

**[For Public Release]**

**World Bank Inspection Panel  
Colombia  
Cartegena Water Supply, Sewerage and Environmental Management Project  
November 8, 2005**

We thank the Inspection Panel team for its very thorough report and Management for its effective response, and welcome the Colombian government's support of the proposed action plan. This project highlights the problems and issues that are raised by undertakings designed to improve the environment and urban living conditions. While the project will undoubtedly improve sanitation in Cartagena for many people, including poorer segments of the population, it also poses concerns and potential risks for others.

The Panel's findings indicate inadequacies regarding the social assessment and the communications strategy. While Management presents convincing evidence regarding the expected benign effects of the submarine outfall, insufficient attention to the concerns about damage to fisheries and inadequate communications with the North Zone communities have led to opposition to the project.

We agree with Management that the villages in the North Zone should be included as beneficiaries and should not be compensated for the mere existence of the project. However, it appears that there was initial confusion as to whether the North Zone communities were in fact included as beneficiaries. Furthermore, it seems clear that villagers remain concerned about threats to their livelihoods. We therefore support Management's proposals to assure public consultations on an updated emergency plan and to improve the outreach strategy of the implementing agency.

We believe Management should provide an update on the extension of water supply and sewage network to the North Zone communities, which are most closely affected by the treatment plant and marine outfall, including information on whether ACUACAR has designated funds for extending the sewage network.

To alleviate community concerns and build public support, monitoring of water quality must be rigorous and transparent. While there is a professional consensus that the submarine outfall poses little risk, the people bearing the risk need to be convinced. We believe Management should provide a report within six months regarding public consultations on the updated emergency plan, the status of water and sewage public works in the North Zone, the fisheries study and program to improve fishing activities, and the water quality monitoring plan.