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PROGRAMME



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OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Recommendation by the Executive Director

Assistance to the Government of Nicaragua

Support of a comprehensive population programme

Estimated UNFPA contribution:	\$ 4 million
Estimated value of the Government's contribution:	\$ 18.8 million
Duration:	Four years
Estimated starting date:	January 1980
Executing Agencies:	United Nations United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO)
Government Co-operating Agency:	Ministry of Planning

I. Summary

1. UNFPA proposes to assist the Government of Nicaragua with a basic population programme, in the amount of \$4 million, over a period of four years. The proposed programme is based on the findings and recommendations of a 1979 needs assessment mission that visited Nicaragua, and takes into account the Government's priorities, as well as the extraordinary conditions, following the recent events, prevailing in the country. The programme includes projects in the areas of basic data collection, population dynamics, maternal and child health and family welfare, population education, and the integration of women into development. UNFPA support will mainly provide technical assistance, some local expenses, training, and equipment.

II. Background

2. Nicaragua, a largely tropical country, which covers 130,000 square kilometres extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, has a population estimated in 1978 at 2.7 million. Population density is 21 persons per square kilometre, making Nicaragua the least densely populated country in Central America. The unevenly distributed population is sparse along the Atlantic coast, with 2.8 persons per square kilometre, and dense along the Pacific coast, with 67 persons. About 53.3 per cent of Nicaraguans live in urban areas.

3. The crude birth rate is about 46.6 thousand, and the crude death rate 12.2 per thousand. The annual rate of population growth is approximately 3.3 per cent, one of the highest and most steadily increasing rates in the region. In fact, the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) estimates an even higher rate of 3.6 per cent for 1978. About 44 per cent of Nicaraguan women are in the reproductive years of 15 to 49, while an estimated 48 per cent of the population are under 15 years of age. The dependency ratio is about 1,018 per thousand inhabitants.

4. Average life expectancy at birth is 55.2 years, although recent United Nations estimates indicate that this figure may, in fact, be considerably lower. The infant mortality rate for 1976-1977 was estimated at 121 per thousand live births. The principal causes of death in children, under one year of age, are diarrheal and bacterial diseases and tetanus infections.

5. The period of strikes and fighting that preceded the recent change in government greatly affected both agricultural production, especially of export crops like coffee and cotton, and industrial production. According to World Bank estimates, per capita gross national product was \$840 in 1978. A recent report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that 32.4 per cent of the work force suffered unemployment or underemployment in 1979, compared with 19.6 per cent for 1974-1978. The United Nations reports that per capita income is currently at the level of the early 1960's and that the economic repercussions of the conflict could last for at least another two years.

6. The Government's development programme is designed to meet emergency needs, affect short-term economic recovery, and to guide medium to long range economic and social development.

7. Although the Government was able by mid-1979 to ensure the supply and distribution of foods and medicine and to reestablish public utilities and services, the most important measures required to bring about short-term recovery include: restructuring the economy and determining the new character of the state; reorganizing the financial system; reactivating the country's productive capacity and generating foreign exchange; reconstructing physical damages resulting from the conflict and from the 1972 earthquake; and implementing social development programmes, particularly in the areas of education, health and housing. In this regard, one of the Government's first measures was to consolidate previously scattered health services, under the Ministry of Health, and to declare the free provision of such services. The Government's longer range objective is to formulate and implement a socio-economic development plan, aimed at improving the standard of living and quality of life of the population, by increasing production and distributing income more equitably. Among the priorities of this plan are the regulation and development of natural resources and energy, land reform, stimulation of the agricultural sector and of agro-industry, increased employment, reform of the educational system and regional development - especially in regard to the sparsely populated Atlantic coast.

8. Nicaragua has as yet no explicit population policy. While the Government does not expect to formulate one in the near future, it is providing family planning services.

9. UNFPA has assisted Nicaragua with several projects in recent years, for a total cumulative expenditure, through 1978, of \$450,255. Completed projects include: support for the publication of the 1971 census results (\$41,622); technical assistance in civil registration and statistics (\$60,816), and training in demography (\$86,133). More recently, UNFPA supported a demographic sample survey (1973-1979) of the rural and urban population (\$235,764 cumulative through 1978) and a project to improve social and demographic statistics (\$25,920 cumulative through 1978). In 1978, UNFPA approved \$350,000 for a project in population education and communication; this project, which is currently being revised according to the changed priorities of the Government, will be executed by UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. In 1979, as part of the United Nations response to the country's emergency needs, UNFPA approved \$314,400 for preparatory assistance to the maternal and child health/family planning project described below to cover the cost of international and local personnel, training, supplies and equipment.

10. Various United Nations agencies have helped Nicaragua meet its population-related emergency needs. In 1979 PAHO/WHO funded advisory and training services and medical supplies in the amount of \$594,000, and a further \$1.6 million has been allocated for similar in-puts in 1980-1981. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided \$600,000 in 1979 to supply health advisers, train health personnel and expand national programmes for immunization and the control of diarrhea. The World Food Programme sponsored a massive emergency distribution of food for mothers and children in the amount of \$2.3 million.

11. Bilateral assistance to Nicaragua has been provided by the United States for maternal and child health and family planning services.

12. Non-governmental assistance has been provided by the Pathfinder Fund, Family Planning International Assistance, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the Church World Service, Development Associates, Inc. and the Programme for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics.

III. The programme

13. Of all Latin American countries, Nicaragua is one of the least well prepared in the areas of demographic training, information, and analysis. 1/ The proposed projects in basic data collection and population dynamics will establish the technical and informational foundations for development planning at both the general and priority sectoral levels.

Basic data collection and analysis

14. UNFPA proposes providing approximately \$1.1 million for two projects in this area. The Government and UNFPA are finalizing details of the first project, while a proposal is still being formulated for the second.

15. Assistance with the 1982 census: The Government attaches the highest importance to the new census; its entire planning effort - especially in the priority sectors of education, health, employment, and housing - depends upon the census results. Previous censuses in Nicaragua, marred by deficient cartography, poor design of questionnaires and inadequate training and supervision of enumerators have produced unreliable data. Hence the comprehensive scope of the present project, which will follow the following stages: updating cartographic material, organizing a test run, conducting the census and assisting with the processing and publishing of the results. Project activities will also serve to reinforce the technical capacity of the staff at the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC). UNFPA assistance in the amount of \$1 million over three years will cover the cost of international consultants, census organization and data processing, local salaries, travel allowances, training and equipment. The United Nations will be the Executing Agency.

16. Modernization of the civil registration system: An amount of \$130,000 has been earmarked for this project, which will improve the civil registration system by: providing technical assistance and training to personnel at the National Institute of Statistics and Census, and establishing a mechanism to promote popular awareness, especially among mothers, of the importance of civil registration. The project is expected to be implemented in 1983.

Population dynamics

17. UNFPA anticipates supporting, in the amount of \$430,000, three projects in this area, two of which are still in the formulation stage of programming.

1/ Proposal for an Intensive Course in Demography, presented to UNFPA by the Government of Nicaragua, December 1979, Project Number NIG/79/P03.

18. Training in demography: UNFPA proposes allocating \$46,000 to train a cadre of medium-level technicians in demography and to help render Nicaragua self-sufficient in the preparation of such professionals; a ten-week intensive course in demography will be conducted during 1980 in collaboration with the Autonomous National University of Nicaragua. The course will train technical personnel to handle census data and to produce demographic in-put for incorporation into development planning. UNFPA assistance, over five months, will cover the cost of travel expenses for CELADE personnel; board supplements for course participants; and equipment, including a basic demographic library.

19. Establishment of a population unit: UNFPA proposes allocating an amount of \$180,000 for the creation of a "population unit" designed to increase Nicaragua's institutional capacity for demographic analysis and for incorporating demographic variables into economic and social development planning. This unit will probably be incorporated into the National Institute of Statistics and Census. UNFPA support, over two years, will primarily be in the provision of technical assistance and training.

20. Studies of migration: UNFPA will support studies on population migration and will formulate policy options for development planners. One such study will assess seasonal migration patterns and the demographic impact of the recent agrarian reform, which has already reduced rural labour mobility. Studies assessing alternative migration schemes are also likely to be included in the project. UNFPA funding, in the amount of \$204,000, will mainly support technical assistance for research and surveys. ILO will probably be the Executing Agency and the Ministries of Agriculture and Labour are expected to be the Government co-operating agencies.

Maternal and child health and family planning

21. Expansion of comprehensive services: In response to the Government's national health programme, and as a follow-up to the UNFPA assisted preparatory programme in maternal and child health and family planning, this project is designed to guarantee total health coverage for pregnant women and for infants and children under five years of age. It also seeks to expand such services to depressed urban and rural areas and to improve the quality of the services provided through operational research. The project thus represents a basic step in the Government's long-term goal of consolidating the national health system and in providing comprehensive health care to fertile women and to children under 15 years of age. Geographically limited in scope, the project will serve as a testing ground for the subsequent duplication and expansion of its various components through the entire health system. UNFPA proposes allocating an amount of \$900,000 for the first two years of the project; an additional \$660,000 is expected to be allocated for the two subsequent years. UNFPA funding, during the initial period, will cover the costs of health consultants, research, training and equipment; the project's training component, which is considerable, involves fellowships for the in-country training of auxiliary personnel in maternal and infant health and a series of courses, seminars, and workshops for continuous evaluation of the services provided and the methodologies used. The Ministry of Health will implement the project; WHO/PAHO will act as the Executing Agency.

Population education and communication

22. The objective of this project, which originally aimed at developing a population component for the national school curriculum, is now being modified, in accordance with the new Government's priorities. The Government is expected to identify the country's needs in population education, in consultations with grass roots organizations. UNFPA has approved \$245,000 for the first two years of this project, which the Ministry of Education will implement and UNESCO will execute.

Special programmes

23. UNFPA proposes allocating \$550,000 for several projects, all still in the formulation stage, to promote the role of women in the nation's population and economic development programmes. These projects, part of an integrated programme, will be directed towards Government officials, as well as towards the general population. They will aim at improving the health and welfare of women and children, at incorporating women into economic activities and at ending sex discrimination through child care, population and family life education, vocational training and the provision of employment opportunities, and communication facilities.

Administrative arrangements

24. All external assistance for population projects will be channelled through the Ministry of Planning, while the implementation of the funded projects will be the responsibility of each relevant Government agency.

25. UNFPA's proposed assistance to Nicaragua, by category and year, is as follows:

	<u>1980</u> \$	<u>1981</u> \$	<u>1982</u> \$	<u>1983</u> \$	<u>Total</u> \$
Data collection and analysis	504 000	320 000	176 000	120 000	1 120 000
Population dynamics	46 000	75 000	105 000	204 000	430 000
Maternal and child health and family planning	495 000	500 000	350 000	310 000	1 655 000
Information, education and communication	160 000	85 000	-	-	245 000
Special programmes	<u>50 000</u>	<u>100 000</u>	<u>200 000</u>	<u>200 000</u>	<u>550 000</u>
	1 255 000	1 080 000	831 000	834 000	4 000 000

26. The status of programming at the time of writing was as follows:

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
Formulated	255 000	85 000	-	-	340 000
Pending	950 000	820 000	176 000	-	1 946 000
Foreseen	50 000	175 000	655 000	834 000	1 714 000
					<u>4 000 000</u>

IV. Recommendation

27. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the four year programme in Nicaragua (1980-1983), in the amount of \$4 million; and

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to allocate the funds and to make the appropriate arrangements with the Government of Nicaragua and the Executing Agencies.

