



***Dialogue Process on Chronic Renal Insufficiency
Facilitator's Summary
December 2, 2009***

1. Background

On December 2, 2009, a new dialogue meeting took place in the city of León, convened by the Office of the Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman of the World Bank Group (CAO), with the participation of Nicaragua sugar Estates Limited (NSEL) and the Chichigalpa Association for Life (ASOCHIVIDA in Sp.), for the purpose of finding options for solutions to the problem of Chronic Renal Insufficiency (CRI).

This meeting was held according to the guidelines established in the Dialogue Framework Agreement, proposed by CAO on November 20, 2008, to which NSEL and ASOCHIVIDA have separately adhered. According to point 6 of said Agreement, the dialogue meetings shall be centered on and limited to:

a) Identifying and addressing the causes of CRI. The Subscribers agree to define, jointly, the criteria and principles necessary to perform a Study that will identify the causes of CRI, the results of which shall be transparent and reliable for all and shall provide feasible solutions.

- i) Expected results: An Agreement on the criteria and principles that shall guide the Study. An Agreement to abide by the results of the Study and the options for a solution to the problem.

b) Options to support the local communities where there is a prevalence of CRI. Out of good will and without any legal obligation, the subscribers agree to seek ways to relieve the situation of the families affected by CRI, involving local resources and State institutions.

- i) Expected result: Relief for the situation of families affected by CRI.

2. Objective of the meeting

The dialogue meeting was aimed at agreeing on the following necessary steps for the implementation of the study on causes, according to the proposal submitted by Boston University once their study on scope has been concluded.

3. Advancements

Point 6.a of the framework agreement: Identify and address the causes of CRI.

After receiving the comments from expert advisors, Boston University submitted the results of their initial study on scope to the participants in the dialogue round-table meeting, at bilateral meetings. The executive summary of the study is available to public access and the full report may be consulted as of December 18, 2009.



As a main conclusion, the study establishes that so far nobody knows for sure what the cause of CRI is, now denominated Chronic Renal Disease (CRD). There exist many hypotheses that shall be studied by BU, among which are: the use of agrochemicals, depletion of volume (similar to dehydration), muscle damage, systemic infections, heavy metals, uranium, aristolochic acid, medicines, general consumption of alcohol, consumption of *guaro lija* (a type of homemade alcohol), renal lithiasis, structural renal disease, diabetes, hypertension, nephritis, infections of the urinary tract and genetics. The possibility shall also be studied that two or more of these factors, acting jointly, might cause the disease. To this end, BU shall perform the following activities: environmental sampling (soil and water), biological sampling (mainly blood and urine), observations at work, a study of cohorts of the employees at Ingenio (Sugar mill) San Antonio, a revision of medical files, determination of urinary protein in teen-agers and renal biopsies of deceased persons. Complementary activities are also proposed. Although the total duration of the study is forecast as two years and three months, the activities shall be designed in such a way that BU may provide some answers as they advance, since some of these hypotheses may be discarded or confirmed faster than others. For the full information on this subject please consult the study document that has been placed at the disposal of ASOCHIVIDA and NSEL.

Both ASOCHIVIDA and NSEL have expressed their acceptance of the technical proposal of BU and are willing to continue to the next stage. The company reiterates its commitment to offer BU full access to the files, facilities and laboratory to perform any observation or taking of samples, as they deem convenient.

As to the participation of NSEL and ASOCHIVIDA in this study, it is agreed that BU needs freedom to perform the study with independence. BU is committed to keep CAO and the Dialogue round table frequently informed on their progress and shall request their opinion where necessary. As an example, at the time of making environmental samplings it shall be important to count on the suggestions of ASOCHIVIDA and NSEL to decide where they will take place. However, the final decision shall be BU's. In other words, BU shall be at the service of the Dialogue round table, but not under their control.

The development of this study may require an important amount of economic resources and its financing should guarantee the independence of researchers. So far, CAO, ASOCHIVIDA and NSEL have invested human and economic resources on the advancement of the dialogue process. CAO is willing to provide additional financing, but it will probably not be enough to cover all the costs of the process. Therefore, the dialogue round table agrees to seek additional resources from other sources, as diverse as possible. The table accepts and is thankful for the possibility that the sugar sector may contribute resources, inasmuch as they do not imply any condition for the work of Boston University. For this purpose, it is agreed that all additional resources should be given to CAO, the only organization that shall maintain a financial connection with BU, as they have up to now.

BU shall appoint a person of their team to work very frequently in Nicaragua and shall appoint a local scientist as collaborator, to participate in the planning of the study and supervise the work when the Boston team is not present in the country. BU considers that the requirements for that position are: i) scientific training; ii) experience in research; iii) it is desirable that the person should have an understanding of CRI; iv) a capacity to communicate fluently in English; v) an ability to



maintain neutrality, objectivity, confidentiality and confidence. It is agreed that the decision to hire this person shall be exclusively of BU and that ASOCHIVIDA and NSEL shall have the opportunity to make their opinion known on eventual candidates.

As next steps we plan open meetings in Managua and León to present the results of the work done by BU, as well as the plans for the complete study. CAO shall also continue to seek a high-level meeting at MINSA to ensure that the authorities are fully informed and that this dialogue process may count on their cooperation.

Point 6.b of the Framework Agreement: Options to support the local communities where there is a prevalence of CRI.

This point was not dealt with this time at the dialogue table, but was the subject of informal conversations to follow up on the outstanding points concerning food aid. NSEL reported that with ANF there is progress obtaining donations of medicines and reactives from abroad and that, although there are good prospects, it is not yet possible to confirm this possibility. Therefore they committed themselves to inform the dialogue table as soon as they have new results.

4. Next steps

In CAO's opinion, the next steps in this dialogue process should be oriented to:

Point 6.a of the Framework Agreement: Identify and address the causes of CRI.

- Between December 3 and 4, BU and CAO shall make public presentations of the study to inform on the progress so far and on the next steps planned.
- CAO shall formalize the contract with BU to complete the study. To this end, they shall send to ASOCHIVIDA and NSEL a draft on the terms of reference, to receive their comments.
- Once the contract has been signed, BU shall immediately start planning the study and shall pay a new visit to Nicaragua to analyze the feasibility of certain activities.

Point 6.b of the Framework Agreement

- ASOCHIVIDA and CAO shall work jointly to follow up on the implementation of points outstanding in the agreements achieved in April and shall communicate with NSEL for any additional necessary proceedings.
- On December 3, CAO has planned to interview four candidates for the position of consultant that shall advise ASOCHIVIDA on the elaboration of projects. The decision shall be made by December 5.

Juan Dumas
Dialogue Facilitator