

PARTNERS COLOMBIA NEWSLETTER JULY – SEPTEMBER 2010

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IN LA GUAJIRA BEGAN THE PROJECT “STRENGTHENING THE RIGHTS OF THE WAYUU”

Approximately 100 people, Wayúu Indigenous Authorities, *Palabrer*os, representatives of indigenous organizations, community leaders, local and regional institutions officials and the general community, were present at the launch of the project: “Strengthening the Rights of the Wayúu”, event that was held in Riohacha on September 20th, organized by Partners Colombia in association with the Ethnic Groups and Access to Justice Offices of the Ministry of Interior and Justice (MIJ), the National Indigenous Organization (ONIC), the Secretary of Indigenous Affairs of the Department of La Guajira and the local Indigenous Organization, Akuaipa Waimakat.

The event was chaired by Judhy Velazquez, director of MIJ’s Access to Justice Office, Pedro Posada, director of MIJ’s Ethnic Groups Office, Patrick Morales of the Intangible Heritage Office of the Ministry of Culture, Armando Valbuena on behalf of ONIC, Reynaldo Velazquez, Secretary of Indigenous Affairs of Uribia, Redondo Nayeb, Secretary of Indigenous Affairs of Manaure, Edicto Barroso, Wayúu *Palabrer*o, Esther Sanchez, project’s legal Anthropologist adviser and Oscar Gaitan, director of Partners Colombia, and was held at the Annas Mai’s Convention Center. Its main purpose was to present officially to the Wayúu community, local, regional and national institutions, the objectives, goals and strategies of the two-year-project, that seeks to promote through dialogue and consultation, the creation of an Indigenous Rights School and a Victims Assistance Clinic.

During the ceremony, a tribute was paid, according to the Wayúu customs, to two indigenous leaders murdered, Idalmis Donoso and Jairo Pushaina, whose social actions were committed to the protection and preservation of the Wayúu culture and the promotion of an Indigenous Rights School.

Both Indigenous Authorities and *Palabrer*os, and representatives of about 30 Wayúu organizations from different regions of the peninsula of La Guajira, expressed their interest in participating in the project and expressed their support to work together to achieve the expected results. Likewise, government institutions expressed their support and commitment to the development of the project.

2010 HOUSTON SERIES CONFERENCE

Next wednesday, October 13th at 3:00pm, it will be held at Partners Colombia facilities, a meeting with the Technical Committee of the 2010 Houston Series Conference. Its purpose is to define the agenda of the event, which is currently titled "TENURE AND LAND USE IN COLOMBIA: FROM CONFLICT TO POVERTY"; additionally the Committee will define the speakers and guests suggested.

The 2010 Series will be held from December 3rd to 5th in the city of Medellin and will take place at the Museum of Antioquia, the Plaza Mayor Convention Center and Hotel Intercontinental. The event expects the traditional support of the United States Ambassador, Peter Michael McKinley and the Colombian President, Juan Manuel Santos.

ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE IN EQUITY REFORM

In July, it was formally launched the USAID' Access to Justice Program, which will be implemented by Management Sciences for Development (MSD) and will focus on strengthening and improving access to formal and informal judicial services, reducing impunity, particularly for citizens living in the priority areas of the Colombian Strategic Development Initiative. Within this program, Partners Colombia has the responsibility to conduct an study on the National Program of Justice Houses, and implement activities related to the component of Alternative Mechanisms for Conflict Resolution (ADR), among which are counted: promoting public policy on issues of Justice in Equity, implement Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in 20 municipalities, support the Ministry of Interior and Justice, develop a curriculum to train litigators in arbitration, among others.

In advance of the evaluation activity of ADR in equity, it was held on September 7th at *Universidad Santo Tomás*, a workshop focused on the identification of pathways, partnerships and creating spaces for dialogue to promote greater interaction and institutional coordination, better and more prompt response to justice community needs by strengthening public policy of ADR.

The workshop was preceded by representatives of USAID, the Access to Justice Office of the Ministry of Interior and Justice, MSD and Partners Colombia; and was attended by representatives of the Mediation Centers of the Chambers of Commerce, of the guilds of judicial equity, academia and organizations that promote and support justice in equity, resulting in an interest agreed to reorient public policy ADR in Colombia.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Partners Colombia is pleased to announce the addition of a fifth member to its Board, is Dr. Hernando Herrera Mercado, a lawyer of the Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario' Law Faculty, specializing in the areas of "International Relations" and "Negotiation" at the Universidad de Los Andes. Herrera Mercado has served as Private and General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Law, as Adviser of the National Constituent Assembly and the Special Legislative Commission. He is currently an arbitrator and litigator in several areas of law.

