

reform of the Municipal Code and of the Urban and Rural Development Council Act. Discussions were also continuing related to the establishment of the Office for the Defence of Indigenous Women's Rights. Difficulties were noted in gaining access to radio frequencies for indigenous cultural projects, in part because of problems related to making the market mechanism that governs the assignment of frequencies compatible with effective protection and promotion of indigenous cultures.

Concerning social and economic issues and the agrarian situation, the report notes that an increase in public investment is not only possible but necessary. The report refers to: fiscal policy and tax revenue; an increase in the coverage of basic social services and an improvement in regional and local economic and social infrastructure; intensification of de-concentration and decentralization of government services, especially in the education and health sectors; a more rational use of public resources and a strengthening of anti-corruption mechanisms; an increase in the participation of the general public and organized civil society in implementing social policies, in particular in the fields of education, health and rural development; and the need to complete the reform of the legal framework in order to define clearly the powers and duties of the public administration and the development activities to be carried out at the different levels and in the various parts of the country.

Concerning the participation of women, the report notes that women suffer from the highest rates of poverty, exclusion and discrimination at all levels. The National Policy for the Promotion and Development of Guatemalan Women and the Equal Opportunities Plan, 1997–2001 establishes a global strategy proposal with national coverage. Implementation of the National Policy will be closely monitored by the Mission. Referring to the work of the Women's Forum, the report notes that the Forum has become an inter-cultural forum for Guatemalan women with the objective of influencing public policies on comprehensive development and monitoring compliance with the commitments of the Peace Agreements. The need to establish a linkage between the Women's Forum and the implementation of the National Policy was recognized, as was the need to institutionalize the advances already achieved.

With regard to the agrarian situation and rural development, the report states that the formulation and full application of a comprehensive rural development policy is necessary in order to: define and implement the various government policies; formulate and execute programmes and projects sponsored by the international community; and promote more investment by the private sector so as to increase the quantity and quality of rural jobs. The Mission noted that, because of the restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture, there was a drastic decline in the institutional presence of the Ministry in some regions, creating a dangerous institutional vacuum and causing a disturbing decline in the services provided to farmers. The Mission recommended that steps be taken to, *inter alia*: move ahead with the formulation and implementation, by the state as a whole, of a comprehensive rural development policy; strengthen the participa-

tion of the various social actors in the organs set up to manage the sector; adopt the Land Trust Fund bill as soon as possible; draft the land registry and agrarian and environmental jurisdiction bills as quickly as possible; assign adequate funds from the national budget to the Presidential Unit for Legal Assistance and Dispute Settlement in Land Matters; involve the international community in efforts to combat rural poverty; and speed up the formulation and implementation of the package of natural resource conservation policies and measures and assign it sufficient financial resources.

The report notes progress and difficulties related to social development in such areas as: education; health care and health care coverage, vaccination programmes; housing and subsidies to the rural population, the legalization of urban squatter settlements; labour principles and policies; women's employment, labour justice proceedings, trade unions and the right to organize; and vocational training.

The report also addresses measures to strengthen civilian power and define the role of the armed forces, noting that the latter has been defined as being to defend the country's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Other areas considered are: the administration of justice, noting *inter alia*, high crime rates, the lack of public security, efforts to modernize the judiciary, the need to modernize the prison system, the establishment by law of the Public Defender's Office in Criminal Matters although no resources were provided for the functioning of the Office; public security, noting the lack of security remains one of the greatest concerns, inadequate guarantees for the enjoyment of fundamental rights such as the right to life, delays in the national deployment of the new National Civil Police (PNC), the need to upgrade training given to new police members and staff assigned to criminal investigation tasks, the apparent absence of an institutional policy to permit the gradual but sustained integration of members of the various ethnic groups into the police force, and the failure to implement the commitment to establish the Advisory Council on Security; information and intelligence, noting delays in establishing a Civil Intelligence Department and ratifying laws providing for parliamentary oversight of intelligence bodies, the establishment of the Strategic Analysis Secretariat, but the absence of a law regulating its functions and tasks; and the armed forces, noting that the Civic Service Act had not yet been submitted to Congress, steps had been taken to reduce the troop strength of the armed forces, and efforts had been made to integrate demobilized members of the armed forces into the labour force.

The report states that the adoption of constitutional amendments in such areas as the armed forces, the creation of an intelligence service, and professionalization of the judiciary, has become the central short-term aim of the peace process. Commentary is also provided on the work of the Electoral Reform Commission and its report entitled "Guatemala, peace and democracy". Efforts made to ensure the legal integration of the URNG are also described, both the progress made and the work that remains to be done.