1.6 Government

Colombia is a centralised state. Its present constitution, which dates back to 1886, states that the head of the national government is the President, elected by the people for a four-year period, with no prevision for re-election. The Colombian people have always voted for democracy and favoured the implementation of institutional government policies and reform. This has resulted in great political stability during the Twentieth century.

Ministers and Governors are appointed by the President, while Mayors are elected by the people since 1988.

The legislative branch of power is represented by Congress. Members of the Senate and of the Chamber of Representatives are elected by the people every four years. The judicial branch of power is represented by the Supreme Court of Justice.

A Constituent Assembly of seventy members was elected by popular vote in December 1990, empowered to make the constitutional reforms required to modernize the country's political institutions.

1.7. Economic and Industrial Development

Despite a large number of adverse conditions such as rapid population growth, poverty, inadequate distribution of income, unemployment, low productivity and a limited generation of capital, the economy has made substantial progress during the past 30 years. This progress is reflected in the increase of the per capita product which went from US$260 per year in 1960, to US$1.300 in 1990.

The international finance and cooperation agencies agree with the economic authorities of Colombia that although the country's real production has grown at a relatively slow pace, it has been exceptionally stable and balanced in the long run.

The perception was confirmed during the 1980's, when the debt crisis struck the Latin American economies causing a dramatic drop in production and employment throughout the region. Although the external sector of the Colombian economy suffered severe disadjustments between 1982 and 1985, the