Indigenous Peoples and Poverty Reduction: A Case Study of Guatemala

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I. INTRODUCTION: SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present case study is part of a larger research project undertaken for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), concerning the issue of indigenous peoples and poverty reduction in Latin America. An overview paper has already been prepared for the Latin American region as a whole, aiming to clarify some conceptual issues and to identify the main policy dilemmas and concerns in this area[1]. Further case studies are planned for Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua in the course of the coming year.

In introducing the Guatemalan study, it is important to clarify its scope and objectives. It aims both to broaden the knowledge of IDB officials themselves regarding the complex issues to be addressed in reducing the poverty of indigenous peoples in a country like Guatemala; and also to prepare the ground for a future dialogue between IDB officials and the Government of Guatemala on this same subject.

Given this dual objective, the study of necessity contains more background information than for a document prepared exclusively for the Government of Guatemala. At the same time, the main focus is on policy concerns rather than a descriptive account of the poverty facing indigenous peoples in Guatemala. Indeed there is a general consensus, shared by all Government officials interviewed by this consultant, that there is a strong correlation between ethnicity and poverty in Guatemala. The correlation has been amply demonstrated in recent Government publications, in particular those by the General Planning Secretariat SEGEPLAN[2], as well in the documents of international organizations. Moreover, the present Government has expressed a strong commitment to reduce the poverty and extreme poverty faced by indigenous peoples; to tackle a legacy of ethnic discrimination; and generally to respect the principles of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity in all of its development policy interventions.

The real questions are how these objectives can best be achieved, and what should be the role of a multilateral development bank like the IDB is assisting the Government of Guatemala to meet these objectives. In Guatemala, the challenge of reducing the poverty facing indigenous peoples is particularly great, but the opportunities offered by the present peace process since the signing of a final Peace Agreement between the Government and the armed URNG opposition in December 1996 are also particularly significant.

The challenges are great, both because the nature and dimensions of poverty - and particularly rural poverty - in Guatemala are severe, and because the correlation between ethnicity and poverty is extremely marked. Moreover Guatemala is one of the two Latin American countries, together with Bolivia, where by most calculations indigenous peoples comprise the majority of the national population. For this reason, projects and programmes to reduce indigenous poverty cannot consist of a few localized initiatives. Because indigenous peoples participate so extensively in the overall and national economy (though for the most part in a situation of considerable disadvantage, receiving the lowest incomes and experiencing the most arduous conditions of work), any initiative to improve the material conditions of indigenous peoples must be seen as an integral part of national efforts at poverty reduction.

The opportunities are now great, because of the somewhat unique conditions now prevailing in Guatemala. After a lengthy and bloody civil conflict, whose principal victims were the indigenous communities of the western highlands, Guatemala has now embarked on a highly ambitious process of peace and national reconciliation which is probably unique in Latin America. Through the many peace agreements, the Government has committed itself to a series of reforms, policy measures and investments, in order to tackle the structural causes of poverty and

to create the preconditions for a more equitable and also culturally sensitive pattern of economic and social development.

However - as will be discussed in later sections of this study - certain tensions are now arising with regard to social and development policies, precisely because of the new opportunities provided by democratization and the peace process. A high priority for the Government is to consolidate democracy and national unity. As senior Government officials have repeatedly stressed to IDB officials, and also to the present consultant in the course of this case study, the present Government is determined to avoid measures which may promote ethnic tensions and divisions within Guatemalan society. However one of the peace accords, the Accord on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (hence, the Indigenous Accord) contains a number of commitments to promote and respect certain specific rights for indigenous peoples within a framework of national unity and integrity. The provisions of the Indigenous Agreement will be examined in more detail in later sections. Here, suffice it to mention that the Government's commitments under this agreement, while mainly concerned with cultural matters, also have some relevance for issues of local and national development. Examples are the commitments to strengthen local indigenous institutions, to establish mechanisms for indigenous participation at all levels, and to respect indigenous communal lands.

A point of obvious sensitivity is the limits of differential treatment for indigenous peoples. It is clear that Mayan and other indigenous peoples of Guatemala have their own cultural institutions and values, including language and dress, spirituality, and traditional mechanisms for administering or regulating some internal affairs within their communities. These are vibrant cultures, which have survived despite periods of oppression and attempted assimilation, and cultural reaffirmation is one of the most important aspects of the indigenous movement in Guatemala since the late 1980s. As the Indigenous Accord stresses in its preamble, respect for and promotion of this cultural specificity of indigenous peoples can actually strengthen national unity. A history of discrimination "has affected and continues to have a profound effect" on Guatemala's indigenous peoples, "denying them the full exercise of their rights and political participation, and preventing the configuration of a national unity which reflects, in true measure and with the fullness of its values, the rich and plural physiognomy of Guatemala".

A key question is the relationship between cultural factors and poverty or its alleviation. It is often asked whether indigenous peoples have different aspirations in the areas of economic, social and cultural development, meaning that poverty can have a different meaning for them than for non-indigenous populations. Is poverty a culturally relative concept? Certainly, with the recent and strong cultural revival among the indigenous Maya of Guatemala, there have been attempts to formulate indigenous development strategies. The concept of "development with identity" is frequently expressed, implying that development initiatives should be constructed around respect for certain indigenous values.

The concept of "development with identity" should be seen in a positive light, as adding an additional component to the material aspects of development. There is no suggestion that indigenous peoples are less concerned than non-indigenous sectors with the material prerequisites of a decent human existence, health, housing, education, or the income necessary to provide for an adequate existence. The argument is that development initiatives should enhance rather than undermine an indigenous way of life, some of whose characteristics may differ from those of non-indigenous societies.

But how easy is it to distinguish between "indigenous" and "non-indigenous" lifestyles or survival strategies in the Guatemalan context? To what extent have indigenous peoples played a specific role in the Guatemalan economy, or do they continue to do so today? To what extent do indigenous peoples retain or participate in separate institutions, through which poverty reduction strategies on their behalf could be devised and implemented?

These are some of the questions that this case study aims to address. Above all it is concerned to examine the role played by indigenous peoples in the economy, and the correlation between ethnicity and poverty in this respect. It also examines the extent to which there is distinct treatment for indigenous institutions in law and policy, with a particular focus here on economic institutions such as land. While some historical analysis is required to detect trends over time, the study focuses mainly on more recent patterns of survival strategies.

II. GUATEMALA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: AN OVERVIEW

In the 1994 census - the first in which self-identification was used as the basic criterion for measuring ethnic identity - indigenous peoples were found to comprise 42.7 percent of Guatemala's total population. This figure is widely believed to be an underestimate. The United Nations and many other sources put the figure closer to 60 or even 65 per cent. This would put Guatemala together with Bolivia as one of the two Latin American countries where indigenous peoples comprise a majority of the national population[3].

A feature of Guatemala's demography is the diversity of its indigenous peoples. The 1995 Accord on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (hence, Indigenous Accord) lists no less than 21 separate linguistic groups of Mayan extraction, together with the Xinca and Garifuna peoples[4]. The largest of these are the Kiche, estimated to comprise well over one million persons. The Mam and Kaqchikel number at least 600,000 each (by some estimates, also over one million each), and the Q'eqchi in excess of 400,000. Some of the Mayan linguistic groups are extremely small, such as the Tectiteco, Mopan, Itza and Sikapakense, each of whom number less than ten thousand. The Garifuna and Xinca peoples are similarly small, the Garifuna numbering ten thousand, and the Xinca by some accounts less than one thousand people altogether[5].

The different linguistic groups tend to be located in specific geographical areas. The Caqchikel, for example, are to be found in the western highlands from the vicinity of Guatemala City as far as lake Atitlan; the Kiche in the adjoining part of the western highlands, particularly around their main towns of Santa Cruz and Chichicastenango; the Mam to the north-west and near to the Mexican border, from the town of Huehuetenango to the coffee-growing areas around San Marcos; and the Q'eqchi mainly in the north-eastern department of Alta Verapaz. Existing administrative structures, however, do not reflect the ethnic composition of the population by department. While one department of the western highlands, for example, is called Quiche, the Kiche peoples are located within Quiche department itself (the majority) but also in the neighboring departments of Quetzaltenango, Solola and Totonicapan. Moreover, while each of the linguistic groups can claim their principal villages or towns, recent patterns of migration have had their impact on the demographic structure.

The Q'eqchi are best known for their pattern of permanent migration. Together with their Poqomchi neighbors, they have furnished much of the permanent labor on the large coffee farms which occupy much of Alta Verapaz department. But Q'eqchi groups have undertaken substantial migratory flows to eastern regions, and also to the frontier regions of the tropical department of Peten to the north. Partly through officially sponsored colonization, but mainly through spontaneous migration, they have established new Q'eqchi villages throughout the Peten where they are estimated to comprise close to half of the entire population[6].

Other Mayan peoples have also undertaken extensive migration in recent decades. Part of this can be attributed to the colonization initiatives after the 1960s, aiming to open up new areas in the tropical lowlands for agricultural settlement. Part can be attributed to the civil conflict and its aftermath, which saw massive uprooting of indigenous communities. While tens of thousands sought refuge outside the country, hundreds of thousands more moved to Guatemala City and other major towns. Yet others took up regular residence on the fringes of the large commercial farms on the south coast, seeking seasonal labour and sometimes renting small land parcels for subsistence agriculture. In addition there has been migration to take advantage of new commercial and trading opportunities, an example being the growing presence of Kiche traders in the urban markets of Alta Verapaz department.

Apart from this more permanent migration outside their communities of origin, seasonal labour migration has long been an important feature of indigenous survival strategies. This has been particularly important in the coffee industry since the late nineteenth century, and in additional commercial crops including sugar and cotton since the mid twentieth century. While it is difficult to calculate the precise numbers involved, it is has been estimated that in recent years more than one million indigenous family members have moved from their home communities in the western highlands to coastal farms for one month or more during the year. As has been widely document, the profitability of export agriculture in Guatemala has been based historically on the use of cheap indigenous labour.

III. POVERTY AND ETHNICITY IN GUATEMALA: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

There are very few explicit studies, at least at the national level, of the issue of indigenous peoples and poverty in Guatemala. There have been many micro-studies covering indigenous development and poverty, in particular the many anthropological studies conducted in villages of the Western Highlands. These appear to have been more frequent between the 1940s and the 1970s. Not surprisingly, it proved impossible to conduct detailed empirical field research during the civil conflict of the late 1970s and the 1980s. There has been something of a resurgence of field research since the late 1980s, though indigenous economic and survival strategies do not appear to figure as a priority for analysis.

In implicit terms, the relationship between ethnicity and poverty over time has dominated much of Guatemala's political analysis and historical research. The better known accounts of the colonial, early independence, "liberal reform", Arbenz revolutionary and modern periods of Guatemala's economy and political history all examine the role of indigenous peoples in the economy. An issue of some debate is during which historical period, and under what economic and political system of government, contemporary patterns of indigenous poverty and discrimination began to be evident.

Some analysts place the roots of indigenous poverty in the economic systems and strategies of the Spanish colonial government, pointing to the formidable fiscal and tributary obligations, and to the forced labour requirements under the repartimiento system. And one prominent historian argues that the concentration of land in the hands of a few people was a deliberate aspect of colonial economic policy, because labour was in short supply and land without labour was useless[7]. Others insist that, except in the vicinity of the main towns, Spanish land acquisition did not entail the chronic dispossession of indigenous communities[8]. In any event, shortly after independence from Spain in 1821, there were complaints that Indians had insufficient lands to plant their basis foodstuffs while much of the land in cattle farms was left uncultivated[9].

For the first half-century after independence, both the "Indian" and the land question were at the center of both economic and political divergences between the main liberal and conservative parties. Liberals wanted open land markets, but in the early stages a current of liberal thinking also favored agrarian reform. Some factions believed that Guatemala could follow the North American model of economic development, breaking up the feudal estates and creating the conditions for homesteading. Overall, the liberal government of the 1830s has been characterized as one that "aimed at assimilating the Indians within a conceptual framework of egalitarianism"[10]. For the next two decades the country was ruled by the conservative government of President Rafael Carrera, which explicitly reversed the liberal assimilationist platform. An Indian Code was enacted, based on the notion that the Mayan peoples "were in fact culturally, economically and politically in different circumstances and therefore the laws should recognize those differences"[11]. In particular, decrees enacted during this period placed restrictions on private land purchase. The non-indigenous population now only had access to their communal lands through rental arrangements with the recognized Indian authorities.

A watershed was the liberal reforms after 1871, at a time when coffee cultivation was expanding rapidly. It was during this period that land tenure and labour institutions underwent profound change, usually at the expense of indigenous communities. And almost all analysts concur that, even though the roots of indigenous poverty and discrimination may be traced back to the Spanish colonial period, their present-day dimensions can be attributed more accurately to the liberal reforms and their aftermath.

Ever since the nineteenth century liberal reforms, one can argue a direct causal connection between the Guatemalan model of export oriented agricultural development and the growth of material poverty for its indigenous peoples. Lands under export crop cultivation grew at the expense of indigenous communal lands. And under various coercive forms of recruitment and employment, ranging from the debt-bondage and labour round-ups of the nineteenth century to the vagrancy laws on the a statute between 1933-1944, it was indigenous peasants who provided the labour for Guatemala's economic growth.

Unlike the case of neighboring El Salvador, indigenous communal lands were never actually abolished by law in Guatemala. Instead, as part of the liberal reforms that accompanied the coffee expansion, there was an accelerated emphasis on the titling of private lands, on the sale of national lands to private purchasers, and on the option for private farmers to purchase at low cost the lands that had previously been rented from indigenous communities. The impact of the reforms on indigenous land tenure has been extensively documented[12]. They did not necessarily involve mass dispossession of indigenous lands themselves. In some cases indigenous peoples were able to title community lands, in others they continued to occupy untitled lands to which private land claims were made. For the purposes of this paper, it is most important to identify some of the different land and labour arrangements - many of them highly coercive and exploitative- to which the liberal reforms and the resultant coffee expansion gave rise.

Apart from land in the Piedmont areas, the crucial need of the new coffee industry was for labour. While a year-round resident labour force was necessary, this had to be supplemented greatly during the four months of the harvesting season. The resident labour force came to be known as the mozos colonos. These were the mainly indigenous inhabitants of the lower coastal region of the pacific Piedmont, whose lands were quickly absorbed in the first wave of coffee expansion; and the Q'eqchi and Pokomchi Indians of Alta Verapaz, where mainly German immigrant farmers expanded coffee cultivation in a hitherto remote region. A variation was the so-called fincas de mozos of the wealthier families, namely the farms kept as a reserve labour pool in the western highlands, from which the workers were transported to a coffee farm during the harvest season. In either case, the workers were largely outside the monetary economy. They were given access to subsistence lands, either in the western highlands or on the fringes of the coffee plantations, in exchange for the provision of labour as required.

The reformist period between 1944-54 aimed both to tackle exploitative labour conditions, and to redress rural poverty through a redistributive programme of land reforms targeting mainly underutilized lands. The enactment of Guatemala's first labour code in 1947 was followed by official programmes to promote rural workers, peasant leagues and cooperatives. The labour code provided for minimum wages and recognized freedom of association, though rural sector unionization was limited to enterprises employing 500 or more workers. Under the short-lived land reform programme between 1952-54, approximately one million hectares was distributed altogether, divided almost equally between private and national lands.

After 1954 the next two decades saw a renewed process of agro-export expansion, this time built around considerable diversification of export crops. Once again there were dramatic changes in land tenure and rural employment patterns, as land areas were taken up with cotton and sugar cultivation and cattle-rearing on the Pacific coast, with cardamom and rubber in new frontier regions including the northern transversal belt, or with cattle-rearing in the Peten. The cultivated area in the large-farm export sector is estimated to have expanded threefold between the 1950s and the early 1980s. At the same time comparison of the 1964 and 1979 census figures indicates that the actual number of small farms grew from approximately 364,000 to just under 550,000, while the average size of small farms declined sharply from 1.8 to 1.2 hectares. And a study by the United States Agency for International Development, published in the mid 1980s, drew attention to the steady growth in

absolute rural landlessness. USAID estimates were that the absolute landless members of the economically active rural population exceeded 400,000 by 1980[13].

The emphasis on new commercial crops for export, which in the case of cotton and sugar require substantial temporary labour during the few months of the harvest season, is bound to have increased the demand for indigenous migrant labour. While there are a number of local accounts of the migrant labour process - some of them highly critical of the exploitative recruitment, living and working conditions which have even been compared with modern-day slavery[14] - there are few systematic studies concerning the numbers of persons and their wages. A 1970 study by the International Labour Organization[15] estimated that the agro-industrial estates of the coast and coastal piedmont regions required 36 million man/days per year of migrant labour, or 140,000 full work units. The most numerous migrations, involving some 350,000-400,000 persons per month, occurred in the months of December and January. 58 per cent of the migrant workers were employed in coffee, 37 per cent in cotton, and five per cent in sugar.

The numbers of seasonal migrant workers are likely to have escalated considerably over the next decade, as more and more land was brought under export crop production. A more recent study by the Guatemala Ministry of Labour has estimated the total volume of the migrant population as between 500 and 600 thousand workers, including men, women and children[16]. And a study undertaken for the Pan American Health Organization in 1992 reached a higher estimate of over one million persons in all.

The impact of this process on rural poverty, including indigenous livelihoods, has been difficult to estimate over time owing to lack of data. A study by the International Labour Organizations in the mid 1980s made some efforts to establish the linkage between rural poverty and export farming over the previous three decades[17]. Though accepting severe data limitations, the study attempted to assess rural poverty trends on the basis of wage levels as well as production characteristics within minifundia. The conclusion was that poverty had most likely increased, because employment opportunities were unlikely to have compensated for declining small-farm earnings. Moreover, while agro-export estates controlled the most fertile land. government policies such as agricultural credit had consistently favoured the large-farm sector while neglecting the small and staple crop farms where the majority of the rural population was concentrated. Though there had been a rise in nominal wage rates, real wages were likely to have declined through lack of enforcement. A pessimistic conclusion was that, within the existing agrarian structure, there was only limited scope for introducing policies to alleviate poverty among the minifundia households.

IV. ECONOMIC AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES; RECENT TRENDS

Official statistics concerning the high incidence of poverty and indigence among Guatemala's indigenous peoples can mask some important differences. There are departments and regions (including Huehuetenango and San Marcos, parts of Alta Verapaz and the Chorti regions of eastern Guatemala, for example) where the incidence of poverty is unusually high by most indicators. There are areas which are now seeing very significant change in development indicators, as at least some indigenous persons and communities avail themselves of new economic opportunities and markets. There are some extremely successful indigenous entrepreneurs.

Moreover, the past two decades have seen some important demographic changes and movements, affecting indigenous employment and livelihoods. Some of these can be attributed to the civil conflict, which had such a devastating impact on the indigenous highlands, and to its aftermath. There has been very substantial movement to Guatemala City and other towns, much new migration to the Peten, but also new commercial opportunities open to indigenous entrepreneurs in some key highland towns as non-indigenous persons abandoned them during the conflict. Other important changes have to be attributed also to economic factors independent of the political situation. There have been significant variations, for example, in patterns of labour migration. There is less seasonal migration to the Pacific coast, as landowners have diversified away from labour-intensive crops such as cotton, and also as a year-round and precarious labour force has settled on the fringes of the large coastal farms. By contrast, seasonal migration first to Mexico and then to the United States has become far more important.

Estimates of how the indigenous poor earn their income have been highly approximate, with noticeable variations between household surveys and more anthropological studies carried out in specific localities. The World Bank's 1995 assessment of poverty in Guatemala[18] draws on the findings of the 1989 National Sociodemographic Survey, which distinguishes between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples (also by gender, and between urban and rural) in its estimates of hours of work and labour earnings by sector. In rural areas, almost all census respondents (2893 out of 3393) have agriculture as their primary occupation in terms of both hours of work (an average of 45.63 hours, with only 0.52 hours devoted to other occupations) and labour earnings (almost 90 per cent of average earnings). The next activities in order of importance for rural indigenous were manufacturing, commerce, construction, social sector and transportation (in that order). For the urban indigenous, 474 out of 860 respondents gave agriculture as their primary occupation. Next in importance were 130 in manufacturing, 90 in commerce, 84 in social sector employment, 50 in construction and 21 in transportation.

Yet anthropological and baseline studies in specific regions, notably in the western highlands, point to a far more significant occupational diversity. As anthropologist Carol Smith has observed, occupational information on rural households from national censuses fails to reveal the zonal pattern of occupational specialisation in western Guatemala. It partly conceals it, mainly because the self-definition of campesino given to census takers is wrongly assumed to mean that they are subsistence farmers. On the basis of field work mainly in Totonicapan (an areas of exceptionally fragmented minifundios, Carol Smith has argued that fewer than 20 per cent of smallholders in the survey area derive most of their income from, or devote most of their time to, agriculture of any kind. Most income is derived from a variety of non-farm commodities, in particular with each household specializing in the production of goods for sale to other similar households. Though most of Guatemala's rural households own some land (sometimes as little as one tenth of an acre), most adult men and women have at least two additional occupations, and most households depend on the income-generating activities of all family members above approximately twelve years of age[19].

The above research was actually published in the late 1980s, and based to some extent on field research carried out in the previous decade. While it is important to assess changes in survival strategies during and after the civil conflict, there is very little systematic information on which to base such an assessment. Indeed, after the massive internal displacement and overseas migration that affected the western highlands until at least the late 1980s, an intensive effort would now be required to examine present-day trends.

At the regional level, an effort to detect some trends is made in an overview study of the western highlands conducted on behalf of an indigenous organization in 1997[20]. Overall tendencies, affecting the entire region, are summarized as follows. With a continuing high population growth rate, averaging some 2.48 percent annually between 1981-94, the fragmentation of the minifundio is continuing, and agriculture is expanding onto marginal elevated lands and also forested areas. Family-operated farms still predominate in small-scale agriculture (combining farming with wage labour and other economic activities). Nevertheless peasant agriculture, particularly of basic grains, is no longer sufficient to satisfy the average family's needs, this explaining the trend to occupational diversity in subsistence strategies. The most important alternatives are now small-scale commercial agriculture, participation in regional and also international labour markets, formal and informal commerce throughout Guatemala and neighbouring countries, services, transport and extractive activities. There is a clear trend towards the diversification and specialization of small-scale production for the market. In some regions there is emphasis on potatoes, vegetables and other lesser crops; in others, on small-scale rural industry. There has been an expansion and diversification of both artisan and small-scale industrial production.

The growth of non-traditional export crops in Guatemala has received much international attention. Different micro-regions within the highlands have been able to specialize in crops with available market niches. Irrigated vegetable production mainly for the Central American market has been a feature of the towns of Almolonga and Zunil near Quetzaltenango. Snow peas and broccoli for the US markets have been extensively developed in the valleys around Chimaltenango and Patzun. And throughout the altiplano there has been a growth of apple and other fruit farming for mainly national markets. In areas including San Marcos and Solola, there is extensive smallholder participation in coffee production. Experiments in new export crops have now reached hitherto remote regions such as the Ixil area of northern Quiche. The impact of these crop changes on rural poverty and employment in the western highlands has been analyzed quite extensively[21]. While the labour-intensive nature of production has clearly had a positive impact on employment, there have been problems with export markets caused by high pesticide-residue levels.

An issue which has received rather little attention is livelihood from forest produce. In a recent study, the World Bank attempted to compile recent available information[22]. One recent study of the economic value of communal forests had found that, even accounting for the opportunity cost of their time, rural families could save on average US$170 per year by gathering firewood instead of purchasing it; there would be yet greater savings in the case of wood for construction or furniture making. One source has estimated the existence of 94 communal forests in the seven departments of the western highlands, with a total extension of over 113,000 hectares[23]. Yet it has been observed that, with few exceptions, most communities lack the norms and sanctions to guide the use of communal forests. The potential for tackling poverty, by vesting clearer rights over forest produce in local communities, has been stressed by a number of indigenous analysts.

As regards employment opportunities and conditions in the large farm sector, a general feature appears to be the reduction of permanent employment. A number of analysts have pointed to changes in the mozo colono system, whereby indigenous and other farm workers have received less (sometimes very much less) than the legal minimum wage, but have had access to a land parcel within the farm for their subsistence needs. There appears

to be a link between the growth of rural labour organizations (with their demands for the enforcement of legal minimum wages), and the decision of the larger farmers to expel much of the resident labour force and replace it with daily or seasonal labour. In this respect, there are certain variations by region and by crop. There is a higher incidence of resident indigenous estate labour, with wages often reputed to be way below the legal minimum, in the coffee farms in the remote areas of Alta Verapaz. On the Pacific coast there is a greater reserve pool of day workers, resident in new settlements in the vicinity of the large farms. This is noticeable, for example, in the sugar-growing regions near the coastal towns of Escuintla and Santa Lucia Cotzmalguapa. In some cases, laid off workers were offered small plots of land in lieu of severance pay.

While there have been changes in migrant labour patterns for indigenous altiplano dwellers, migrant labour has by no means disappeared. A mid 1990s study undertaken for the Ministry of Labour estimates the total volume of the migrant labour population at between 500 and 600 thousand workers (including men, women and children), though the number of separate individuals is likely to be between 400 and 450 thousand persons, as many of these undertake migration several times in any one year[24]. According to sources from the sugar industry, sugar alone accounts for some 60,000 mainly indigenous seasonal cane-cutters in any one year. Recent research indicates that most sugar enterprises recruit between 65 and 100 per cent of their cane-cutters from the western highlands. Migrant workers are often preferred as being more disciplined, and more likely to stay for the entire cane harvest. Moreover, wages in the sugar industry appear to have increased significantly in the course of the 1990s, as employers are more selective about their recruitment techniques, and as piece rates have been introduced while new harvesting techniques have led to major increases in labour productivity[25].

The trend towards increasingly diverse forms of non-agricultural employment, already evident in the 1960s and 1970s, is becoming increasingly apparent. Systematic studies of indigenous economic strategies are almost completely lacking. For Guatemala City itself, despite the massive indigenous immigration over the past two decades, the only available study at the time of writing was a sociological study of a small number of indigenous interviewees, examining their changing concept of identity and linkages with their communities of origin[26]. But the indigenous presence in the capital city and smaller towns can be seen easily enough by any observer. At one level there are the jobs typical of the urban informal economy, shoe-shining, street vending, car washing and similar pursuits. But there are different levels of commerce, as the wealthier indigenous peoples from Kiche and other departments establish their own retail networks in Guatemala City.

The importance of small industry for the indigenous economy is also readily apparent in such towns as Chimaltenango, Solola and Santiago Atitlan by the tourist lake of Atitlan, or in Guatemala's second town of Quetzaltenango. Textile production is of particular significance, given not only the tourist outlet but the ongoing market for these products among indigenous women themselves. Wood products, ceramics, candles, musical instruments, shoes and sandalware are among the small products that proliferate throughout the indigenous highlands.

Beyond petty trading, a small number of indigenous entrepreneurs have developed wider commercial and trading networks, marketing food products in particular throughout the Central American region. While the issue needs further research, there is anecdotal evidence that indigenous are increasingly replacing non-indigenous persons in retail and commerce in the smaller towns of the western highlands. Some analysts attribute this to the legacy of the civil conflict, in that non-indigenous persons abandoned these areas during the height of the violence.

V. CONCEPTS OF INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT: INDIGENOUS APPROACHES

As throughout Latin America, in the course of the 1990s there has been a tremendous resurgence of indigenous peoples' organizations throughout Guatemala. They range from national level umbrella organizations, to regional and local groupings concerned with diverse aspects of indigenous rights and development. Long before this time, church-based and other non-governmental organizations had worked with indigenous communities in the western highlands, launching agricultural and credit cooperatives, artisan and small-scale industry programmes. But it is only over the past ten years or so that organizations have assumed a specifically indigenous identity.

Of the national-level organizations, it is customary to draw distinctions between the organizations whose main concerns are with cultural rights and identity, and those relatively more concerned with economic and social rights including land and labour issues. The following analysis will focus mainly on the organizations that identify themselves with poverty-related issues, examining the extent to which can one detect a specifically Mayan or indigenous perspective on development issues in Guatemala.

Moreover, apart from the indigenous organizations which have legal personality or a higher public profile, the role of traditional civic and religious authorities in the management of community affairs is a matter of considerable interest in Guatemala today. Both the secular authorities of elders (the Principales, Consejos de Ancianos) as well as religious authorities (the Aj Q'ijab or Mayan priests) are most likely to express concern that development paths should be consistent with the integrity of traditional indigenous values.

At the local and regional levels, indigenous organizations often stress that their methodological approach is drawn from the Mayan worldview. One of the more successful organizations, the Cooperación para el Desarrollo Rural de Occidente (CDRO) in Totonicapan, insists that its basic approach of involving total community participation in all aspects is derived specifically from the Mayan worldview; and that "Maya Kiche culture is the ideological framework which guides the work process, and constitutes the theory of a coherent development, global, non-destructive, involving coexistence and the conservation of life and nature". And the Cooperación Indígena para el Desarrollo Integral (COINDI) in Solola affirms its policy of strengthening community organizations and promoting mutual support in accordance with the principles and characteristics of the Chinamit model of ancestral Mayan organization[27].

A more difficult question is how this Mayan worldview can be incorporated within, and have its effect upon, national development policies. Within the context of the peace process, certain indigenous organizations and intellectuals have been turning attention to this issue and attempting to come up with an alternative framework for development. An example is the Mesa Nacional Maya (MENMAGUA), a broad coalition of several indigenous organizations which sees its role as the coordination of the development efforts of the Mayan people and their organizations, carrying out programmes and projects for the development of the Mayan people, defining and developing development projects at all levels, and promoting national initiatives within the context of the peace process. One of its endeavours in recent months has been to formulate an "indigenous development plan". However, as explained by its present Director in an October 1997 interview, the implications of such a concept are still the subject of debate within the MENMAGUA leadership. Originally envisaged as a specific development plan for indigenous peoples, it is now seen more as a set of principles and mechanisms by which indigenous peoples can participate in all aspects of development policy.

An important regional initiative for the western highlands was conducted in 1997 by the indigenous organization Tzuk-Kim Pop, with United Nations assistance. Its aim was to devise an agenda for social development on the basis of social sectors and individuals from throughout the western highlands. However, the analysis and recommendations are rather too diverse to be covered easily here. Among the causes of poverty there is much emphasis on growing land hunger and continuing high levels of illiteracy, but also on the maldistribution of resources as a result of the civil conflict. Recommendations to the central and municipal governments cover areas including: the strengthening and transformation of productive structures in the region; environmental services; health and education; strengthening of democracy; and effective decentralization[28].

A similar exercise, focusing particularly on explanations of poverty by the poor themselves, was undertaken by the Rafael Landivar University in 1993-4[29]. The survey focuses primarily on indigenous areas, covering diverse communities from Mam, Kiche, Cakchiquel, Tzutujil, Pokomam and Chorti regions, as well as poor mainly non-indigenous areas from eastern Guatemala and the metropolitan region. The issues covered include the definitions, causes and consequences of poverty, as well as recommendations to reduce it. Low salaries are identified as the principal cause (all of 627 respondents), followed by the high price of goods and services, land shortage, the lack of work, and the lack of education and training. Controls on the price of food and medicines is the principal recommendation to emerge from the interviews, followed by more direct government work with communities.

At the more technical or sectoral level, there have been some considered proposals by Mayan organizations for new approaches to natural resource management, as a key element of poverty reduction. An example is the forestry action plan first issued by the PAF-Maya group in 1994. This contains a series of recommendations for drawing up an inventory of existing communal forest resources, and building on traditional forms of resource management as the basis for a sustainable future strategy[30]. As seen earlier however, existing forestry legislation provides an impediment to more community involvement.

At the more theoretical level, there has been some recent indigenous writing on concepts of development with identity or sociocultural development. One example is a thesis concerning development alternatives for the Mayan people, based on extensive interviews with indigenous professionals, technicians, leaders and members of community organizations[31]. As regards poverty reduction strategies to date the findings are highly critical of the various social funds, observing that.."bureaucracy , the lack of an appropriate methodology, the lack of support for productive and income-generating projects, the lack of participation of Mayan communities in the definition of policies and strategies, as well as in project administration, minimizes the efforts and resources of the communities, and provides a disincentive to community initiatives for economic and social development". The thesis also aims to articulate an alternative model of socio-cultural development. Yet while stressing the importance of the Mayan spirituality and worldview, based on equilibrium and the sharing of resources, it is clearly not a call for an altogether autonomous development. Many of the recommendations relate to mechanisms for greater participation in Government and all aspects of development policy and institutions.

Even in the worlds of commerce and industry, while there is an obvious concern to break down ethnic barriers and achieve greater indigenous participation in the business chambers, there is a current tendency for the Mayans to seek their own institutions. Examples are the formation of an indigenous chamber of commerce, and an indigenous "business network". Here the main feature seems to lie not in an "alternative" approach to business, but in the need for ethnic solidarity in order to break down the barriers of discrimination, to have greater access to credit and both national and international markets. It can also constitute another level of dialogue with the state and its financial, commercial and industrial institutions. Though the national network had only some 50 members as of December 1997, plans were already under way to create similar structures in the most important departments.

Finally mention should be made of the more "popular" organizations which, if they do not necessarily define themselves as indigenous, tend to have an almost exclusively indigenous membership. This is the case of two national organisations, the Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC) and the National Coordination of Indigenous and Peasants (CONIC) which have orchestrated the movement for land distribution and reform, and for improved conditions for farm workers, by a combination of legal and extra-legal means. Given Guatemala's agrarian structure, and its emphasis on private land title, it may be difficult to perceive a specifically indigenous worldview in the way that these organizations have pursued their land claims. But one feature has been to question the private title claims of large landowners, insisting that indigenous communities sometimes have prior historical claims to the land in the conflictive areas. It remains to be seen how these issues will be dealt with in the current negotiations between indigenous peoples and the Government under the Indigenous Agreement.

VI. THE PEACE ACCORDS, INDIGENOUS POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT

Taken together, the several separate accords signed in the context of the Guatemalan peace process comprise important commitments both to respect the identity and rights of indigenous peoples, and to implement a new participatory model of development aimed at tackling the roots a of poverty and stimulating economic growth. However, socioeconomic issues of relevance to the Mayan population are dealt with in separate accords. The two of most immediate relevance are the March 1995 Indigenous Accord; and the May 1996 Accord on Socioeconomic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation (hence, the Socioeconomic Accord).

A. The Indigenous Accord

The Indigenous Accord is for the most part not directly concerned with poverty and development issues. The main focus is on cultural rights and identity, on participatory mechanisms, and on the role of local indigenous communities and authorities including their customary law. Only one section of the accord nevertheless deals specifically with economic concerns, namely with indigenous peoples' land rights. Implementation of the Indigenous Agreement could still have important implications for the economic, as well as cultural, development of indigenous peoples.

There is a general commitment to combat discrimination in both law and practice, and to provide free legal assistance for persons of limited economic means in municipalities in which indigenous communities are prevalent. There is a separate commitment to promote the rights of indigenous women, establishing an Office for the Defence of Indigenous Womens' Rights which should include legal advice services and social services.

In the areas of language and education there are important commitments to promote the use of all indigenous languages in the educational system, and similarly to promote the use of indigenous languages when providing state social services at the community level. The Government also commits itself to promote programmes for the training of bilingual judges and court interpreters from and into indigenous languages. Furthermore, the Indigenous Accord contains major commitments to educational reform. These include: giving indigenous communities an active role in determining curricula and the school calendar; incorporating the educational concepts of the Maya and other indigenous peoples as part of the overall reform of the educational system; recruiting and training indigenous bilingual teachers and technical and administrative officials; and promoting improvements in the socio-economic living conditions of indigenous communities by developing the values and content of their culture, technological innovations and principles of environmental protection.

The commitments concerning local indigenous communities and authorities have implications both for the determination of development priorities and for the allocation of government expenditure. In general terms the Accord recognizes the right of indigenous communities, acting within the framework of municipal autonomy, to determine their own development priorities, particularly in the fields of education, health, culture and the infrastructure. The Government undertakes to strengthen the capacity of indigenous communities in this area, and to promote a reform of the Municipal Code in order to promote indigenous participation in the decision-making process. Among other things, the reform is to define the modalities for promoting the equitable distribution of government expenditure among the indigenous and non-indigenous communities that make up the municipality, strengthening the capacity of these communities to manage resources and to be the instruments of their own development. As regards wider participation, there are general commitments to institutionalize the representation

of indigenous peoples at the local, regional and national levels, and to ensure their free participation in the decision-making process in the various areas of national life.

In the important area of land rights, the commitments relate to: regularization of the land tenure of indigenous communities; land tenure and use and administration of natural resources; restitution of communal lands and compensation for rights; acquisition of land for the development of indigenous communities; and legal protection of the rights of indigenous communities. Many of these commitments are derived from the text of the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention. And while some of them do no more than recognize certain rights as a matter of general principle (for example the right of indigenous peoples to participate in the administration of natural resources existing in their lands), other commitments refer to specific measures to be undertaken by the Government. For example, the Government undertakes to institute proceedings to settle the claims to communal lands formulated by the communities and to restore or pay compensation for those lands. And there are a range of specific commitments in the area of legal protection, including: to promote an increase in the number of courts dealing with land cases, and to expedite procedures for the settlement of such cases; to establish competent legal advisory services to advise on land claims; and to provide indigenous communities with the services of interpreters, free of charge, in respect of legal matters.

The Indigenous Accord came fully into force upon the signing of the final peace agreement in December 1996. However, unlike some of the more pragmatic accords, there is no time-frame for implementing any of the commitments. Moreover, given that many of the broader commitments related to law and administrative reforms, the main implementation mechanism envisaged by the Accord was the establishment of several commissions (some of them to be comprised of equal numbers of government and indigenous representatives) to make reform proposals in certain key areas. The Accord provides for "Joint Commissions" of government and indigenous representatives in the areas of educational reform, participatory mechanisms and institutional reform, and indigenous land rights. Additional commissions are to study arrangements for granting official status to indigenous languages, and to identify indigenous sacred sites and make recommendations for their preservation. All of these commissions were established in the first six months of 1997.

B. The Socioeconomic Accord

The Socioeconomic Accord, negotiated between the government of President Alvaro Arzu and the URNG leadership, is very different in its nature and approach from the Indigenous Accord. It is more concrete and pragmatic, and contains a series of specific commitments to be undertaken by the present government between the years 1996-2000.

The elimination of poverty is an explicit objective of the Accord, in its opening paragraphs. A firm and lasting peace must be consolidated "on the basis of social and economic development directed towards the common good, meeting the needs of the whole population". And this is necessary "in order to overcome the poverty, extreme poverty, discrimination and social and political marginalization which have impeded and distorted the country's social, economic, cultural and political development and have represented a source of conflict and instability".

The accord has four substantive sections, namely: democratization and participatory development; social development; the agrarian situation and rural development; and the modernization of government services and fiscal policy.

The first section establishes the principles and mechanisms for participation and consensus-building, placing much emphasis on participation at the local level, on the role of communities and municipalities, and on the importance of an integrated system of urban and rural development councils. While it highlights at some length the participation of women in economic and social development, indigenous peoples and their representative institutions do not receive special mention. It is stipulated only that participatory mechanisms should be in line with previous agreements including the Indigenous Accord.

The section on social development deals first with the State's responsibilities and leadership role in steering the course of development, and then separately with the issues of education and training, health, social security, housing and work. There are more specific commitments in the area of bilingual education, where the Government undertakes to expand literacy programmes in as many languages as is technically feasible, with the participation of suitably qualified indigenous organizations, and thereby to raise the literacy rate to 70 percent by the year 2000. As regards health, there is a general reference to indigenous and traditional medicine. A national coordinated health system is to enhance the importance of indigenous and traditional medicine, promoting its study, and renewing its concepts, methods and practices. In the section on work, though there is no explicit reference to indigenous workers, there are commitments with regard to the occupational categories that tend to comprise mainly indigenous workers. Decentralized and expanded labour inspection services, for example, are to pay particular attention to monitoring compliance with the labour rights of migrant and temporary agricultural workers. And in the case of agricultural workers who are still hired through contractors, the Ministry of Labour is to propose reforms to improve their bargaining power.

The section on the agrarian situation and rural employment is of most direct relevance to the poverty situation of indigenous peoples. It elaborates further on issues already touched upon in the Indigenous Accord, including the legal framework and juridical security, and the prompt settlement of land conflicts. The main emphasis of the section is on market mechanisms, backed by expanded consultative procedures with sectors including indigenous organizations. A key commitment to promote a transparent land market is the creation of a land trust fund. The Government recognizes the vital role of small and medium-scale enterprises in combating poverty, committing itself to a policy of support to small-holders so they can become small-scale agricultural businessmen through access to training, technology, credit and other inputs.

Despite the free market emphasis the Government also undertakes to protect common and municipal land, in particular by limiting to the strict minimum the cases in which it can be transferred to private individuals. With respect to community-owned land, it also undertakes to regulate participation by communities to ensure that they take the decisions relating to their land. In the search for a prompt settlement of land conflicts, the Government undertakes to find formulas for compensation in the case of land disputes and claims in which small farmers and communities in a situation of extreme poverty have been unfairly dispossessed. This can involve either reinstatement of the land or compensation, when the land has been usurped or allocated in a manner involving abuse of authority. The institutional mechanism for dealing with these issues is a Presidential office for legal assistance and land conflict resolution, to be created by 1997.

Other items dealt with in the section include a land register, labour protection, environmental protection, and a land tax. The Government reiterates the need to pay urgent attention to abuses against rural migrant workers, tenant farmers and day labourers (almost exclusively indigenous), and to adopt administrative or penal sanctions against offenders.

C. Implications of the Peace Accords for Indigenous Poverty Strategies

What guidelines and lessons can be derived from the peace accords in themselves for the combatting of indigenous poverty in Guatemala?

The Indigenous Accord is only very marginally concerned with the role of indigenous peoples in the national economy. But it does reflect aspirations of indigenous peoples with regard to development in the broader sense. It places its strongest emphasis on the cultural dimensions of development, and on appropriate mechanisms for ensuring indigenous participation at all levels in the determination of development priorities.

The Socioeconomic Accord inevitably has a different focus. Its aim is to establish the principles, goals and mechanisms of an integrated national approach to development and poverty reduction, referring to the situation and institutions of indigenous peoples only when considered relevant.

Are there necessary tensions between these two accords? While both stress the importance of national unity, there still appears to be a difference of emphasis. One accord appears to see national unity and development as being strengthened through the consolidation of specifically indigenous institutions at all levels. The other seems to see these institutions as being only one of the many actors in an integrated approach to development, avoiding any direct reference to the correlation between ethnicity and development.

VII. ADDRESSING INDIGENOUS POVERTY REDUCTION IN GUATEMALA: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES

This section aims to review the different ways in which both Guatemalan government and non-governmental agencies, and international donor and lending agencies, have approached the broad issue of indigenous peoples and poverty reduction. Rather than describe specific projects and programmes in detail, the aim is to illustrate methodologies and broad approaches.

Almost all development projects and programmes are likely to be concerned in some way with the reduction of poverty. The expectation is that over a period they will have at least some impact on one or other of the main poverty indicators. And in Guatemala, given its demographic composition, most projects and programmes are similarly likely to have at least some impact on indigenous peoples. This is most particularly the case in the Western Highlands or in Alta Verapaz.

Thus the main concern of this analysis is the manner in which policies and programmes can give specific attention to indigenous peoples and communities in their design, preparation, implementation and evaluation. Has there been a deliberate attempt to target indigenous peoples, either exclusively or in part? If not, have there been attempts to consult with indigenous organizations, or to adapt any aspects of programmes to the specific cultural concerns of indigenous peoples? It is also interesting to see whether the commitments of the peace accords have led to any changes in the way either the Government or donor agencies have perceived indigenous poverty and development.

A. Government Policies: Overall Framework

Both poverty reduction and respect for Guatemala's ethnic diversity figure prominently among the policy objectives of the present Government. These issues are to be addressed within the framework of the peace agreements, which form a cornerstone of the Government's overall policies for the 1996-2000 period.

This can be seen most clearly in the Government's 1996-200 Action Plan for social development and the construction of peace (PLADES)[32]. This document recognizes that the incidence of both poverty and extreme poverty affects in particular the indigenous population, and that its incidence is yet higher in female-headed households. Respect for multiculturalism and ethnic diversity is one of the seven basic principles set out in the PLADES document. These represent a "wealth that should be preserved, creating the conditions by which, in a context of freedom, all and particularly indigenous cultural expressions should be developed in their condition of original cultures which have suffered a historical situation of subordination. The right to a cultural identity is a fundamental human right and the basis for national coexistence and unity".

Aspects of indigenous culture and development are emphasized in some of the sectoral programmes and priorities in the PLADES document. For example there is to be an increase in educational coverage, with emphasis on bilingual intercultural education. There is a specific target to increase the coverage of bilingual education to 16 languages, and to increase literacy at the national level to 80 per cent through programmes in all the languages that are technically possible. In the area of health there is a general commitment to promote indigenous participation in its planning and implementation. And there are specific commitments with regard to the defence of indigenous women. Generally speaking, the commitments and targets are taken directly from the peace agreements, and most particularly from the Indigenous Agreement in so far as its commitments relate directly to developmental and anti-poverty concerns.

Beyond this, there is no explicit suggestion in the Government's policy statements that poverty reduction or development resources should be allocated by ethnic criteria. In the Socioeconomic Agreement, the Government has undertaken a commitment to begin a programme of investment for rural development, with special attention to the zones of resettlement for the uprooted population and with the greatest index of poverty, with an emphasis on basic infrastructure. Commitments of this nature may imply a specific attention to indigenous communities and populations, but they are left implicit rather than explicit.

Indeed there appear to be growing concerns among the Government that the tendency of many foreign donors to identify poverty almost exclusively with indigenous peoples, and to target their development resources largely at the western highlands, may lead them to overlook other areas with a serious poverty incidence. There have been increasing calls for greater donor coordination, in order to ensure a balanced allocation of development resources across the country.

B. The Government's Social Funds

As throughout Latin America, the past decade has seen a proliferation of social funds with poverty reduction as a specific objective. In Guatemala the number of these funds has been unusually large, no less than eleven at one stage, leading the present government to eliminate some and avoid duplication of functions. Moreover Guatemala is one of the very few countries to have created an Indigenous Development Fund, FODIGUA.

The performance of these social funds in Guatemala and elsewhere in Central America has been extensively examined, and there is no need to comment at length in the present paper. In Guatemala the largest has been the Social Investment Fund, FIS, which commenced in 1992 and received over 122 million dollars for the 1990-1995 period (approximately one third of this from the IDB itself)[33]. While FIS has no ethnic targeting, it geographical targeting based on poverty maps necessarily implies a strong emphasis on areas of largely indigenous concentration where high degrees of poverty and extreme poverty have been identified. In its early years FIS tended to emphasize almost exclusively infrastructure projects at the local and community levels, such as education, health and water supply. This could often involve only the construction of buildings, without any future guarantee as to sustainable provision of services. FIS the gave somewhat more attention to productive projects, including community banks.

An objective of FIS from the outset was to stress community organization as the mechanism for project implementation. The chosen structure was the Empresas del Fondo de Inversión Social (EFIS). The methodology was widely criticized at the outset, in that the FIS tended the create the EFIS organizations around a specific project, rather than to work through existing community organizations that could claim representativity. Since November 1996 there has been a change in methodology. Through its new Community Organization Programme, FIS now aims to empower and strengthen local organizations. In a methodology that seems to draw in part from the Bolivian experience with local participation, community groups receive support with the preparation of integrated community plans.

The second largest fund has been the National Peace Foundation (FONAPAZ), created in 1992 with the overall aim of promoting, coordinating and supervising projects to improve living standards and achieve economic and social insertion in the nine departments of the country most affected by the armed conflict. By definition, this has once again involved primary attention to areas of indigenous concentration, as those most severely affected by conflict. Activities have been concentrated in the largely indigenous areas of Alta Verapaz, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, Quiche (particularly the Ixil triangle), Peten, Solola and Totonicapan. In practice, apart from its

initiatives more directly associated with conflict resolution, FONAPAZ has given considerable priority to social investment and productive projects. In its 1992-96 report FONAPAZ stresses that it has worked with the participation of integrated communities and particularly of indigenous towns, creating the conditions that have allowed the self-development of communities, aiming tom eradicate poverty and segregation[34].

The Indigenous Development Fund FODIGUA, formally created in 1994 with an initial Government contribution of 20 million quetzales[35], has always had far less resources than either FIS or FONAPAZ. Its mission is officially described as "to help and strengthen the process of human, sustainable and self-managed development of indigenous peoples of Mayan ascendancy, of their communities and organizations in the framework of their worldview, to raise their standard of living through the implementation and financing of their economic, social and cultural programmes and projects". FODIGUA is devised as a bipartite entity of the Government and Mayan organizations, with a national council of Mayan elders as well as four regional councils in accordance with the Mayan spiritual principle of cuadrilateralism.

In practice, the kind of projects funded and implemented by FODIGUA appears to differ little if at all from those originally undertaken by FIS. The emphasis is on small projects of a material nature. A review of projects under implementation for the years 1996-97 indicates that they are mainly for such items as drinking water, agricultural inputs, provision of mills, construction of footbridges, road construction, school construction or expansion, introduction of electric energy etc. Very few of the projects in themselves point to anything of a specifically Mayan nature, such as a project for the recovery of Mayan culture in Antigua Guatemala, a programme for Mayan cultural development in parts of Quetzaltenango, a project to recover cultural identity among Ixil children, or a meeting of Guatemala's indigenous business entrepreneurs.

For these reasons several indigenous analysts have been critical of FODIGUA's approach. It has been argued that, rather than simply compete the other social funds in the financing of small investment projects, FODIGUA should place more emphasis on the structural aspects of development. For example, it could examine state expenditure in general, making recommendations as to how a programme of investments could respond to the particular needs and priorities of indigenous peoples.

C. International Approaches

It is abundantly clear that all international and donor organizations - ranging from the multilateral development banks, bilateral donors to non-governmental organizations - are broadly concerned with the broad issues of indigenous poverty and their participation in development. This can be seen from the most recent country strategy paper of the IDB itself, as well as in some of its specific projects. It is equally clear–though in a somewhat different way–in the case of the World Bank's most recent initiatives.

In its 1996-1998 strategy document for Guatemala, the IDB identifies support for the poor indigenous population as a specific aim within its overall poverty reduction objective. Proposals in this area include: to improve social services for indigenous peoples; to stimulate an increase in their production and incomes; to increase and improve the quality of basic health services; to increase bilingual education; and to define and protect indigenous land rights, both communal and individual. The document also proposes a study, concerning the access of indigenous peoples to social services.

Over the past decade, the IDB has addressed indigenous and community development mainly through its small projects facility, providing often non-reimbursable loans for the support of small community organizations. Examples include a programme of agro-industrial centres for indigenous women, administered through the coffee-

producers cooperative FEDECOCAGUA; support for a farmers association in Aguacatan to establish a revolving credit fund; or a credit programme for rural sector women, implemented through the financial advice and development foundation FAFIDESS. Such projects, with an average budget of US$500,000, have tended to be small in comparison with the typical loan channelled through the Government.

A larger project for almost 15 million dollars, approved in 1991 and implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture, has aimed to improve living standards of the mainly indigenous population in the Chixoy river basin. The over-arching objective of this project has been to contribute to the sound management of the Chixoy river basin development project, combating the deforestation and erosion which could diminish the useful life of the project. The methodology has been to work with Kiche and other indigenous communities in the municipios of Santa Cruz del Quiche, Cunen, Aguacatan, Malatacancito, Momostenango and Santa Maria Chiquimula, combining forestry and soil management techniques with income-generating productive projects. The project works through some 480 promoters, almost exclusively indigenous.

A new generation of IDB projects, recently approved or now in the pipeline, is increasing the IDB's profile with regard to various aspects of indigenous development.

A unique project is the Programme of Community Development for Peace (DECOPAZ), approved in October 1996 with a budget of over 50 million US dollars in all. Among other things, the project represents the first major commitment to the Guatemalan peace process. Its main overall objective is to restore the physical, human and social capital of areas severely affected by the armed conflict. The methodology is one of bottom-up and participatory planning, effectively delegating to the local-level beneficiaries decision-taking powers over the selection and implementation of project components. At the same time the project document determines in advance the relative amounts to be allocated to the provision of such social services as education and health (US$19.4 million), to items identified by local communities as their priorities (US$9.7 million), and to support for productive projects (US$7.7 million).

The DECOPAZ project is to be implemented in several remote municipios of Huehuetenango department, where the vast majority of the population is indigenous. For the DECOPAZ area 82 percent of the population is estimated to be indigenous, compared with 66 percent for the department of Huehuetenango as a whole. However, the project is very deliberately not targeted exclusively at indigenous peoples. Indeed, as the project document itself stresses, an important principle learned from earlier conflict and post-conflict situations is that of non-discrimination. In communities that have been divided and polarized by a conflict, discrimination in the allocation of assistance between different groups can exacerbate existing divisions, which is why it is necessary to work together with all agents living in a community.

An important recent loan, executed through the Ministry of Education with an IDB contribution of over US$15 million, aims to support educational reforms. Its objectives are to improve the quality of primary education, reducing average primary school repetition by over 2 percent between the years 1996 and 2001. The project is devised as a three-phase operation, for which full IDB financing over the three separate phases could be as much as US$100 million. Several components address bilingual education, enhancing the capacity of the Government's Directorate for Bilingual Education (DIGEBI) to develop, print and distribute bilingual texts in as many as eight indigenous languages; to improve the quality of teacher training: and to enable DIGEBI to adapt the national educational curriculum to incorporate local linguistic and cultural values. During the three years of the project, consultant reports identifying the elements of local linguistic and cultural values are to be prepared for 34 linguistic communities.

A second pipeline project, of obvious relevance to indigenous peoples, aims to promote private sector participation in technical training in rural areas. To be financed with a $US 2 million contribution from the IDB's FOMIN facility, the project aims to enhance the capacity of rural inhabitants to earn income from non-agricultural pursuits. One of the two executing agencies is to be the Foundation for the Development and Education of Indigenous Women (FUMEDI), based in Alta Verapaz.

None of the IDB's recent or pipeline projects is targeted specifically at indigenous peoples. While support for indigenous peoples is clearly identified as an objective within the overall poverty reduction area, the tendency is to incorporate indigenous issues and concerns within other projects and programmes.

Among bilateral donor agencies, there has been a global tendency to seek to target development assistance directly at indigenous peoples, either through government or by channelling funding directly to indigenous organizations and institutions. This is evident also in Guatemala. A review of International Cooperation and Guatemala's Indigenous Peoples[36], undertaken on behalf of the Government of Sweden, observed that donors and agencies fell broadly into four categories. First were those implementing specific political or policy decisions to direct cooperation specifically towards indigenous peoples (examples being Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Norway, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden). A second category identified indigenous peoples as a target group, but aimed to have an impact on them through more generally targeted assistance projects. A third category did not identify indigenous peoples as a target group, but their projects by their nature or geographic location necessarily had an impact largely on indigenous peoples. The fourth category were those projects had little or no impact on indigenous peoples.

Of the first two categories it is important to distinguish between those who are concerned with indigenous economic development and poverty reduction as such, and those more generally concerned with indigenous cultural identity and rights.

Of the larger donors, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) attaches major importance to both poverty reduction and the economic uplifting of indigenous peoples. These issues are repeatedly expressed in its 1997-2001 strategic plan of assistance to Guatemala[37]. Poverty reduction in selected geographic areas is identified as one of the four main strategic objectives for the five-year period. It is stressed moreover that USAID's poverty reduction strategy is to have a "Mayan focus". Priorities are to reduce severe poverty, particularly for the poverty-stricken indigenous population in the Northern and Northwestern regions, by increased income generation through expanded access to credit, training and markets; improved quality of and expanded access to bilingual education; and more carefully targeted access to the food and funds provided under the P.L.480 programme. At the same time USAID has given extensive support for the implementation of the Indigenous Accord, focusing on access to justice and channelling some of its assistance through United Nations organizations.

Several European donors by contrast see their entry point for assistance as the promotion of indigenous identity and rights, once again by particular reference to the Indigenous Agreement. A recent example is a support programme from several European donors to the Government of Guatemala to assist in the formulation of inter-cultural public policies to consolidate the concepts of the multiethnic and multicultural state and nation.

The international concern with the concepts of ethno-development and self-development has led many agencies to pursue a particular paradigm of indigenous development, even calling for a strategy of indigenous development at the national level. These issues seem to have arisen, for example, within the context of the World Bank's emerging operational strategy in Guatemala.

Current World Bank policy on indigenous peoples is guided by its "Indigenous Peoples" Operational Directive 4.20 of 1991. OD 4.20 states that when an investment project financed by the World Bank affects indigenous peoples, the borrower should prepare an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan designed and implemented with the participation of indigenous peoples and their organizations. Projects that affect indigenous people are expected to include provisions that incorporate such a plan or a component to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. If the bulk of the direct project beneficiaries are indigenous peoples, then the World Bank's concerns would be addressed by the project itself and the provisions of the Operational Directive would apply to the entire project.

Given the high proportion of indigenous peoples in Guatemala, the Operational Directive appears to have had a major impact on the World Bank's recent country programming. In the framework of the peace process the World Bank has been preparing a comprehensive Land Administration Project, with components including land regularization, land conflict resolution, improvement of the legal and institutional framework, and a land fund. The project envisages that indigenous peoples would figure among its principal beneficiaries, since their land security is the most precarious and they have the least access to land. The project is considered to have a heavy poverty focus, given that those who are so far excluded from land registry and cadaster services are overwhelmingly poor and indigenous communities. For these reasons the project has aimed to formulate an indigenous peoples development plan. It envisages an institutional strengthening component, to support the process of legal recognition of indigenous communities and to provide support for community members in aspects of law. Moreover, the preparation of this project has also led to efforts to develop a multi-sector indigenous peoples development strategy for the World Bank's entire Guatemala portfolio.

Three other Guatemala projects have also been considered under the World Bank's indigenous peoples directive. While there is no indigenous peoples plan or component as such within these projects, steps have been taken either to target indigenous peoples within them or to include mechanisms for indigenous participation. The 1994 loan to FIS provides promotional materials in local languages and staff speaking the local dialect, thus strengthening the capacity of indigenous groups to prepare project proposals. Under a basic education project, there is a participation plan to target indigenous peoples with the involvement of indigenous organizations in the design and implementation of the regionalization of education services. The project will also support contracting of indigenous administrators to develop education programmes within their own community. And a Guatemala Rural and Main Roads Project currently in preparation identifies indigenous peoples and may include specific actions to consult indigenous leaders about the roads which may affect their areas[38].

VIII. COMBATTING INDIGENOUS POVERTY IN GUATEMALA: FUTURE CHALLENGES AND AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION

This final section aims to identify future challenges for the reduction of indigenous poverty levels, and also some issues that could usefully be discussed between the IDB and the Government of Guatemala. In doing this, the author draws on his comparative experience in Latin America, on the issues of indigenous rights and development, multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism. Certain things can be learned from other Latin American experience. However, the opportunities for addressing the legacy of indigenous poverty, and for promoting a more effective role for indigenous peoples and their institutions in national development, would appear to be particularly unique in Guatemala at the present time. The IDB itself, which has committed such strong support to the Guatemalan peace process, also has a significant opportunity tom assist the Government of Guatemala in responding to this challenge.

In Guatemala today–as indeed in other Latin American countries where indigenous peoples form a large proportion of the national population–issues of indigenous identity and national development are arousing considerable sensitivity. This is not surprising. After a legacy of bitter internal conflict, the present Government is trying to consolidate national democratic institutions, and also to prepare the ground for a more equitable and participatory model of socioeconomic development, at the same time that there is a strong cultural reaffirmation by the country's indigenous peoples. Moreover the government of Guatemala has embarked on an ambitious programme of financial and administrative decentralization, together with social sector reforms.

As the Government assumes these manifold tasks, a key question is whether or in what circumstances development or anti-poverty initiatives should pay particular attention to an ethnic group, perhaps even targeting resources specifically at indigenous peoples. The correlation between ethnicity and poverty is not an issue of debate. The Government's principal development policy documents, such as the PLADES 1996-2000 report, recognize that poverty and rural poverty are most heavily concentrated in the rural departments where indigenous communities predominate. Thus it is Government policy, based on poverty mapping, to channel development resources on a preferential basis to these geographical areas.

Problems do arise, however, with such concepts as "indigenous development" or "indigenous development plans". Given that in all parts of the country (even those departments with a very large indigenous majority) indigenous and non-indigenous peoples currently live alongside each other, specifically ethnic targeting of development resources is bound to prove a controversial issue.

There can be further conceptual problems with the notions of "indigenous development", or specifically indigenous concepts of poverty. Once again there is a strong consensus–fully expressed in the peace accords and in the recent literature by indigenous organizations and personalities–that indigenous peoples have a distinct cultural identity, as well as their own values and institutions which are an important part of the Mayan "cosmovision" or worldview. These are vital part of Guatemala's national identity, and efforts are now being made to promote and revitalize indigenous languages, history, dress and spirituality, amongst other elements of indigenous culture and institutions.

Yet difficulties can be raised in the Guatemala context by such concepts as autonomous development and self-development. These concepts are very much part of the international discourse on indigenous identity and rights (including to some extent the ILO's Convention No.169, recently ratified by Guatemala, which stressed the right

of indigenous peoples to exercise the greatest possible degree of control over their own development). Yet such concepts are most easily applied in practice, where indigenous peoples have control over a contiguous territory, live to a large extent in a subsistence economy or at least have a particular niche in the overall national economy. In Bolivia, for example, the Government has since the mid 1990s been actively promoting a model of "development with identity" or indigenous development, through an administrative territorial unit referred to as the Indigenous Municipal District. Many factors make it easier to apply such a concept in Bolivia than in Guatemala. One is that some indigenous peoples have traditionally occupied large and contiguous territorial areas in the tropical east of the country. Another is that, in the highland areas where Aymara and Quechua indigenous peoples predominate, land is still held under a particular regime with market restrictions.

In the earlier sections of this case study, an attempt has been made both to explain some of the causes behind the contemporary poverty facing Guatemala's indigenous peoples, and to examine some present-day trends in their economic and survival strategies. The contemporary analysis has been made with considerable data limitations. Very few micro studies have been conducted on economic participation and strategies in either urban or rural areas, to permit an understanding of changes during or after the civil conflict. Nevertheless, certain general trends can be detected.

The growing indigenous participation in urban life is an obvious point, that can be perceived by the naked eye. Though it has not been systematically studied, it is changing the face of both Guatemala City and small towns, and will generate new problems of urban poverty in the years to come. The nature of the linkages between indigenous urban residents and their communities of origin urgently needs to be understood. Furthermore, there are considerable discrepancies between officials statistical data and anthropological studies, concerning the extent to which indigenous families derive their livelihood from agriculture, rural employment or other economic pursuits. Remittances, of obvious importance in departments like Huehuetenango and San Marcos near the Mexican border, again tend not to be reflected in poverty indicators. But overall, the importance of informal sector employment, small commerce and enterprise is likely to be underestimated.

A rather obvious point, but one which nevertheless tends to be overlooked in much policy analysis, is the growing diversity in indigenous economic situations. Despite some prevailing perceptions about indigenous peoples as subsistence farmers, landless rural workers or petty traders, there has always been an indigenous "economic elite". With perhaps several thousand indigenous university students in Quetzaltenango, and with some successful indigenous entrepreneurs, the trend will continue. More economic differentiation among the indigenous population can be predicted, by both region and occupational sector.

For these reasons, it is difficult to conceive of a uniform strategy for "indigenous development" in Guatemala, or of uniform policies to address the poverty experienced by indigenous peoples as an ethnic group. As elsewhere, a poverty reduction strategy has to be based on a range of policy measures and interventions, which respond to the expressed needs of the poorest sectors in any society, and which are also adapted to their particular situation in the economy and the labour market. While some basic amenities are needed by all communities and individuals, there are likely to be significant differences in the measures to redress poverty among peasant farmers, landless rural workers and the urban unemployed or marginally employed, respectively. Thus a recent IDB survey identifies a range of policy actions for poverty reduction, depending on circumstances. They include: building human capital and upgrading the skills of the poor ; changing the distribution of assets (including land and tax reform); enhancing the poor's access to market opportunities; improving the quality of life of the poor; direct transfers to the poor (of particular relevance to underprivileged groups such as the indigenous population); helping the poor cope with adverse shocks; and providing social protection for the unemployable[39]. A further policy paper prepared for the IDB has examined the scope for poverty reduction policies more specifically in Central

America. It places much emphasis on the promotion of community action, in particular through the strengthening of indigenous organizations. While stressing the need for improved and better targeted social expenditure (education, health, housing and small infrastructure), it also highlights the urgent need for productive activities. Credit for small enterprise programmes, assistance for the small and export farmer, employment generating tourism and artisan production, and assistance for the maquila industry are among the recommendations in this area[40].

Of the IDB's current portfolio in Guatemala, perhaps the best example of "direct transfers" is the DECOPAZ loan. Effectively, this will be taxing other sectors of Guatemala society over the long term in order to achieve resource transfers to an impoverished and conflict-torn part of the country with a predominantly indigenous population. Yet only a small portion of the loan is committed specifically to productive activities. The main emphasis is on social services, and restoration of the social fabric through empowerment of community organizations.

In the meantime, there is a vibrant and growing indigenous rights movement in Guatemala. In the context of the peace process, indigenous and government representatives are currently negotiating highly complex issues of indigenous participation in national society and its institutions. At stake is the way in which a future multi-ethnic and multicultural society in Guatemala, including its political and juridical institutions, will be configured. The issues being debated include constitutional reforms, indigenous consultative and participatory mechanisms at all levels, the official status of indigenous languages, indigenous land tenure institutions, and bilingual intercultural education.

To what extent are these broader aspects of indigenous identity and rights related to poverty reduction and socioeconomic development for indigenous peoples? Some are directly related, others indirectly, and yet others may have little relevance for socioeconomic issues. In some cases there can be a clear correlation between the cultural and socioeconomic aspects of indigenous development. Higher educational levels, based in large part on bilingual education at least in the first instance, is the key to higher economic opportunity and attainment. In Guatemala a greater use of indigenous languages at all levels of Government and society, and particularly in the judicial system, will also improve socioeconomic welfare for indigenous peoples. Guarantees of bilingual judicial interpretation, provided for in the Indigenous Accord and the Code of Criminal Procedure, are clearly not widely enforced despite recent improvements in this regard. And more widespread use of indigenous languages and interpretation in labour and civil courts could lead to improved wage protection and land tenure security.

Effective consultation procedures, based on an understanding of indigenous institutions and their role in decision-taking, are also a key to improve development and anti-poverty strategies. As is increasingly recognized, this is of critical importance for the social funds. However community development, and improved access to social services, can only be one part of a strategy aiming to improve the social and economic conditions of indigenous peoples in Guatemala. If the main features behind this poverty are structural, whether labour market discrimination or unequal access to land and other productive resources, then an effective anti-poverty strategy has to address these structural factors. As regards the fight against discrimination, to which the Indigenous Accord attaches much importance, there are two separate aspects. One is the need to eradicate any continuing discrimination, to ensure genuine equality of opportunity and treatment for indigenous peoples. The other is the need to compensate for past discrimination, through affirmative action or the "special measures" envisaged by the ILO's Convention No.169.

While there is no real evidence of de iure discrimination against indigenous peoples, indigenous workers continue to endure poor conditions and abusive treatment in some labour markets. It appears that a decreasing number of indigenous workers are now undertaking seasonal migration in commercial agriculture. Yet several hundred

thousand persons per year still undertake such migration, and they are likely to be the poorest members of indigenous communities. A special programme, directed at this category of workers, could pay several dividends at once. Apart from enabling resource transfers through wage protection, it could address health and hygiene, perhaps also education, and give experience in negotiating techniques to indigenous communities.

Finally, one can examine ways in which a future IDB programme of loans and technical assistance might constructively address issues of indigenous poverty and development in Guatemala. First, it is important to identify approaches that should probably be avoided. For the reasons mentioned, it is unwise to attempt a comprehensive indigenous development plan or strategy. This would provoke unnecessary tensions, in that it would involve the IDB in controversial political debates at the national level with regard to autonomous development, the scope and limitations of customary law, representative indigenous institutions, and other issues that are currently being debated through the Comisiones Paritarias under the Indigenous Agreement. At the same time, there are some areas where IDB technical assistance could provide a useful input to national discussions.

It would seem more useful to address the sectoral areas where the incidence of indigenous poverty is a cause for concern, and to devise programmes and policy interventions accordingly. Moreover, there are a number of areas that require further research in order to determine the scope for addressing poverty through productive employment. On this basis, the following issues are proposed for discussion in a forthcoming policy dialogue between the IDB and the Government of Guatemala.

a) **Institutional Mechanisms**. What are the most suitable mechanisms for ensuring consultation between indigenous peoples and the Government, concerning development policy and programmes? What are the advantages and disadvantages of vesting responsibility for indigenous affairs in one State entity? What can be learned from the Bank's wider Latin American experience on this issue? What lessons have been learned from the implementation of the Indigenous Accord up to the present time? How could the Bank provide future support, through loans or tecnical assistance, to strengthen the mechanisms for policy consultations and indigenous participation in development?

b) **Concepts of Indigenous Development**. To what extent can one identity specifically indigenous concepts of development, or "development with identity", in the Guatemalan context? What are the implications of these concepts for anti-poverty programmes? Is this an issue to which the Bank should give particular attention and support in Guatemala?

c) **Labour Market Dimensions of Indigenous Poverty**. Indigenous peoples clearly participate more than other ethnic groups in certain labour markets, for example in seasonal rural labour markets. There are indications that conditions of recruitment and employment, and also living and hygienic conditions, remain particularly poor; and that indigenous peoples have so far had little opportunity to negotiate improved conditions. What can be done to remedy this situation? What can be learned from Bank experience in other countries? Should the Bank aim to prepare a project, addressing the labour market dimensions of indigenous poverty in Guatemala?

d) **Credit and Financial Assistance**. Until now, the Bank has assisted market integration through a number of small projects involving credit schemes targeted largely at indigenous communities. Under the current economic environment, improved credit access for indigenous communities would appear to be a major priority. Should the Bank now aim to devise a larger project, perhaps in collaboration with such predominantly indigenous organizations as CDRO?

e) **Access to Social Services**. An important determinant of indigenous poverty, in Guatemala as elsewhere in Latin America, is the lack of access to fundamental social services. How can this situation best be remedied? Is there need for further research on this issue? Or could at least a pilot project be devised at the present time, aiming to improve such access in select geographical areas?

f) **Research Issues and Priorities**. This study has identified a number of areas where further research appears necessary. One is the nature of indigenous land tenure institutions, attitudes to communal land tenure systems and to land privatization. An improved knowledge of indigenous systems of land use and management in different ecological reasons would seem highly desirable, as the Government embarks on major programmes of land titling and registration and cadastral reforms. A further issue is the extent of indigenous rural-urban immigration, and the nature of the linkages between new urban immigrants and their places of origin. Finally there is a need for empirical research on changing economic and survival strategies, examining in particular the extent to which incomes are earned outside the agricultural sector. Are these priority issues for research and analysis in Guatemala? What other priorities are there for future research? Should the Bank itself support a research programme into issues of indigenous poverty and development? If so, with which national institutions might the Bank cooperate in this area?

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