

JUSTICE STUDIES CENTER OF THE AMERICAS
FIRST QUARTER REPORT
January-March 2003

The following report provides a summary of the activities of the Justice Studies Center of the Americas for the period corresponding to January to March 2003.

The activities described herein were undertaken within the framework of the institutional support project signed with USAID (LAG-G-00-00-00035-00). This project's original termination date was extended three times. The project's final termination date of April 30, 2003 was approved on March 28, 2003.

The JSCA has also received financial support from the Government of Chile, the Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Human Security Program of Canada. These grants have supported different JSCA projects, including the Judicial Statistics Project, the Follow-up Project and the newly initiated Gender Project.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

A. JSCA's Institutional Development

During this period the JSCA ratified cooperation agreements with the following institutions:

- The Supreme Court of Justice of the State of Tabasco, Mexico.
- Comisionado de Apoyo a la Reforma y Modernización de la Justicia, Dominican Republic.

The JSCA has also been notified of the following additional cooperation agreements that have been approved pending signatures from the appropriate authorities:

- Centro de Arbitraje y Conciliación de la Cámara de Comercio de Guayaquil, Ecuador.
- The Supreme Court of Justice, Federal Justice Council and Regional Federal Courts of Brazil.
- Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico.

Finally, it should be noted that as of February 17th, the JSCA has new permanent institutional headquarters located on Avenida Holanda 2023 in the municipality of Providencia, Santiago. The JSCA left the Corporación de Promoción Universitaria (CPU), where it had been housed since its inception. Although the JSCA continues to have a good relationship with the CDJ-CPU, the move was motivated by the new legal independence acquired by JSCA through the signing of a Headquarters Agreement with the Government of Chile, in addition to its need for larger offices to carry out its varied activities.

B. ACTIVITIES AIMED AT ACHIEVING JSCA'S INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

1. Generate and disseminate instruments that improve the information available on justice in the Americas.

1.1 Virtual Information Center (VIC)

Website

Creation of the new Website

The JSCA's new Website, which was introduced in mid-January, has three principal features:

- There was a substantial change in the site's layout, which was changed from a flat page system to a platform of information housed in databases.¹
- The Website's design was changed in order to provide more user-friendly access to content, which is an important part of JSCA's ongoing effort to change its corporate image.
- New information on JSCA activities and the operation of justice throughout the region is gradually being incorporated into the Website and updated on a regular basis. This process is being carried out with the help of new tools that have been incorporated into the Website.

The following changes were made to the Website during this period:

- More than 400 active pages were created containing information relevant to the issues that the JSCA addresses. The information is available through a database containing 871 links to institutional Websites and other sites related to the judicial sector, 753 online documents, 205 news pages in English and Spanish, 168 calendars of events, 87 lists of book reviews, and 45 newsletters.
- Four new autonomous instruments were developed within the Website:
 - 1) An electronic newsletter was created in Spanish and English. This section of the site is updated each week and contains news, links to relevant documents, a calendar of events, and highlighted access to special topics on public policy in the area of justice (developing judicial statistics, alternative dispute resolution, reforms in justice and civil society, etc.).
 - 2) A Virtual Library was also introduced, containing online documents, legislation, reviews and bibliographic references, as well as a search engine for consulting online texts. As of March 31, the library includes 434 studies, reports and papers, 319

¹ The technology used includes PHP language for Website design as well as MySql data administrator, a data engine based on Relational Database norms. In both cases open source software available on the Internet was used (the Yahoo search engine is currently adopting this technology). This allowed us to create a data-processing product that is economical and highly stable, versatile in terms of managing information (it allows the user to adapt the content from various formats) and flexible with regard to updates.

legislative documents and 87 book reviews. In addition, 7800 keywords (a thesaurus of related terms) were assigned in English and Spanish in order to facilitate and sort searches.

- 3) A special page dedicated to the journal *Sistemas Judiciales*, which allows users to access old issues and download articles and other highlighted sections.
 - 4) A special page dedicated to the Nexus Newsletter with an integrated archive of all back issues and access to versions in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese (the last two only in biannual editions).
- These special pages form part of a series of pages developed in previous quarters, including a thematic module on alternative dispute resolution and a site on the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Network, among others.
 - The Virtual Library is complemented by the JSCA's print library, which currently contains 360 volumes (144 books, 50 CD-ROMs, 49 journals and 117 periodicals).

Flow of visitors

During this quarter the JSCA Website registered a total of 19,472 external visits, with an average of 226 sessions per day. Although this does not represent a significant increase over the last quarter, the new platform allows us to process more information on Website users, of which the following is worth noting:

- 169,796 pages were visited during this quarter, with an average of 1,887 pages visited by external users each day.
- Most users are from Colombia, Mexico, Bolivia, Chile and the U.S states of North Carolina and Virginia.
- The most frequently visited sections on the site are the Virtual Library (particularly documents and legislative texts), the Nexus Newsletter and reports on JSCA Studies.
- The Website registered 7,303 gigabytes of external traffic during this quarter. With an average size of 800 KB for legislative texts and national reports, this means that external users downloaded approximately 9,000 documents from the site during this quarter.

Other activities

At the request of USAID, during this period contact was established with the U.S. Library of Congress, to which a proposal was presented to establish formal ties between the JSCA and the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN). The goal of this relationship would be to standardize JSCA's cataloguing system for documents according to GLIN norms and to benefit from GLIN databases and other resources. GLIN representatives are currently reviewing the proposal.

The JSCA's virtual information staff attended a seminar offered by U.S. expert Louis Rosenfeld at the Universidad de Chile, entitled *Arquitectura de la Información para Grandes Compañías* (Information Architecture for Large Companies). The seminar allowed us to identify key areas for improving and strengthening the information incorporated into the new JSCA Website. One concrete example is the development of the above mentioned electronic newsletter.

1.2 Annual Report on the State of Justice in the Region

Progress made during this quarter includes:

- Conclusion of the information exchange requested from official institutions in the judicial sector in the 34 active member countries of the OAS.
- Completion of the data-gathering process for justice indicators. Information was collected from reports and studies published by international organizations, risk-assessment companies and international cooperation agencies.
- Conclusion of organization and processing of data into tables and graphs.
- Creation of a database for processing information on the Website.
- Initiation of the narrative text of the Report. The first draft of the document will be analyzed by JSCA experts and consultants in April.
- Preparation of design models for the print and digital editions of the Report.

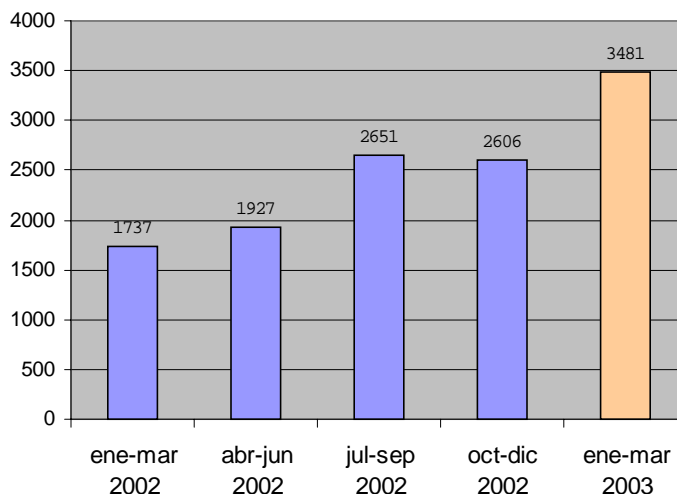
1.3 Nexus Newsletter

Newsletter issues 19 (January), 20 (February) and 21 (March) were published in English and Spanish in a new format that was redesigned in accordance with the layout of the new JSCA Website.

The Newsletter currently has 3,481 subscribers, which represents a 33.6% increase over last quarter, the largest recorded since the Newsletter's creation in July 2001. The English version's 143% increase in the number of subscribers—from 522 last quarter to its present level of 1270—is particularly significant.

These figures do not reflect the estimated ten thousand individuals who receive this publication indirectly through regional online forums and discussion groups on topics related to justice and law.

Total de suscritos al boletín



The Newsletter's contents continue to be reproduced and cited frequently in electronic publications and institutional Websites in different countries. For example, the Lexis Nexis Chile group has requested permission to reproduce original articles in its publications on topics such as justice and economic competitiveness and the functioning of Public Defenders Offices in the Americas. We have also been asked to participate in an information exchange with institutions such as the *Programa Acción Colectiva por la Justicia de la Fundación Poder Ciudadano* in Argentina, the Florida-based Law Latin portal for legal topics in Latin America and other judicial-sector institutions in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, among others. One of our challenges in this area is that we lack an extensive follow-up system for analyzing the impact of our publications on a regional level.

In addition, the following special reports were included as independent sections of the Newsletter:

- The Role of the District Attorney in Canada
- Justice, Reform and the Media: The Journalist's Role
- New Public Defense Systems in the Americas: Progress, Challenges and Obstacles

The electronic version of the Newsletter was the second most visited page on the Website during this quarter.

1.4 *Sistemas Judiciales* Journal

The fourth issue of the journal, which focuses on judicial independence and responsibility, has been distributed. This issue's lead article is the IFES-USAID guide to judicial independence, entitled "Guidelines for Promoting Judicial Independence and Impartiality."

Free copies of the issue have been distributed to institutions and key individuals in the justice sectors of 34 JSCA member countries. Those receiving the complementary issue include judicial branches, Attorney General's offices, Public Defender's offices, Judiciary Councils, representatives

of diplomatic missions before the OAS, civil society organizations working on justice-related issues, and international cooperation agencies.

In addition, the journal's fifth volume is also currently being prepared, and will focus on judicial management. This volume will include articles by Daniel J. Hall, Vice-president of the U.S. National Center for State Courts and Christina Biebesheimer of the Inter-American Development Bank, as well as by experts from Spain, Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, Chile and the Dominican Republic, among others.

Other publications have expressed interest in reproducing articles originally published in *Sistemas Judiciales*. This quarter, the French journal *L'Astreé*, which is published by a group of researchers affiliated with the L'École Doctorale de Droit Comparé de Paris, requested authorization to translate and reprint three articles from our journal. One of the articles to be published in *L'Astreé* is an edited transcript of the debate on the future agenda of judicial reforms in the Americas that was organized by JSCA in Washington in March, 2002.

There has been an increase in the number of voluntary submissions to the journal by experts and authorities from different countries.

1.5 Publication on the Role of Civil Society Organizations in Judicial Reform

- This publication contains the results of the study undertaken by the Ford Foundation's Program on Rights and Citizenship, which was conceived of mainly as a learning exercise on the role of civil society organizations in the recent changes in the justice systems of Argentina, Colombia, Chile and Peru. The JSCA was responsible for preparing the Country Report for Chile, which involved interviewing representatives from fifty civil society organizations dedicated to working in the judicial system area.
- The Ford Foundation entrusted JSCA with publishing the results of the study and disseminating them through a series of activities to be held in the coming year. To this end, one thousand copies of the book *Justice and Civil Society: The Role of Civil Society in Judicial Reform Processes. Case Studies in Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru* were published.
- This book, which is distributed free of charge, was publicized in the March issue of the Nexus Bulletin and through the JSCA Website.
- Distribution of this publication, which is to continue until May 2003, is planned as follows:
 - Orders placed via the JSCA Website are filled as received. Twenty orders have been placed as of the submission of this report.
 - One hundred copies will be donated to the institutions that participated in the study (INECIP in Argentina, IDL in Peru, and UNIANDES in Colombia). Each institution has submitted contact information for staff involved with the project in order to facilitate this process.
 - The JSCA will distribute copies to those on its contact list, particularly official institutions, international agencies and member organizations of the Network of CSOs for Justice in the Americas.

- The book is also being presented at the following events:
 - On March 19 in Lima, Peru, the book was presented for the first time at an event co-organized by the JSCA and the IDL. Copies of the book were distributed to all those attending the event, including authorities from Peru's judicial branch, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, attorneys, CSO members, and the press.
 - Presentations are being organized in the other countries involved in the study with the help of the participating institutions.
 - A regional presentation of the book will be held at the Second Annual Meeting of the Network of CSOs for Justice in the Americas, which will take place April 24-26 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- A promotional insert was produced in English and Spanish and printed at the end of March, to be distributed in the same manner as the book. The JSCA will also be responsible for distributing this insert in English-speaking countries throughout the region.
- We are also currently negotiating with the Ford Foundation in response to their request that JSCA hold other presentations and create other means of disseminating the publication among donors dedicated to judicial administration issues and Ford Foundation grant recipients in countries throughout the Americas. We expect to have the results of these negotiations in the second trimester of 2003.

1.6 Standardization of judicial statistics and indicators

- The IDB has approved the project for continuing the standardization of judicial statistics and indicators. We will begin to work on this project, which involves collecting information in Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala, during the month of April. This work will be carried out within the framework of the cooperation agreements that the JSCA has signed with various judicial institutions in these countries. The project also involves creating and implementing a basic set of judicial indicators. To this end, meetings were held with authorities in Guatemala (March 28) and in Belize (March 31 and April 1) with excellent results and collaboration on the part of the authorities.
- We have also begun distributing *Code and Decode*, the manual that was published in December. The text is also being translated into English and will be presented at a meeting/workshop on constructing judicial information systems, to be held April 28-9 in Santa Lucia. This event will be sponsored by the JSCA and the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and will be attended by representatives from the judicial branches of all English-speaking Caribbean countries. This initiative is in response to a request for collaboration from the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. Four meetings are being planned for 2003 and will be held in countries that have requested technical assistance on this matter.

2. Strengthen the Cooperation and Exchange of Experiences among Key Parties in the Justice Sector at the Regional Level

2.1 Training

- During the first quarter discussions were reestablished with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for planning the training project proposed by the JSCA to strengthen the Criminal Justice reform process in Latin America. In addition to email exchanges and teleconferences, a JSCA team (Executive Director, Academic Director and Training Coordinator) visited the city of Ottawa at the end of the quarter in order to work with CIDA program directors as well as with the National Judicial Institute and Canada's Justice Department, the agencies that will participate in the project. The purpose of the visit was to work together to establish the project's structure, initiate a dialogue with Canadian experts in related areas, including Gender and Connectivity, and to define the initial steps of project. The agenda included visits to courts and meetings with representatives of Civil Society Organizations.
- During this quarter JSCA also held the International Course on Instruments for Implementing an Oral and Accusatory Criminal Procedure System. The activity was held March 24-28 in La Serena, Chile. Participants included authorities and members of important institutions involved in judicial reform including court ministers, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, scholars, attorneys and other professionals working in the judicial system. A total of 65 people participated in the course, including representatives from Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Honduras, Venezuela, Uruguay and Canada.

The course sought to offer a general overview of criminal procedure reforms in the region, analyze their strengths and weaknesses, and present innovative tools and proposals for implementing those reforms. The thematic modules addressed the following topics: general overview of the reforms, judicial management models, the organization and management of the District Attorney's Office and Public Defender's Office, and training personnel for the reform. Presentations were given by international consultants from Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica and Canada. There were also on-site visits to observe the Chilean criminal procedure model in operation.

In terms of the opinions expressed by the participants –who gave the course an average score of 9 points- and the expectations of the JSCA organizing team, the course was a great success.² During the week of the course, the JSCA team met with different delegations in order to strengthen the exchange and generate opportunities for analyzing the particular state of the reform in each country.

The course received coverage in the local newspaper *Diario el Día* (La Serena, Chile), which published a ¼ page article on the course's objectives and content in its print and electronic editions (see www.diarioeldia.cl).

² For more information on the results of the International Course, refer to the final evaluation report in Annex 1.

- Lastly, the project *Diseño y Ejecución de un Programa de Capacitación a Jueces y Vocales de los Tribunales Penales en Destrezas Específicas Necesarias para el Nuevo Código de Procedimiento Penal en Ecuador* (Design and Execution of a Training Program for Judges and Members of the Court in Criminal Courts in Specific Skills Necessary for Ecuador's New Criminal Procedure Code) began this quarter. This training project was awarded last quarter to the alliance formed by JSCA, Globatel and the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. The project was formally launched in the context of the signing of an agreement among the members of the alliance and the Ecuadorian Fundación Esquel on February 14. The project is expected to conclude in November of this year.

2.2 Networking

a) Civil Society Organizations Network (Red OSC)

- The INFORED OSC Network published February and April issues of its bimonthly electronic newsletter. The newsletter is sent to a list of subscribers, including 74 who represent the Network's 31 member organizations, and 46 individual non-members.
- The French Embassy has confirmed its support of the regional program on human rights. The Embassy will finance the participation of representatives of Network member organizations in the Segundo Encuentro Anual de la Red de OSCs de Justicia de las Américas (Second Annual Meeting of the CSO Network for Justice in the Americas), which will be held April 24-26 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The UNDP Program on Security and Justice for Latin America and the Caribbean will also support this event, as will the Ford Foundation. We are also currently soliciting additional international support. Representatives of the most important foundations and international cooperation agencies working on justice-related topics have confirmed their participation at the event, which will address the creation of a regional observatory on justice from the perspective of civil society.
- The event's program, which includes the Red OSC work plan for 2003, was prepared with the active participation of network members through long-distance discussions by means of the tools available on the JSCA and Red OSC Websites. We are currently working with Red OSC members on a reference document for discussion at the Rio meeting.
- The network responded effectively and with a high level of regional collaboration to the Ford Foundation's call for proposals to increase civil society organizations' capacity for influencing and participating in decision-making at the regional level. We will receive a response in June.
- In response to a suggestion and offer of support by USAID Washington, JSCA began a process of coordination with other networks that receive support from this agency and that address related topics such as strengthening democracy and fighting against corruption.

b) Ibero-American Association of Public Defenders

- JSCA is participating in the organization of the meeting of constituents of the Inter-American Association of Public Defenders. At the regional meeting of Public Defenders held in late

October 2002 in Costa Rica, participants agreed to organize a meeting of the executive board, comprised of representatives from Antigua, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and El Salvador. The meeting, which was held March 6-8, 2003, aimed to formulate a draft of statutes for the Association, to be discussed during the course of the year among interested institutions. In spite of the fact that the meeting was only attended by representatives from Argentina, Chile and El Salvador—a problem that could not have been foreseen by the JSCA or the organizers from El Salvador as there were many confirmed participants from other countries who did not attend—the board succeeded in creating a draft of statutes for the Association that is currently being circulated among interested parties.

- The Association of Public Defenders of Brazil is currently organizing the Second Inter-American Meeting of Public Defenders, which will be held in October of this year.

c) Ibero-American Network of Judicial Academies

- In fulfillment of the agreements reached at the II General Assembly of the Ibero-American Network of Judicial Academies, in March the JSCA presented to the Network's Executive Secretary a draft proposal for implementing a program to assist the region's Judicial Schools. In broad terms, the project consists of developing processes and instruments for institutional self-assessment and quality control. During its second phase the project would serve as the basis for installing an accreditation system for academies and centers for judicial training.

2.2 Fellowship Program and Events

- During the current quarter, the JSCA received a number of applications for its Fellowship Program from individuals from several countries. In the program, participants work pro bono at the JSCA for a period of several months. A calendar was drawn up to accommodate the demand. The following information pertains to this period:
 - Carlos Paz, of Guatemala, and Gino Persaud, of Guyana, completed 6-month JSCA fellowships in 2002. Both worked mainly with the Virtual Information Center gathering information on the functioning of judicial systems and judicial indicators in the Americas. Their activities also included carrying out research on reform and justice in the Caribbean and victims in the Americas. .
 - Catherine Beer, an historian from Wesleyan University (Connecticut) completed a three-month fellowship in January. Ms. Beer carried out research on topics including justice and economic competitiveness and victim services in the United States. She also collaborated on VIC publications.
 - Kathryn Tabone, an International Relations student from Tufts University (Massachusetts), completed her fellowship at the JSCA in February. Ms. Tabone focused on processing information for the Annual Report on Judicial Systems in the Americas.

- Helen Blessinger, an International Relations student from American University (Washington, D.C.), began her internship in March. Ms. Blessinger is devoting much of her time to updating the English version of the JSCA Website.
- A JSCA delegation headed by the Program Director and the Academic Director visited Puerto Rico on February 3-5. The delegation was invited to observe the operation of the judicial system and to establish links with the Universidad Nacional de Puerto Rico, which is also carrying out a USAID-funded project on the organization of regional information on justice matters. JSCA representatives visited courts, observed hearings, and visited the Justice Ministry and the Public Defender's Office, in addition to meeting with university professors and administrators. The activity was considered a success, and the JSCA and the Universidad Nacional de Puerto Rico are currently coordinating the execution of their respective projects.
- The JSCA also participated as a presenter at the Conferencia Internacional Desafíos de la Reforma Procesal Penal, which was held March 14-15 in Lima, Peru. The JSCA's Executive Director and Academic Director spoke on the state of judicial reform processes in Latin America. The event, which was organized by the Academia de la Magistratura del Perú, was attended by approximately 250 Peruvian judges and prosecutors, who are currently actively debating these topics in their country with the support of JSCA.

3. Conduct In-depth Studies of the Operation of the Region's Justice Systems, and Strengthen Innovative Proposals in the Discussion of Judicial Reform

3.1 Follow-up and Support of the Criminal Procedure Reform

a) Local and Comparative Reports from the 1st Stage

INECIP, the group responsible for drafting the Report on Córdoba, Argentina has presented a series of papers based on the 2001 Report. This local group has initiated a series of presentations on the report at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, has prepared a press kit and has given presentations before different judicial authorities, members of parliament and the province's Judicial Branch.

b) Local Reports, 2nd Stage of the Project

- The international seminar "Follow-up on Criminal Procedure Reforms in the Americas," organized by the JSCA jointly with the Dominican organization FINJUS, was held January 30-31, 2003 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Country reports from Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Venezuela were presented, along with the comparative report for this stage of the project. The first day was dedicated to the participation and comments of regional experts and countries that are currently participating in the second stage of the project. The Attorney Generals of Ecuador and El Salvador and a representative of the Guatemalan Supreme Court attended as commentators on their national reports. On the second day the comparative report, presented by the JSCA's Academic Advisor who was responsible for its preparation, was discussed by the more than 50 event participants.

- The local seminar “Challenges for Implementing a New Criminal Procedure System: Future Tasks in the Dominican Republic in Light of the Latin American Experience” was also held in Santo Domingo on the afternoon of January 31. The event was organized by FINJUS and the JSCA in the context of the implementation of the country’s New Criminal Procedure Code. High-level government officials, judicial representatives, attorneys, representatives from local universities and representatives of the USAID mission in the Dominican Republic counted among the participants.
- After being delayed, the Country Report for Guatemala was presented March 28, 2003 in Guatemala City by the ICCPG, the group responsible for researching and preparing the document. The JSCA and the local USAID mission sponsored the presentation. JSCA representatives held preliminary meetings and then presented the report along with authorities from the Supreme Court, the Attorney General’s Office and USAID Guatemala. In addition to authorities from the above institutions, participants included public defenders, judges and prosecutors, attorneys, members of international cooperation agencies and CSOs. After post-presentation meetings with JSCA, the ICCPG began organizing additional opportunities for presenting and disseminating the report in order to generate proposals for change in partnership with government institutions and cooperation agencies in Guatemala.

The second Chilean Country Report is currently being developed by the Universidad Diego Portales, which presented a draft version of the document at the International Seminar in the Dominican Republic at the end of January. As reported below, reports from other countries participating in the second stage of the project were also made public at that time. The Chilean document will be officially presented in Chile in May.

c) Third Stage of the Project

- Planning is currently underway for the third stage of the project, which will be undertaken in Argentina (in the Province of Buenos Aires), Bolivia, Honduras and one English-speaking Caribbean country. To this end, teams are currently being organized to gather information and prepare country reports and government authorities and USAID missions are being contacted.

d) Other Activities

- The manual being prepared by Patricio Valdivieso, that is aimed at providing local teams with an easy way of addressing different project stages and which could be used as a guide for collecting information and preparing follow-up reports, is currently in press. The document will be ready for distribution by the end of April.
- During the week of January 27-31 the JSCA participated in a series of meetings to discuss the implementation of the new Criminal Procedure Code in the Dominican Republic. The meetings, which were sponsored by USAID and that country’s Judicial Academy, culminated in the presentation of an outline of the Implementation Plan to the Vice President of the Republic, who expressed his support of the process.
- The following activities were carried out during this quarter in order to strengthen the JSCA’s support for the judicial reform process in Mexico:

- A delegation from Mexico, led by the country's Attorney General and USAID representatives, observed the Chilean criminal justice system during the week of January 20-25 in Santiago and Antofagasta, Chile. A delegation of 15 people from different areas of the justice sector participated in this visit, which included on-site observation of the operation of the Criminal Procedure Reform in the city of Antofagasta, as well as meetings with individuals involved with implementing the Reform. The principal objective of the activity was to analyze the operation of the new system and to discuss the pros and cons of the system's implementation in Chile. The results of the visit were positive, with dialogues being established between the delegation and, among others, the Attorney General, the Public Defender, and representatives of the Chilean Ministry of Justice.

- A delegation from the Mexican state of Nuevo León visited Santiago and La Serena on February 24-28 to observe Chile's criminal justice system. The mission was led and co-organized by Fundación RENACE A.B.P. Fifteen people participated in the activities, which included observing the operation of the Criminal Procedure Reform in La Serena, Chile. The principal goal of the activity was to boost the reform process in the state of Nuevo León. The delegation was comprised of members of all government branches and agencies involved in the reform, including the Judicial and Legislative Branches and the universities of this Mexican state. As a result of the visit, JSCA established ties with the members of the Mexican delegation and will likely visit the city of Monterrey to lend support for its reform process.

The local newspaper "El Día de la Serena" offered complete coverage of the visit. A total of three half-page articles were published with color photos in the paper's print and electronic editions (www.diarioeldia.cl). A brief article announcing the delegation's activities in Chile also appeared in the print and electronic editions of the newspaper "El Norte" in Nuevo León (see www.elnorte.com).

3.2 Gender and Criminal Procedure Reforms

- The JSCA has begun a new project that is focused on the degree to which gender issues have been affected by the criminal procedure reform processes. This new initiative is being undertaken in the Latin American countries that currently have processes in place to assess the effects of the reforms. The first stage aims to establish how the system resolves crimes that tend to affect women and children, particularly sex crimes and crimes that affect personal safety.

- Although this study has only been initiated in Chile, the goal is to expand it to other countries in the region. During the pilot stage, research will be carried out in the 2nd, 4th, 7th and 9th Regions in Chile, areas where the criminal procedure reform has been introduced in this country. Six different localities will be selected that represent a variety of different realities, taking into account factors such as locality (urban or rural), per capita income (higher or lower), the percentage of criminal cases where the victims are women and children and other factors, in order to ensure the applicability of the tools in different contexts. The goal of this stage is to have a statistical universe that is broad enough to allow for gathering and analyzing information

on the practices of different operators within the system, on relevant jurisprudence and on applicable norms.

- During the month of March, through the support and financing of the GTZ, the JSCA also began a project for evaluating Chile's experience in Women's Courts. These courts provide a mechanism for symbolically re-trying and ruling on key cases for women's rights. For these retrials, the Women's Court selects cases for which the State courts did not use international women's rights instruments or those in which a gender perspective has not been incorporated.

The goal of this project is to assess the experience of the Women's Courts, which is an activity carried out by the Institute for Women in Chile, and to analyze opportunities for promoting and enhancing this instrument with the aim of offering it in other countries in the Americas.

To this end two expert consultants carried out empirical research in Chile during the month of March. A meeting was held at JSCA headquarters on April 3 in order to analyze the results of the research. The GTZ and JSCA are working to complete the project in the next few months and plan to hold a regional Women's Court as a way of promoting this instrument further in the region.