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Observations on the work of the International  
Labour Office in Colombia

Report  
by  
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In-Plant Training Programme  
(UNDP/SF project COL 26)

The In-Plant training programme was the only activity of the ILO into which I looked during my recent tour of inspection in Colombia.

2. The Colombian counterpart agency for this project is the National Apprenticeship Service (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje - SENA) and the operation is generally referred to in Colombia as SENA III, arising as it does out of phases I and II of the general industrial training programme, the UN references for which were COL 1 and COL 11. Unfortunately, COL 26, although formally declared operational in December 1967, has not so far produced the outstandingly happy results of its predecessors. In fact, a series of misfortunes of leadership and recruitment have resulted in misunderstandings and some loss of confidence on the Colombian side; more than half the planned project time has now elapsed with little more accomplished than preparatory work.

3. I hope that the nadir of this project's fortunes has now been passed. Towards the end of my month's stay in Colombia, after a long interregnum, the newly appointed Project Manager arrived with a brief that should enable him, with exercise of his obvious tact and diplomacy, to get the project under way at last in an atmosphere of mutual confidence. It seems very probable that any discrepancy of views on aims or methods between the three parties to the operation - SENA, ILO and UNDP - is minor and capable of adjustment within the general framework of the existing plan of operations.

4. Two points are worthy of special stress. In the first place, the counterpart agency is a solidly established organisation eminently capable of making this project run once the signals are down. Secondly, the object of the exercise is right on the main line of Colombian progress. However, when - and I am sufficiently optimistic to write when rather than if - when the all-clear is given, a very great effort will be

required. Two years have been if not exactly wasted at least not used to the greatest advantage. On the Colombian side, a most important point will be the provision of a good corps of first-class counterpart "links" who will remain with the project long enough to give it the full benefit of their services. On the UN side, the equipment delivery programme is badly behind schedule, some degree of re-arrangement of the timing of experts' services will be required, rapid improvisation may be called for and a general willingness to cut red tape and corners will probably be desirable. I think it not unlikely that more time and money will prove necessary. If so, this is part of the price to be paid for bad luck, but it should be paid willingly if it is surely for the advancement of a project with such promising potential.

#### Summary of Recommendations

1. That a close look be taken at the reasons for existing delays in the delivery of equipment and that the watchword of the relaunched project be Efficiency and Flexibility (Para.4)
2. That the need to extend the project be regarded as a possibility (also Para. 4).