

Speech by the Secretary General of SICA, Ambassador Aníbal Quiñónez, to the Meeting of the Consultative Committee of PAIRCA

At the beginning of the Consultative Committee of PAIRCA, first of all, I would like to thank you for your presence. Your contribution to the deliberations concerning the items of the agenda that we intend to carry out today will be useful, without any doubt, to fulfill our commitment to generate ideas and recommendations for PAIRCA management and actions.

As you may know, we are in the final phase of execution of the Program and it allows us to assess the progress made thus far by each component and assess whether the results correspond to the objectives that we formulated, and above all, if the products meet the expectations of this important program for the Central American Integration.

As beneficiaries and members of the PAIRCA Consultative Committee, you are directly linked to its execution, and therefore, we think that your opinions concerning the contributions of the program to strengthening the working capacity of the respective institutions as well as those aspects that you may consider necessary to improve the results of the last Operating Plan, are very important. Likewise, we expect to share information regarding the problems encountered during the implementation of the program activities so that this Consultative Committee may recommend actions for improvement or solutions.

However, the key objective of this meeting is to share the vision of what must be done from here to the end of the Program, based on the discussion of the previous Annual Operating Plan (POA 3).

It is also relevant to think about what the content of a second stage of PAIRCA must be or that the program must give continuity to the European Union cooperation for strengthening the Central American Integration System. We know that the main objective of the next period (2007-2013) of the European Union Cooperation is to provide support to the Central American integration, which secures the continuity of programs such as PAIRCA, the Customs Union and Common Policies, but at the same time, binds us to monitor that the results of these programs will be used as the point of reference for the formulation of new plans and projects. As representatives of the regional institutions, we must contribute to achieve a design coherent with the interests and objectives of the Central American integration, such as the implementation of the customs union and the negotiation of the Partnership Agreement with the European Union, and both matters require a sound and efficient regional institutionality.

I would like to thank you again for being here with us and let's proceed to start our work meeting at once.

Managua, Nicaragua, September 12, 2007.