

AMERICAS REPORT

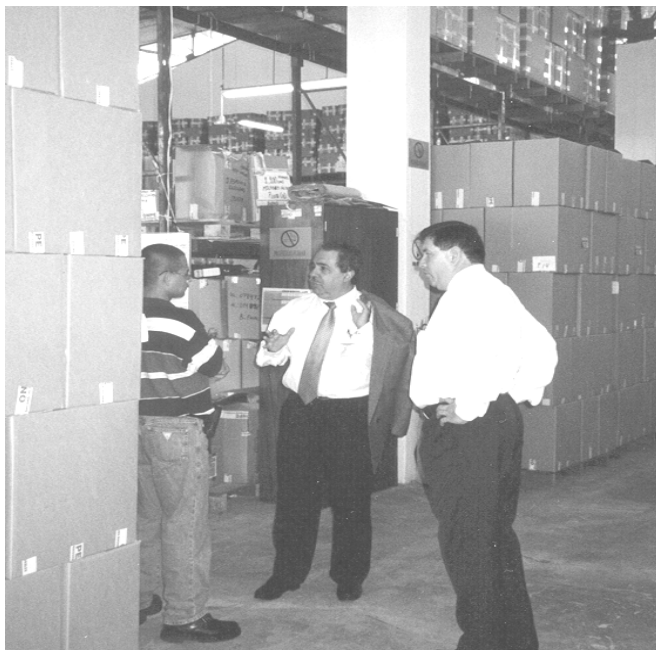


MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

March 2001

IFES Provides Rapid Technical Assistance Response for Extraordinary Elections in Peru

The changes occurring in Peru create a unique window of opportunity to advance peaceful, democratic transformation because President Alberto Fujimori voluntarily resigned from office without intervention from the military, which had a long history of political involvement. The fact that the transition in Peru is taking place without violence has increased the optimism among the Peruvian people and the international community that meaningful change is underway.



IFES consultant Gonzalo Brenes (middle) discusses logistical plans at ONPE's warehouse

On December 27, 2000 the Peruvian Congress reversed its position and voted to create multiple districts for the

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new Congress to be elected on April 8, 2001. Each department (equivalent to a state) will be allotted proportional representation based on its population. Peruvian President Valentin Paniagua has also made several pronouncements supporting decentralization and devolution of power to local communities.

The ongoing release to the public of secretly recorded videotapes showing former Fujimori national security official Vladimiro Montesinos bribing officials has brought corruption issues to the fore. These "Vladivideos" have focused the country's attention on the need for adequate checks and balances in government.

From January 7 to February 11, 2001 IFES carried out its first phase of the technical assistance in Peru in preparation for the April 8 extraordinary general elections, in the first-ever application of a new rapid response mechanism for USAID. This short-term program was followed immediately by the currently-ongoing USAID-supported IFES elections technical assistance program, covering many of the same activity areas. IFES rapid response assistance focused on the Peruvian National Electoral Processes Office (Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales – ONPE) and the

National Elections Board (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones – JNE). IFES provided a relatively smaller amount of assistance to the Peruvian National Identification and Civil Status Registry (Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil –RENIEC), since that authority had already carried out the bulk of its responsibilities for the April 2001 elections in developing the voter rolls.

IFES cooperation with the ONPE and JNE included assistance in developing, reviewing, testing and monitoring information technology systems and procedures. The ONPE and JNE Electoral Training and Education Divisions both benefited from IFES assistance, such as in designing training for polling station officials, a communications strategy to get the word out to the 524,000 citizens selected by lottery to serve as polling officials, development of instructional materials, and coordination with decentralized electoral offices.

One of the most important aspects of IFES assistance was coordination among the three Peruvian electoral institutions, as well as with the United Nations and other international bodies providing assistance to the electoral process.

The IFES rapid-response assistance was especially challenging because about 80 percent of the Peruvian officials responsible for organizing elections had little or no previous direct experience in this area and since Peruvian electoral officials had to operate under very tight time constraints to meet deadlines for the extraordinary elections. A great deal of coordination was also necessary among the various international institutions providing technical assistance to the Peruvian authorities, but cooperation has been excellent.

It should be noted that the Peruvian electoral institutions enthusiastically took full advantage of the technical support provided by IFES, always taking into account that the national authorities have the final say on each item addressed. This technical assistance should continue to benefit Peru in the long run, as it will help the country to build stronger institutions to support democracy beyond the April 2001 elections.

IFES has high hopes that it may be able to assist Peru's longer-term transition to democracy by working to institutionalize reforms to the electoral system, strengthen civil society, and promote good governance and rule of law.

GUYANA

Technical Assistance for March 19 General Elections

Guyana held general elections March 19 after considerable controversy regarding timing and procedures. IFES provided extensive technical assistance to the electoral authorities in preparation for an event that Guyana's people hoped would help them reconcile a history of ethnic, political and social divisions.

Adding to the ferment of the electoral environment, on January 15th the High Court declared the 1997 General Elections null and void. In a special election petition, the Court ordered the current government to remain in office until new elections were held. The long-awaited Election Law Amendment, part of the ongoing national constitutional reform effort, was passed on November 23, 2000, increasing proportional representation in the electoral system.

The legislation stipulated that ten geographical constituencies would elect 25 of the members of the National Assembly and the remaining 40 elected members of the National Assembly would be chosen from "national top-up lists" supplied by the political parties. The amendment did not pass through consensus among the major political parties, as some had hoped, but it nevertheless enabled the Elections Secretariat to begin critical elements of the polling preparations.

The Claims and Objections Period for the Preliminary Voters List (PVL) was extended to allow more citizens to register and have their photographs taken. As the period drew to a close, the People's National Congress (PNC) submitted a block of approximately 30,000 objections to the voters list to the Elections Commission, alleging that the individuals identified did not exist and should be removed from the list. After further investigation, however, the PNC withdrew the majority of these objections, reducing the number of objections to approximately 3,700.

As part of its preparations, the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) recruited Returning Officers, Deputy Returning Officers and other polling officials. Due to a shortage of polling officials in the capital city, GECOM intensified its efforts to find qualified, capable individuals from civil society and the private sector to fill those positions.

GECOM sponsored a "Participatory Training Seminar for GECOM Core Trainers" at which

participants engaged in role-playing the duties of election officials and each was evaluated on his or her performance. Subsequent training sessions for polling officials also took place until election day. In order to improve the public's understanding of changes to the electoral system, GECOM hired a public relations officer and voter education specialist. Additionally, GECOM developed a brief educational publication to inform the public on the new electoral system, how the electoral system would be applied and how to vote. A local advertising firm, was responsible for implementing the voter education plan.

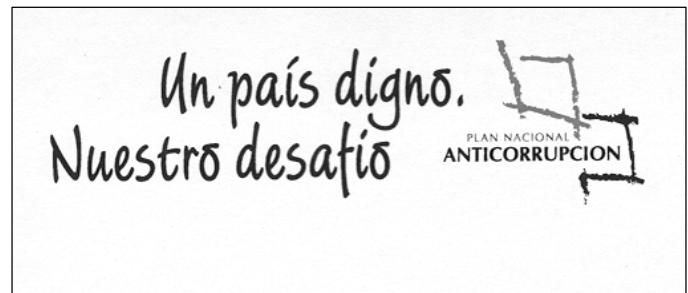
IFES worked closely with GECOM, providing recommendations on migration of the voters list database to a Structured Query Language (SQL) server system, feasibility of the production schedule of the new National Identification Cards, analysis of the Parliamentary seat allocation formula according to the new electoral law amendment and assessment of the computer code for the compilation of the PVL. IFES recommended a number of database systems be developed before March 19, including a Logistics Tracking Database, a Preliminary Results Reporting Database, a Statement of Polls Processing System, Seat Allocation Programming and a Results Publication System, to help ensure the smooth functioning of the electoral process.

IFES assisted in the development and implementation of the logistics and communications plans, which would be critical in determining the success of the upcoming elections. Recommendations included prepackaging electoral materials destined for the outlying regions as well as generating a database of polling station locations and political party names in order to preprint distribution and return forms, statements of poll and vote tally sheets in order to save time and resources as well as ensure quality control before the elections and on election day.

PARAGUAY

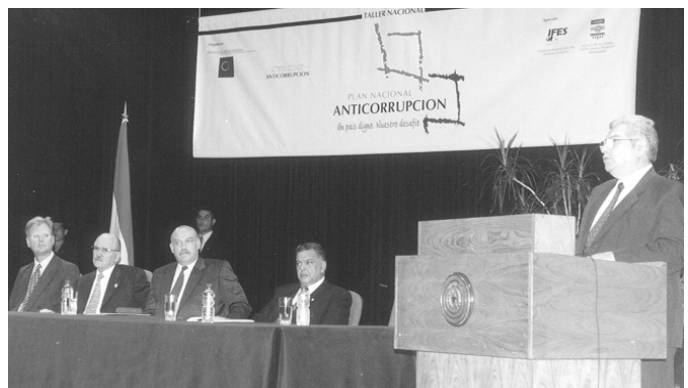
Phase One of IFES, USAID and World Bank Institute Support to Anticorruption Initiative

IFES and USAID facilitated an agreement between the Paraguayan Coordinating Council on the National Anticorruption Plan (*Consejo Impulsor del Plan Nacional Anticorrupcion - CIPNAC*) World Bank Institute, and IFES to hold national and regional public deliberation forums on the draft plan created by CIPNAC with support from the World Bank Institute.



Anticorruption posters were developed and distributed by IFES and its partners in this project

The draft plan centers on reforms to customs, bids and contracts, and the judicial system. Through the support of USAID, IFES will support dissemination of the draft plan and organize public debate regarding its merits. In December, IFES, USAID, the World Bank Institute and CIPNAC organized the first public presentation and discussion of the plan in a highly publicized National Forum with over 350 participants representing civil society, government, and private sector leaders, including Paraguayan President Gonzalez Macchi and the presidents of the Congress, Supreme Court and the Election Tribunal. The next phase will be to conduct regional forums on public deliberation, and citizen proposals for the final version of the plan. As a result of the successful coordination among the Government of Paraguay, national institutions, civil society groups, IFES, USAID and the World Bank Institute, the Inter-American Development Bank pledged over \$600,000 for implementation of the project.



In December, IFES, USAID, the World Bank Institute and CIPNAC organized the first public presentation and discussion of the plan in a National Forum that included participants from civil society, government, and private sector leaders, as well as Paraguayan President Gonzalez Macchi and the presidents of the Congress, Supreme Court and the Election Tribunal

Under the cooperation agreement, IFES and USAID were responsible for the development of participatory methodologies and instructional materials for the national and regional forums; organization, evaluation

and presentation of findings of the national workshop; as well as provision of sub-grants via *Pojoaju*, an umbrella association of over 80 local non-governmental organizations, for the organization, evaluation and presentation of findings of the regional forums.

PERU

Participation of People with Disabilities in the Elections

With the support of grants from Finland and Sweden, IFES has become very active in promoting full participation in elections for people with disabilities. IFES intends that these efforts will contribute to creating international norms to promote full electoral enfranchisement of people with disabilities.

As part of this effort, IFES is providing a sub-grant of \$18,000 to *Aproddis (Asociacion Pro Desarrollo de la Persona con Discapacidad)*, a Peruvian non-governmental organization implementing innovative programs for people with disabilities. The purpose of the sub-grant is to identify, train, and deploy as many as 200 Peruvians with disabilities as election observers for the elections on April 8, 2001. In turn, *Aproddis* will engage a coalition of disability organizations, including those representing persons with mobility, sensory, and communicative impairments. Training will occur in conjunction with the high-profile Peruvian non-governmental organization *Transparencia*, which is undertaking a major election observation effort.

BOLIVIA

In February 2001, IFES brought to a close the 4-year Democratic Development and Citizen Participation (DDCP) project it had carried out in Bolivia as a sub-contractor. The DDCP project focused on promoting democratic practices and popular participation in governing in 20 municipalities sponsoring pilot programs.

IFES work in Bolivia also featured assisting in the development of the country's civil registry system. The DDCP project helped formulate a strategy for the development of Committees for Electoral Orientation and Participation (COPEs). This included developing guidelines for organization and operation of the COPEs in each pilot program municipality and proposing civic/electoral education activities for the COPEs.

The DDCP also proposed activities to encourage adult citizens to obtain the national identity document and participate in planning local coordination of activities with the National Identification Registry (RIN).

As part of closing the program, IFES helped DDCP establish an information resources center in La Paz, Bolivia. The resources center includes books and a computer database on democracy building, electoral processes, and examples from a variety of countries and regions. The resources center should be especially useful to advocates of democratic reforms, students and economic development professionals.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Under a grant from USAID, IFES conducted a technical assessment of the electoral redistricting project in progress by the Central Electoral Board (*Junta Central Electoral - JCE*) of the Dominican Republic in January 2001. In doing so, IFES consulted with JCE magistrates, JCE Technical Advisory Committee members and technical staff, personnel from political parties and civil society groups. IFES reviewed the overall technical implementation of the project and provided recommendations to the JCE on steps for successfully completing the process.

IFES and other co-organizing institutions first addressed the topic of electoral redistricting in the Dominican Republic in a seminar held on November 28 – 29, 2000, in Santo Domingo. The event gathered regional experiences presented by international experts from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Bolivia and the United States in order to give the audience and decision-makers a broader picture of the different redistricting models in place in the region.

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The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1987. IFES provides nonpartisan technical assistance in the promotion of democracy worldwide and serves as clearancehouse for information about democratic development and elections. Since its inception, IFES has grown and worked in more than 100 countries around the world, earning an international reputation for the highest quality research and assistance in support of building democratic institutions.

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