally, they welcomed the increase in the amount of specialized electoral information generated by the members and the Executive Secretariat over the previous six months, and the growth in the channels for sharing such information, particularly the Integrated Ibero-American Information System and the newsletters published by UNIORE.

4. TRAINING

4.1 International Seminar on the Resolution of Electoral Conflicts: Comparative Outlook for Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic (San José, March 27-29, 2000)

In collaboration with the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), the Federal Electoral Institute, the Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Branch of the Federation of Mexico and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Costa Rica, CAPEL organized the *International Seminar on the Resolution of Electoral Conflicts: Comparative Outlook for Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic*, which was held in San José, Costa Rica, from March 27-29.

The objective of the event was to help strengthen the juridical culture of electoral processes and electoral institutions, with special emphasis on Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

The event was attended by senior officials and specialists of electoral bodies, constitutional courts and civil society organizations involved in electoral processes. The participants discussed and compared theoretical and legal frameworks, and case studies were presented that pointed up the comparative advantages, strengths and weaknesses of the constitutional and procedural guarantees that underpin the structure and operation of the modern systems for resolving electoral conflicts in the countries in question. The case studies also highlighted experiences in this field, and the views of different actors.

5. CONSULTATION MEETING ON THE REPOSITIONING OF CAPEL (San José, Costa Rica, April 26-27, 2000)

The Executive Director of the IIHR, Roberto Cuéllar, asked a group of experts led by the former President of the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua, Mariano Fiallos, to conduct an analysis aimed at the strategic repositioning of CAPEL, so as to bring it into line with the new conditions and needs of democracy in the Western Hemisphere. To this end, a discussion paper prepared by Mariano Fiallos and José Thompson, who served as the group's Technical Secretary, was presented; it included contributions from electoral organizations, political scientists and experts on electoral matters resulting from a consultation -which included direct contact and communication by telephone and e-mail- with distinguished individuals from 20 countries of the hemisphere. This document was used as the basis for the discussions that took place with electoral bodies and political scientists at a two-day meeting held at IIHR Headquarters from April 26-27, 2000.

A total of 21 participants, from 15 countries, and 10 electoral organizations were represented in the meeting. Additionally, written comments were received from or telephone conferences held with eight other electoral organizations.

5.1 The nature of the consultation

The Consultation reached consensus on the importance and timelines of the activity, in the light of events in the Latin American political sphere together with recent changes in IIHR's structure, in particular, in its specialized program, CAPEL, which make it necessary to reassess the latter's focus and *modus operandi*.

The pertinence of the meeting was emphasized particularly; this resulted in a major presence of members of electoral organizations –in keeping with the priority that CAPEL wishes to give to its function of Secretariat of the associations of Latin American electoral organizations– together with the participation of a group of CAPEL experts and collaborators. The IIHR was also complimented for having prepared a basic documentation for the consultation that fulfilled the need for information while respecting the consultative nature of the meeting. Lastly, those consulted indicated that consideration of the issues in the order proposed should not limit or restrict the participation of those present.

The IIHR Directorate explained that CAPEL occupied a significant place in the institutional plans, since it was considered an emblematic program. It reiterated that the personnel reorganization had the two-fold purpose of adapting IIHR's structure to the new trends in international cooperation programs while correcting an imbalance in the budget envelopes that particularly affected CAPEL. It indicated that CAPEL had adequate basic resources to assume its commitments for calendar year 2000, although no special projects were underway, such as those that had made it necessary to expand the personnel roster in the past. However, as some participants observed, this is because the installed capacity of the electoral organizations themselves has been strengthened.

The Consultation suggested that the IIHR Directorate and the coordination generated for CAPEL should explain and disseminate the reasons for carrying out the recent personnel changes and that communication with the electoral organizations and other collaborators and interested parties should be reinforced, in order to reestablish fluidity in the exchange of information, an exchange that forms the basis for CAPEL's success to date.

5.2 The validity of CAPEL in its milieu

The Consultation considered the major changes that Latin America had undergone in recent decades and noted the emergence of new opportunities for democracy as a system, accompanied by new challenges but also new threats. The expansion of stronger democracies has not coincided with advances in the democratic experience and democratic institutions, which could lead to fissures or regressions in this political trend.

Elections only acquire their full meaning if they are seen as a way of achieving democratic principles and goals. But even if they are only seen as a technical component, it is obvious that there are still defects, omissions, contradictions and deficiencies that require the action of institutions specializing in the matter.

Participants insisted in the importance of reexamining CAPEL's mandate in the light of political and institutional circumstances, but agreed that the amplitude of its formulation² makes it appropriate for current needs and those projected for the future. Some participants insisted in the importance of concentrating efforts in the technical areas. Nevertheless, no one rejected the obligation to retain the connection with the democratic goals that it should serve, so that, whatever happens, the teleological perspective is preserved and not sacrificed to technical considerations that are isolated from its context.

The IHR Directorate reaffirmed the Institute's conviction that human rights legislation and philosophy require solid and reliable electoral organizations, norms and systems; this explains the rationale for the creation and growth of CAPEL within a human rights educational entity. The meeting expressed its agreement on this position, which should guide the definition of the projects formulated and the actions undertaken. It noted, however, that the specialized nature of the subject and the need to identify specific clienteles and collaborators more than justified CAPEL's position as a program with special characteristics within the framework of IHR.

One participant emphasized the active relationship between promotion of democracy and electoral technical assistance and insisted that electoral issues are instrumental to democracy; this is applicable to the case of CAPEL, so that, should a conflict occur, the democratic option should prevail.

The Consultation was unanimous in affirming the validity of CAPEL as an institution, due not only to its accumulated experience and list of achievements to date, but also to its function in the actual context and to evident needs in the area of promotion of democracy and assistance on electoral matters. The existence of other institutions and entities that are increasingly venturing into this area was recognized; however, participants insisted that this did not nullify CAPEL's validity, but rather obliged it to strive for increased quality and seek out new specialized areas for its action. In the same way, it paved the way to exploring how to make alliances and implement joint projects.

5.3 The characteristics of CAPEL's action

The Consultation was asked to consider the concern about the validity and purpose of the distinguishing characteristics of CAPEL's action; these are, its non-partisan nature, the priority of collaborating with electoral organizations, the impossibility of making public complaints about the conduct of specific States, the intention of achieving an inter-American scope.

² The Statute of CAPEL stipulates that "The Center is an instrument for planning and executing IHR programs relating to the principles of democracy and the rule of law, ideological pluralism, respect for human rights, their international protection and promotion, academic freedom, international solidarity and non-discriminatory cooperation, and to those of free elections as an essential component of the theory and practice of human rights, which is a condition of democracy and the basis of the right to self-determination and peace in harmonious national and international relations....The objectives of the Center are to provide technical assistance in electoral matters and promote elections and the values of the culture of democracy and full non-discriminatory political participation".

In general, the characteristics were considered valid, although the point generated widespread discussion, above all on whether the impossibility of making public complaints was applicable to the issue of electoral observation, since some participants indicated that CAPEL should use its moral authority to openly denounce irregularities in electoral processes. However, at the end of the discussion, there was evident consensus that this task is amply covered by other organizations and would denaturalize CAPEL and place its work in contradiction with the rest of the IIHR. The Consultation's general opinion was that the approach of the observation missions should not change, but thought should be given to modifying the methodology and focus, seeking how to make the technical assistance that CAPEL offers more agile and effective.

In addition, the Consultation requested CAPEL to reinforce its collaboration with the electoral organizations, taking advantage of its position as Secretariat of the respective Latin American associations and intensifying its functions in this capacity. In this respect, it was suggested that CAPEL should consider the organizations as natural counterparts, insofar as the nature of the projects underway do not run counter to this. To encourage communication, and as there have been numerous changes in the composition of the organizations over the last two years, the Consultation recommended that contacts should be established with the new authorities, who should be informed of the possibilities of and limits to CAPEL's action; this could open up opportunities for new initiatives and, also, prevent any inaccuracy or misunderstanding about its mandate and working methods.

The Consultation recalled that one of CAPEL's essential characteristics is that it is an institution created and established in Latin America, which could privilege its role in complex situations when the participation of a non-regional or international body might generate misunderstandings and misperceptions. This was translated into the recommendation that this distinctive characteristic should be taken into account when planning, negotiating and implementing projects.

5.4 Technical assistance on electoral matters

The Consultation considered that one of the areas in which CAPEL has been most successful is with regard to needs attended by technical assistance projects. Consequently, in general, there is a perception that the role and capacity of electoral organizations has been strengthened and that electoral processes have greater credibility. Essentially, this means a reduction in the dimension of technical assistance projects provided by institutions such as CAPEL, because the organizations are often able to execute them directly.

However, the Consultation noted that, even though they have been significantly reduced, there are still many needs related to technical electoral issues. All the countries represented at the meeting mentioned concrete aspects of their systems that needed to be corrected or updated and affirmed that there were still valid opportunities for action open to CAPEL and other international bodies.

Participants reiterated the opinion that CAPEL should revert to its practice of identifying needs in this area and collaborating in the formulation of proposals to be submitted to the respective national authorities or to international cooperation agencies. They expressly

recommended that a diagnosis of needs should be made and the electoral organizations present offered to collaborate with this.

The Consultation indicated that the new circumstances in Latin America made it necessary to strengthen democracy and this could result in important modifications to electoral systems and legislation. Accordingly, technical assistance should be rethought, no longer in terms of resolving the urgent need for a model, but rather of strengthening the institutional framework and democratizing the institutions.

The Consultation recommended CAPEL to make greater and better use of the opportunities provided by the meetings of the associations of electoral organizations and observations missions to identify needs for technical assistance and possibilities for joint projects. It mentioned that CAPEL should once again give priority to this line of work and reinterpret its activities in this perspective.

5.5 Other types of action

The Consultation was informed about CAPEL's accumulated experience in areas of work such as electoral observation, producing doctrine on political and technical issues, organizing the Inter-American Course on Elections and Democracy, and its functions as Technical Secretariat for the associations of Latin American electoral organizations. It agreed with the Executive Directorate on the importance assigned to CAPEL's work as Technical Secretariat of these associations, since it was irreplaceable in this role. It therefore recommended that future plans should give priority to this activity and that new and more creative ways and resources should be sought in order to take maximum advantage of the opportunities provided by the periodic meetings of these bodies.

The Consultation recommended that the agreements adopted during the associations' meetings should be re-examined so as to verify that they have been executed and any work they imply for CAPEL. The Executive Directorate agreed to study progress on this matter in order to make an assessment of what is resolved and what is implemented, and update it from time to time.

In the same way, it reiterated the essential role of constant communication for the Secretariat to carry out its work completely and responsively. In this respect, the Executive Directorate indicated that the recently established Ibero-American Integrated Information System (SIII) has provided a new instrument for communication and access to broad segments of information and opened up opportunities for dialogue between electoral organizations. The Consultation observed a demonstration of the SIII's possibilities and congratulated IIHR for this effort. Without officially committing the electoral organizations they represented, some participants indicated that there might be a possibility of paying a determined amount for access to the system, which would be more effective than making a financial contribution to CAPEL's work as Technical Secretariat.

With regard to electoral observation, the Executive Directorate maintained its conviction that this should continue to be a horizontal cooperation mechanism and that its composition should reflect that intention. The meeting noted the multiplicity of actors currently involved in the international observation of elections and recommended that CAPEL should examine the possibility of carrying out fewer but more extended missions,

so as to evaluate a process, with its possible defects and deficiencies, and not merely the actual vote.

On the subject of electoral observation, the Executive Directorate mentioned that it considered that the highest priority should be given to developing an “early warning” system, capable of detecting situations that were potentially conflictive, threatening or dangerous for democratic stability and the solidity of electoral processes in Latin America. This task, which CAPEL could carry out without contravening its fundamental characteristics, would be appropriate and timely for the actual circumstances in the region and would be aimed at detecting ways of preventing and containing the potential development of such situations.

The Consultation then recalled the role that local election observation had acquired and recommended CAPEL to continue working with civil society organizations and other entities. This work should be carried out on two fronts: first, taking advantage of the experience accumulated locally and the potential of these organizations as sources of information; second, developing activities designed to strengthen technical capacity on domestic observation and, to this end, applying and adapting know-how acquired at the international level and promoting the sharing of similar experiences.

Regarding the production of doctrine, the Consultation recognized CAPEL’s work during its 15 years of existence and underlined the importance of undertakings such as the Electoral Dictionary and research on electoral legislation and political parties. Participants considered that CAPEL should continue to give importance and resources to research and publications, a field in which there are a series of needs related to substantial aspects of Latin American democracy. It was specifically indicated that the actual circumstances in the region required more research and the production of new publications on issues and dilemmas related to the evolution of democracy.

The Consultation observed that CAPEL should improve the system for distributing its publications, so that they have a greater circulation and are more accessible to students and academics. It recommended reviewing the current system and examining the advantages of signing agreements with international commercial distributors; it was also suggested that the potential of Internet should be analyzed, in this respect.

With regard to educational activities, the Consultation recommended strengthening efforts designed to seek new opportunities in fields such as civic education, which could be developed in collaboration with electoral organizations. It considered that the Inter-American Course on Elections and Democracy was a valuable endeavor, due not only to the reflection that it provokes but also to the issues that emerge, which could aliment future research or specific projects.

5.6 New areas of activities

The Consultation heard about CAPEL’s concern to diversify its areas of activity and agreed on the need to explore working procedures and strengthen what have to date been poorly systematized efforts.

In this respect, it was agreed that special priority should be given to strengthening and democratizing political parties, since these groups are in crisis throughout the region and this is one of the key elements of the weaknesses that are perceived in the actual state of Latin American political systems. Participants noted that CAPEL could perform important work on this issue and that it should consider doing this with the collaboration of the electoral organizations, insofar as the respective national circumstances allow this.

The relevance of the work of training party leaders was emphasized and it was suggested that long-term plans should give priority to women and young people, as this has an effect on the internal democracy of the political parties.

It was noted that this course of action is relevant and timely, but there could be implementation problems due to the nature of the parties, their internal dynamics and their effective capacity to interact with similar groups. Therefore, it was recommended that activities should be introduced gradually, with the start of each new stage based on previous results; it might be necessary to carry out research prior to the training programs, and local action should be combined with opportunities for exchanges with other countries.

The Consultation underlined the importance of other possibilities for action, such as working with the media. In this regard, it indicated two possible lines of action: one, that of freedom of expression and the threats to its exercise, since this is a fundamental freedom for the existence of truly democratic regimes; and the other, that of the responsibility of the media, its role in the political dynamics of their countries and its potential for strengthening democracy. In both cases, it is important to generate opportunities for dialogue and it may be advisable to foster the participation of different sectors of society.

The Executive Directorate indicated that work with the media should be grounded, above all, in the know-how developed in the series of seminars on “The Media and Democratic Society” that CAPEL and IIHR held in previous years.

On two other issues submitted for discussion, the strengthening of the Legislatures and support to local government, the Consultation considered that it was preferable that CAPEL should work on those cases and issues directly linked to elections.

The Consultation recommended adopting a broad perspective when interpreting CAPEL’s mandate and types of action, agreed with the importance of establishing priorities – on issues, clienteles and duration – but considered that this determination should not be interpreted as restricting the activity of an institution that constitutes a valid, actual and necessary option for the circumstances of Latin American democracy at the present time.

6. PUBLICATIONS

6.1 Cuaderno de CAPEL No. 46

In *Cuaderno de CAPEL No. 46*, Venezuelan attorney and political scientist José Enrique Molina discusses Latin America’s electoral systems, describing their main characteristics, the prevailing trends in the region regarding both presidential and parliamentary elections, the effect of electoral systems on democratic governance, and the way that electoral systems and party systems influence each other.

The author, who is a specialist on the subject, presents four articles in which he sets out convincing arguments to demonstrate that Latin American politicians' belief in the transforming power of electoral systems is well founded but excessive. Electoral systems are institutions that have proven throughout the democratic world, including Latin America, that they can create trends in political phenomena. Numerous studies of specific cases have also shown that such trends are modified, amplified or neutralized by the specific political context in which they take place.

6.2 Boletín Electoral Latinoamericano XXI

The IIHR/CAPEL published issue No. 21 of the *Boletín Electoral Latinoamericano*, covering the period January-June 1999. The section on elections includes analyses of the electoral processes held in El Salvador, Uruguay and Panama. The presidential election in El Salvador, the second of its kind since the Peace Accords were signed in 1992, is analyzed by Pedro Monterrosa, a former member of the country's Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Rodolfo González Rissotto, a member of the Electoral Court of Uruguay, writes about the Uruguayan elections held in April 1999, under a new electoral system. Introduced as a result of a constitutional amendment, it replaced the system that had been in operation for nearly 90 years. The process via which Mireya Moscoso was elected President of Panama is discussed by Eduardo Valdés, a member of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama.

The section entitled *Tema Central* contains a selection of the papers presented at the seminar "Electoral Engineering: Integrity, Security and Electoral Geography," held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, as part of the Electoral Senior Management Program (PAGE) being implemented by CAPEL to contribute to the professionalization of electoral officials in the region. The papers included were written by a number of specialists from the region, such as Orlando Solano, a Colombian researcher and professor, Fernando Tuesta, a Peruvian consultant and professor, Eduardo Cázarez, a Mexican geographer, and Rolando Costa, a Bolivian doctor, historian and writer.

In the section *Análisis y Opinión*, Costa Rican attorney Ricardo Valverde discusses the construction of a democratic and participatory democracy.

C. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

An essential part of the cooperation that USAID provides to the Institute are the funds assigned to institutional support. This enables the IIHR to maintain its infrastructure; to provide administrative support to all its projects and activities; and to retain its autonomy *vis-à-vis* other donors, such as international agencies of cooperation, counterparts and governments.

In particular, funds in this category were used for the following items:

- *Infrastructure and administrative support*: in addition to covering part of the costs of using and maintaining the Institute's physical facilities –which include public utilities (water, electricity and communications), security, building maintenance,

transportation, cleaning and bank and insurance charges- a portion of the administrative and informatics support needed for the execution of all Institute projects was also financed.

Institutional funds were also used to maintain existing and acquire new equipment, and office supplies needed for the operation of the Institute.

- *Salaries and professional honoraria:* a portion of institutional funds was used to pay the management personnel of the Institute, who are not directly covered by the specific projects executed by the IIHR. This applies to the Executive Director, the Department Directors and the Director of Administration and Finances.
- *Meetings, missions and institutional visits:* The meetings of the Institute's highest-level decision-making bodies –the Board of Directors and its Permanent Commission- are made possible by institutional funds. The Board is the Institute's governing body and is composed of twenty-seven internationally respected experts who provide advice and guidance on an institutional and programmatic basis. This year the Board met March 5-6 in San Jose, Costa Rica. During this annual meeting, the policy and academic guidelines to be followed in Institute activities were defined. The Permanent Commission of the Board, which meets periodically, is composed of the Institute's President, Vice Presidents and two members of the Board and advises the Executive Director.

These resources also make it possible to dispatch missions aimed at increasing its fundraising and diversifying its donor base, and to meet with current and potential beneficiaries for the purpose of monitoring the services it provides or to negotiate the execution of new projects.