

### 1. The Republic of Guatemala

Guatemala is the most septentrional country of Central America, it is located between the parallels 13°44' and 18°30' of Northern Latitude and the meridians 87°30' and 92°13' of western longitude. Borders North and West with Mexico, North with the Pacific Ocean and East with El Salvador, Honduras and the Atlantic Ocean. Its territorial extension is of 108,889 Km<sup>2</sup>. Its location on the narrow strip which joins the continental masses of the Americas, as well as its topographic relief, give the country an enormous diversity of climatic regions.

A journey in Guatemala takes the visitor in a few minutes from the lush vegetation of the warm low lands zone to the cold of the pine forests. Most of the estimated ten million Guatemalans live in the valleys of the mountainous regions, in the center of the country, where the climate is temperate. This is the region of lakes and volcanoes for which Guatemala is known throughout the world.

In this small country, the ancient Maya civilization had its heyday in the first millenium of our calendar. In 1523, the Spaniard Pedro de Alvarado, sent by Hernán Cortés, launched the conquest of Guatemala. With the cruel destruction and subjugation of the Quiche, Kakchikel and Tzutujil lords, the colonial era opened in 1524. The period saw an impressive cultural development experienced by few other places in the New World. In 1821, Guatemala and Central America declared their Independence from Spain. Since then, many dictatorships have alternated with a few democratic periods. But, starting in 1985, Guatemala began a new process in its history, in search of peace and democracy.

Over half of the population is made up of 22 Maya groups, the most numerous of which are the Quiche, Kakchikel, Mam and Kekchi. The mestizos, or "ladinos", product of the biological and cultural mix between native Guatemalans and Europeans, make up less than half the population, including the Garifunas, of Afro-West Indian stock, and some Europeans. Although the official language is Spanish, each Maya group and the Garifunas speak their own language.

In Guatemala, freedom of worship is guaranteed in the constitution. The country is mostly Catholic, although there are many Protestant denominations. Maya rites and worship are preserved, particularly in the rural communities.

Around two thirds of the country are made up of mountain chains, among of which is The Sierra Madre, crossing the country from East to West, originating three hydrographic sheds (Caribbean, Pacific and Gulf of Mexico), with a superficial hydrological system, divided in 24 hydrographic basins. The land strip that runs parallel to the pacific shoreline is particularly fertile, mainly because of the volcanic origin of its soils and the abundance of hydric resources, outstanding its agricultural vocation. The Northern Plains are relatively large in extension and the actual use of land goes from pasture lands to tropical forests.

### **1.1 Political and Administrative Organization**

Politically, Guatemala is a free, sovereign and independent country, with a republican, democratic and representative government. The people delegates its sovereign in the Legislative, Judicial and Executive organisms, through popular elections. Administratively, the country is divided in twenty two departments or provinces, which are also divided into three hundred thirty municipalities, ran by governors and majors, respectively.

### **1.2 Executive Power**

The Executive organism is directed by the Constitutional President and a Vice-President. From that level the power is divided into 14 ministries and secretariats, each one in charge of an specific area of public administration.

- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Livestock
- Ministry of Communications, Transport and Housing
- Ministry of Culture and Sports
- Ministry of Defense
- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Energy
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance
- General Secretariat of the Republic
- Private Secretariat of the Republic of Guatemala
- Secretariat of Public Relations of the Presidency of the Republic (Press Office)

### **1.3 Legislative power**

The Legislative Organism is composed of congressmen democratically elected by the people, whom have the constitutional right to make national decisions. Although Guatemala reached its independence in 1821, due to profound political changes, it has had several constitutions. The one currently in effect was written and published in 1985 by a popularly elected Constitutional Assembly.

### **1.4 Judicial Power**

The maximum authority of this organism is the Supreme Court of Justice. All members are elected by the National Congress and appointed for a six year period.

The Judicial Power is in charge of the exercise of justice at national level, for that purpose it has established courts of justice nationwide.

All three powers are totally independent one from another, which guarantees the state of justice and democracy.

### **1.5 Local Empowerment**

As to exercise power towards the hegemony, equality in terms of access to development opportunities and consolidation of democracy, the Republic of Guatemala supports the local empowerment in a diversity of levels.

#### **1.5.1 Governorships**

A governor is appointed for each department (province), directly by the president, and becomes his personal representative at that level. Although governors do not exercise direct power, they are indeed facilitators of development by the knowledge of the local environment and the direct communication with the highest authority. Currently governors play an important role as coordinators of the Urban and Rural Development Councils at departmental and regional levels.

### 1.5.2 Municipalities

Municipios are ran directly by majors whom are popularly elected by the people, they perform technical and administrative tasks, along with the Municipal Council (5 to 9 members from different political parties).

Municipalities are usually in charge of water supply, garbage disposal and other urban infrastructure. In order to support their development initiatives, the Central Government distributes 10% of the national budget among the 330 municipalities, proportionally to their population. On the other hand, they generate own funds from services provided to the community and from municipal taxations.

As a result of the peace accords, the Central Government has established the Urban and Rural Development Councils at municipal, departmental and regional levels, among which distributes 10% of the Value Added Tax (currently 10% over gross sales).

Municipalities have found a way to cover all the villages and communities in their area of influence, by an innovative system of auxiliary majors, selected by every village and whose authority is recognized by municipal, civil and military sectors.

## 1.6 Population

The Guatemalan society is divided in two main groups with cultural and social differences: indigenous and ladinos (non indigenous). The total population is estimated in 10.61 Million inhabitants<sup>1</sup>. During the last decade it has increased at a rate of one million inhabitants every four years. In 1990 the growth rate was 2.9%, one of the highest in the world. The departments of Petén, Izabal, Alta Verapaz, Huehuetenango and Sololá have a population growth rate above 3%, while Zacapa and Chiquimula (traditionally non indigenous areas) are below 2%.

The average population density is 89.4 inhabitants per square kilometer, however it is not homogeneous countrywide. The departments with the higher density are Guatemala, Chimaltenango, Sololá, Totonicapán and Quiché.

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<sup>1</sup> Estrada, JM. PAFC/FAO 1998

Most of the Guatemalan population live in the rural areas (61.8%). The remaining 38.2% lives in urban areas, among which Guatemala City is the largest in the country.

## 1.7 Social organization

As in most parts of the world, in Guatemala the family is the basic and most important social group. Family is the priority for every individual, far beyond his personal longing, his duties and obligations. This fact makes the Guatemalan rural society quite difficult to understand, specially when compared with others in Europe and Asia, for whom their duty with the society is a priority. Another important aspect to take into consideration is that the rural family is usually a patriarchal nucleus. The head of the family is in charge of supplying all the needs of his woman and children, as they are to obey him and accept his decisions.

However, an important fact is that according to the Mayan cosmovision, a man is never complete unless he has a wife to support him. This belief confirms the importance of women in the indigenous society. In fact, all men in decision-making positions at community level must have a wife and children, otherwise they are ineligible since they are considered incomplete in terms of wisdom and maturity.

There are tremendous differences between indigenous and non indigenous communities, specially in terms of social organizations, for instance indigenous people are highly gregarious, therefore it is quite common to observe small groups gathered to share common interests. In a typical village of 100 inhabitants in the central or western highlands of Guatemala would be common to find 8 or 10 different committees (potable water, access road, school construction, etc). Based on this, a head of family could easily belong to two or three different committees.

On the other hand, non indigenous people from the south or east coast are highly individualist, even if they share common interests with neighbors or friends, therefore is very difficult to find rural committees.

The gregarious sense of indigenous villagers offers a unique advantage for rural development, since the identification of needs and prioritization of activities becomes an easy task in the participative rural appraisal, as well as in the implementation process.

### 1.8 Gender

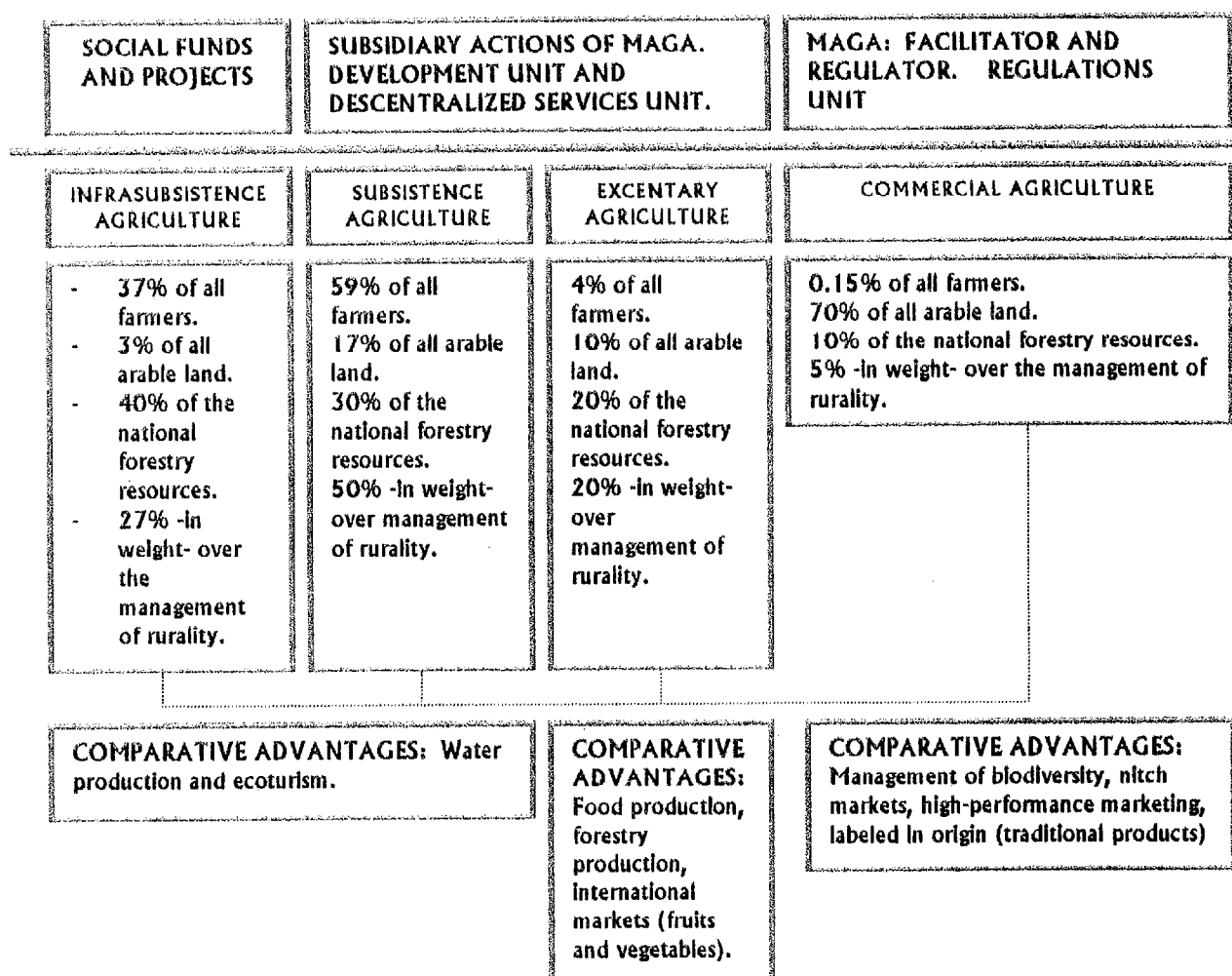
Gender issues have been introduced in the Guatemalan rural society through various international organizations. Several of them have supported the integration of gender focus as a condition to release funds, which has provoked a misunderstanding of such initiative as a feminist attempt to take control of production factors.

From an objective point of view, although gender issues add equity to the development process, in most rural areas of Guatemala it is proven that they are not a condition nor an ineludible attribute of success. Forcing the introduction of gender in rural areas –specially indigenous communities- would be highly contraindicated due to the solid cultural and social patterns that define the duties, responsibilities and rights of all family members.

### 1.9 Land tenure

Land tenure scheme is one of the most important social constraints in Guatemala. Although it is not politically nor technically convenient to implement a land reform at this point, since there would not be enough land for all people, the current distribution scheme is by itself an important issue. The following table shows the current classification of farmers as per the volume of their production and the land tenure issues, as well as the –different- support initiatives.

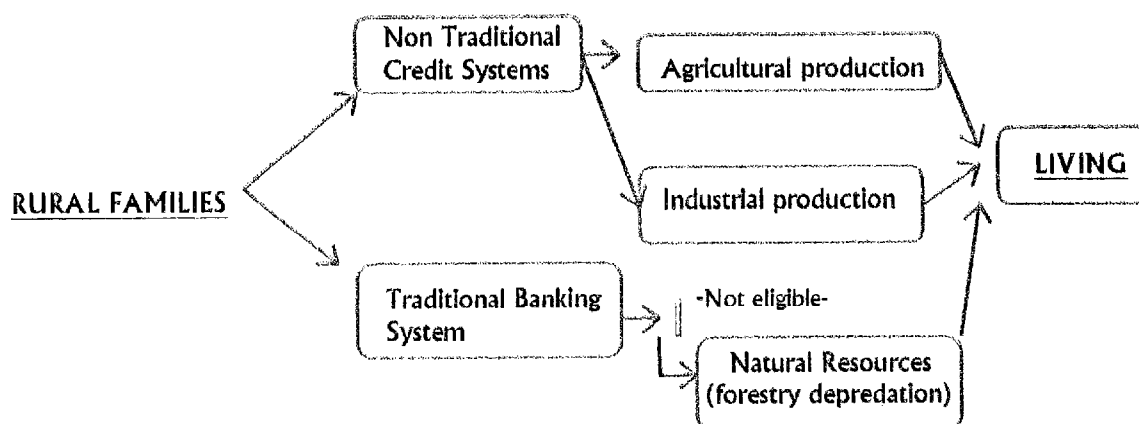
Table 1. Policy Functioning Frame (Ministry of Agriculture).



Based in this table, it is quite easy to observe the contradictions in land distribution, but perhaps at this point the most important problem is not land distribution, but land titling. It is known than less that 20% of all land in the country has registered title, the rest is clearly in fact possession, although most people in the rural areas have inherited it from their ancestors.

The Central Government is currently initiating the implementation phase of a catastro project, which intends to register all lands within the next ten or fifteen years. Meanwhile the owners of such farms are not eligible for loans from the traditional banking system, putting pressure on the natural resources.

Chart No.1 Alternative "living pathways".

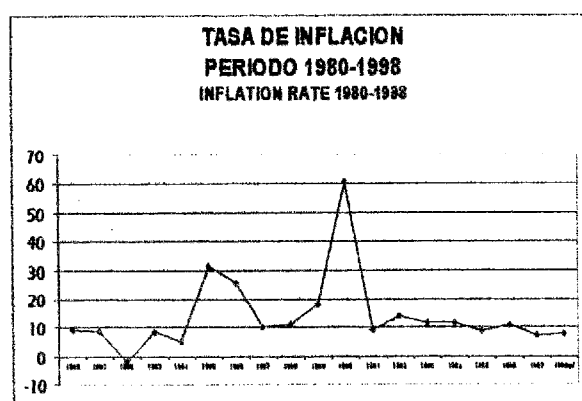
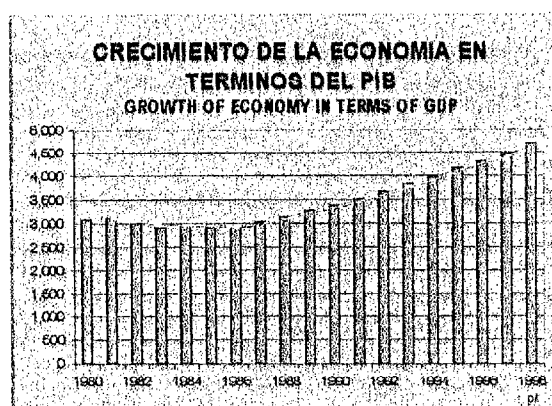


Based upon the chart show above, It is easy to understand the reason for an annual loss of 80,000 hectares of tropical and sub tropical forest, with the obvious environmental consequences. But the consequences are not only for the environment, but for the quality of life of the rural families, whom invaded by desperation fall in the hands of "non profit" organizations.

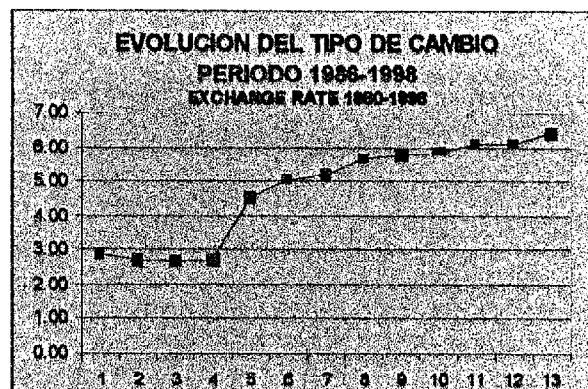
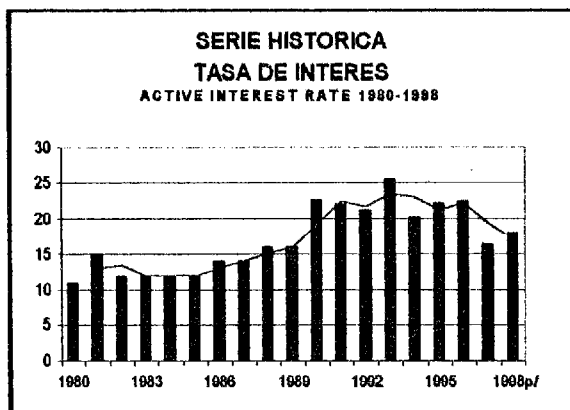
Some of these NGO 's would give loans to small farmers, without the need for land titles, but in most cases the annual interest rate reaches 28 or 30%, taking away the possibilities of success in the productive activity.

### 1.10 Economy

During the last 5 years, Guatemala has recovered the growth path of the past. The national economy is growing at 4.5% per year, the inflation rate is below 10% and the exchange rate is quite stable at Q.7.70 x US\$.1.00.





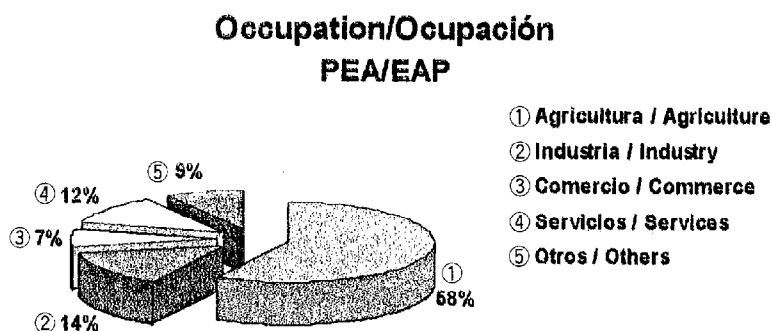


The above mentioned indicators add certain attractive to the export business, based upon which several Korean textile factories have settled in the country. On the other hand, the non traditional agricultural exports (mainly high value fruits and vegetables) has increased from 86.2 U.S.\$ Million in 1988 to 320.9 U.S.\$ Million in 1997, with the joint effort of small and medium size farmers and export companies, with the common interest of expanding their markets.

Another source of financial stability and credibility has been the privatization of the National Telephone Company (TELGUA), the Guatemalan Electrical Company (EEGSA); The National Railway (FEGUA); together with the diversification of electrical generation.

However, the agricultural sector is still the major consumer of workmanship and the major source of income for the country. Graph No.2 shows the comparative consumption of workmanship among the most important economic sectors.

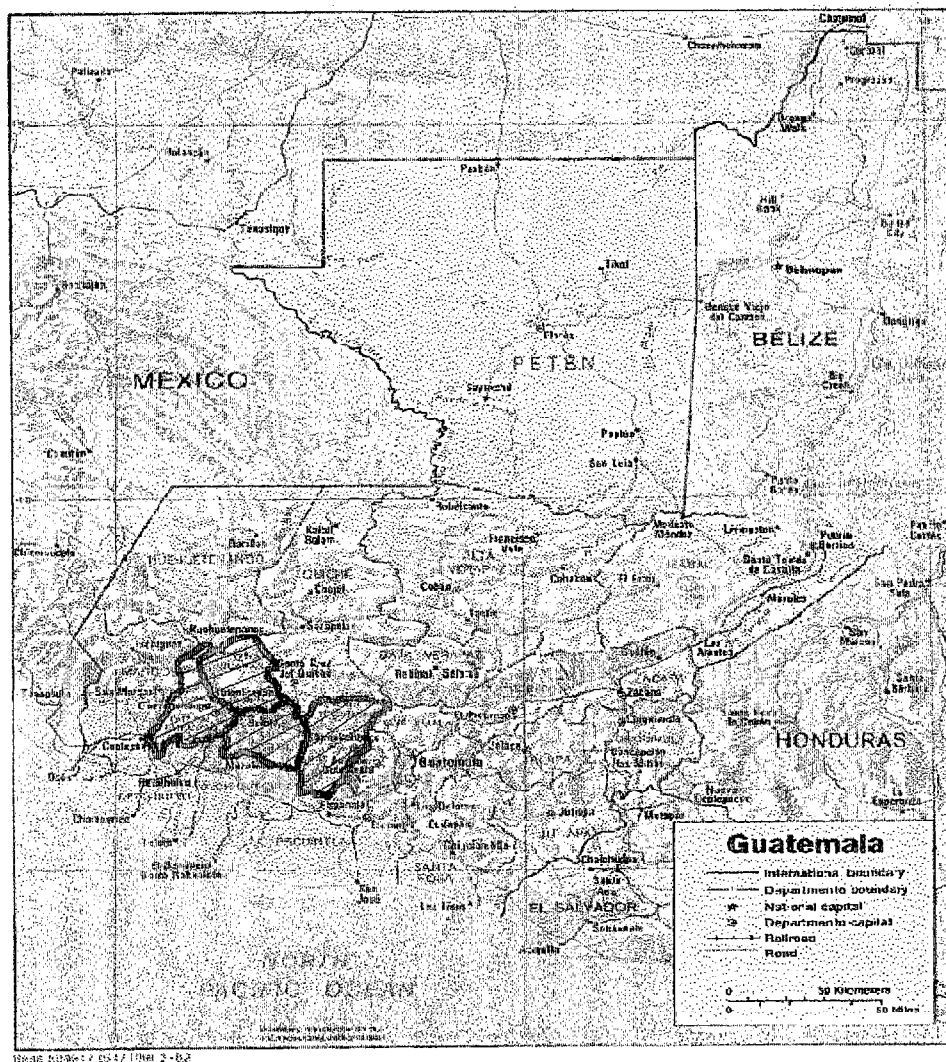
Graph. No.2



As the graph shows, the most important sector, from the social point of view, is agriculture, with 58% of the EAP (Economically Active Population). Industry is in the expansion phase, together with services, adding a total of 26% of the EAP.

The economic indicators shown above provide a clear view of the Guatemalan economy and its perspectives for the short and medium term. A current priority for the government is to improve the business environment for the attraction of foreign investments as a necessary step towards the modernization of industry, the mass generation of income and a fair society with equal opportunities for all, as a country commitment.

## THE STUDY AREA



## II. THE STUDY AREA

The study area comprehends the departments of Chimaltenango, Sololá, Quetzaltenango and Totonicapán, all of them situated in the central highlands of Guatemala and with specific physiographical, environmental and cultural characteristics.

### CHIMALTENANGO

Chimaltenango is characterized by its broken earth, deep ravines, beautiful valleys, and extensive plains. The Panamerican Highway runs through this department of mild climate which sits on a high mountain plateau of the Sierra Madre. The capital city of this department, in which Ixchímé and Mixco Viejo are located, is Chimaltenango.



## **SOLOLA**

Located in the western part of the nation, Sololá is characterized by its Indigenous folklore and traditions. Under clouds and volcanoes, the Tzutuhil and the Cakchiquel, ethnic groups of Mayan descent, carry on with their traditional Indigenous culture. Handicrafts, especially fabric-making, are their principal industry. The capital of the Sololá department is the city by the same name.

## **QUETZALTENANGO**

In the nation's Southwest, extending from the cold altiplano to the hot Pacific Coast, is the department of Quetzaltenango, famous for having the oldest colonial buildings in the nation, as it was here that the first conquistadores settled. This lovely department also stands out for its impressive and varied geography; numerous volcanoes, hot springs, valleys, mountains, and rivers allow for the production of an assortment of crops like coffee, wheat, and vegetables as well as for cattle and sheep raising.

## **TOTONICAPAN**

Because this is one of the highest departments of the country, it is also one of the coldest. The beautiful religious and civic buildings preserved here coupled with the fact that the inhabitants of the area still carry out religious rituals passed down from their ancestors make Totonicapán one of the main draws for tourism. The department capital is Totonicapán.

## 2.1 STATISTICAL FACTS OF CHIMALTENANGO

INDEX	FIGURE
TOTAL AREA OF CHIMALTENANGO	1979 Km <sup>2</sup>
MAIN TOWN:	City of Chimaltenango
LOCATION:	14°39' 38"N - 90°49' 10"W
ELEVATION:	1800.17m.o.s.l
TEMPERATURE RANGE:	12.1 – 23.7 °C
AVERAGE ANNUAL PRECIPITATION:	1,587.7mm

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY WITH RESPECT TO EAP (Economically Active Population)	
Private Sector	35.0%
Self employed	45.4%
Government employee	3.7%
Employers	0.2%
Family (without pay)	15.7%

NON ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION	
Household work	57.2%
Students	39.0%
Retired	1.6
Other	2.2%

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH BASIC SERVICES	
Drinking water	79.1%
Electric energy	60.9%
Drainage	26.5%
Drinking water, drainage, and electricity	24.9%

HOUSEHOLD COOKING FUEL	
Firewood	84.7%
Propane gas	13.7%
Electricity	0.5%
Kerosene	0.3%
Charcoal	0.2%
Other	0.6%

### 2.1.1 BASIC INFORMATION

Chimaltenango (City of Shields in Kakchiquel), is located in the central highlands of Guatemala, its main town (also called Chimaltenango), is 52 kilometers west of Guatemala city.

This department borders North with Quiché, South with Escuintla; East with Guatemala and Sacatepéquez, and West with Suchitepéquez, Sololá and Quiché.

The occupation of the Cakchiquel Territory began on the year 1800 BC, during the preclassic period (2000BC-250AC). However, such occupants cannot be addressed as Cakchiqueles, since this language separated from Quiché in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. There have been found several archaeological sites from the early classic period (250-500AC) in Chimaltenango as well as in Sacatepéquez. During the late classic period (500-900AC) the population increased considerably, until the late post classic period (1200-1500AC), when they covered all the area that is currently in their possession. Is at that time when they can be addressed as Cakchiqueles.

Chimaltenango is still an eminently Cakchiquel region, with fertile valleys cultivated by small and medium farmers involved in the production of non traditional export crops, such as snow peas (mangetout), french beans (haricot verts), baby squashes, broccoli and others, generating more than \$.125 Million in exports.

Since small and medium farmers from the central highlands of the country began growing export vegetables, in the early 1980's, the production pattern of the region experienced profound transformations. Families with net daily incomes of U.S \$.3.00 were now able to participate in a high income activity which could guarantee at least four times more.

This facts, together with the high learning capacity of the rural people of Guatemala have situated the country as the major provider of snow peas, broccoli, baby vegetables and french beans for the United States.





## LINGUISTIC MAP OF THE 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

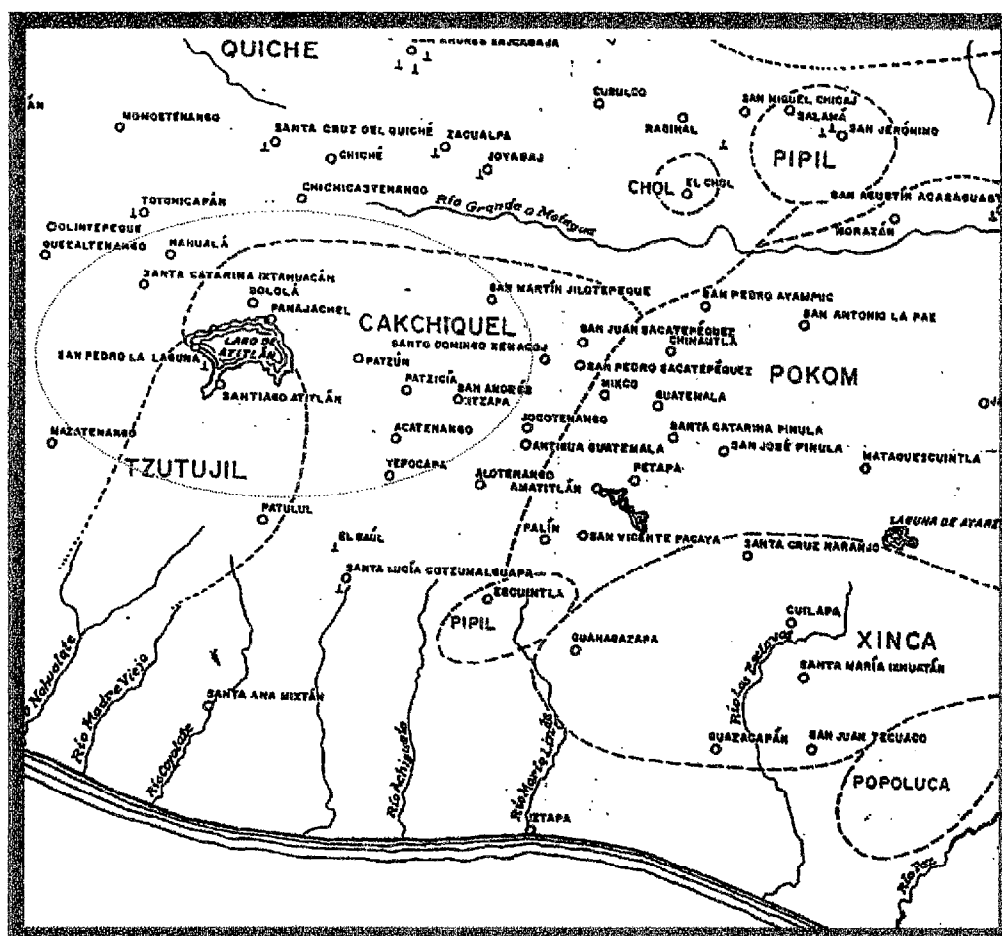


Table No. 2

Non traditional agricultural products of Chimaltenango.

PRODUCT	GROWN AREA	FOB PRICE OF PRODUCTION
Snow peas	1,600 ha	U.S.\$ .32 Million
Broccoli and Cauliflower	2,900 ha	U.S.\$ .23 Million
Cut flowers	74 ha	U.S.\$ .09 Million
Avocados	250 ha	U.S.\$ .0.75 Million
Rasp berries	102 ha	U.S.\$ .2.0 Million
Black berries	150 ha	U.S.\$ . 1.52 Million
Strawberries	148 ha	U.S.\$ .4.2 Million
Other fruits	1,250 ha	U.S.\$ .1.2 Million
Employment generation		10,400,000 day/man



### 2.1.2 PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The department of Chimaltenango is located in the southern end of the Sierra Madre. The central part of the Sierra Madre is quite flat, therefore it is called the country's central highland. The cities of Chimaltenango and Antigua are in these highlands, as well as the water division line.

Chimaltenango is located within the following physiographic regions:

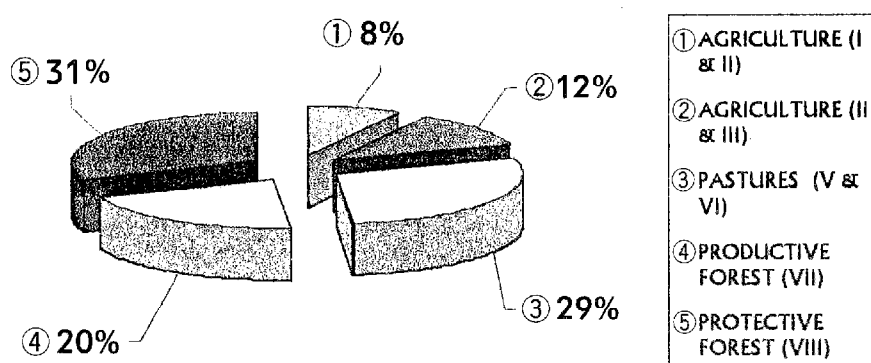
- High crystal lands
- High volcanic lands
- Recent volcanic slope

The following hydrographic basins are located within the department of Chimaltenango:

Table No. 3

BASIN	SEA	AREA (Km <sup>2</sup> )	MAX. ELEVATION	MIN. ELEVATION
Nahualate	Pacific	2012	3000m	0
Coyolate	Pacific	12117	2300m	0
Motagua	Atlantic	15190	2500	0

### SOILS PRESENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHIMALTENANGO

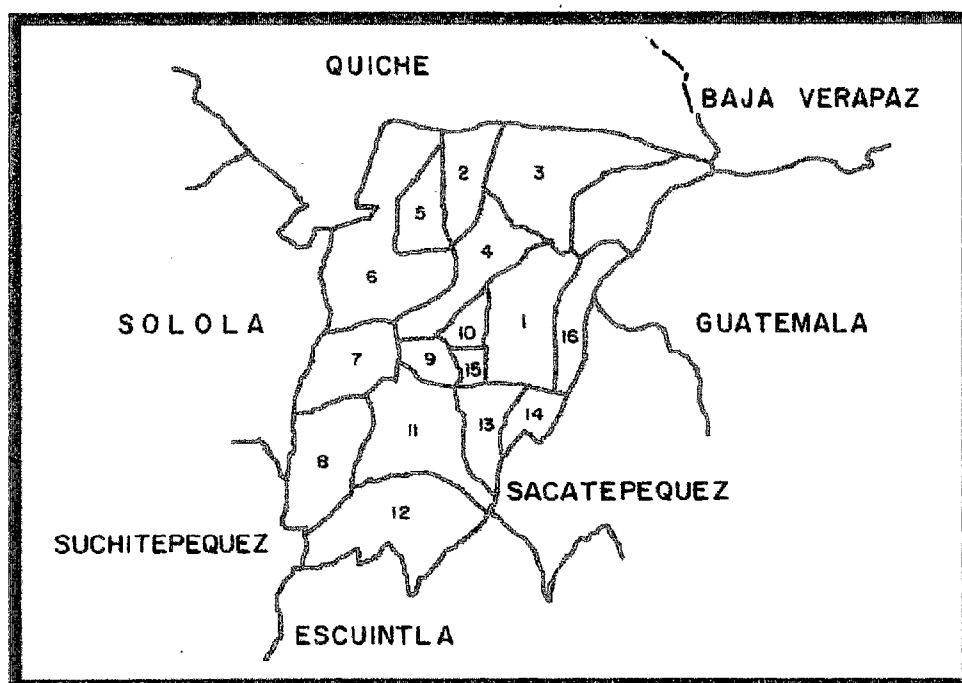




### 2.1.3 POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

The Department of Chimaltenango is divided into 16 municipalities and more than 300 villages. The maximum departmental authority is the Governor. However, local power is exercised by majors at municipal level and by auxiliary majors at community level.

The judicial power has a departmental court in the city of Chimaltenango, as well as lower level courts (peace courts) in the municipalities. The Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Education also have departmental offices.



No.	MUNICIPIO	No.	MUNICIPIO
1	Chimaltenango	9	Patzicía
2	San José Poaquil	10	Santa Cruz Balanyá
3	San Martín Jilotepeque	11	Acatenango
4	Comalapa	12	Yepocapa
5	Santa Apolonia	13	San Andrés Itzapa
6	Tecpán Guatemala	14	Parramos
7	Patzún	15	Zaragoza
8	Pochuta	16	El Tejas



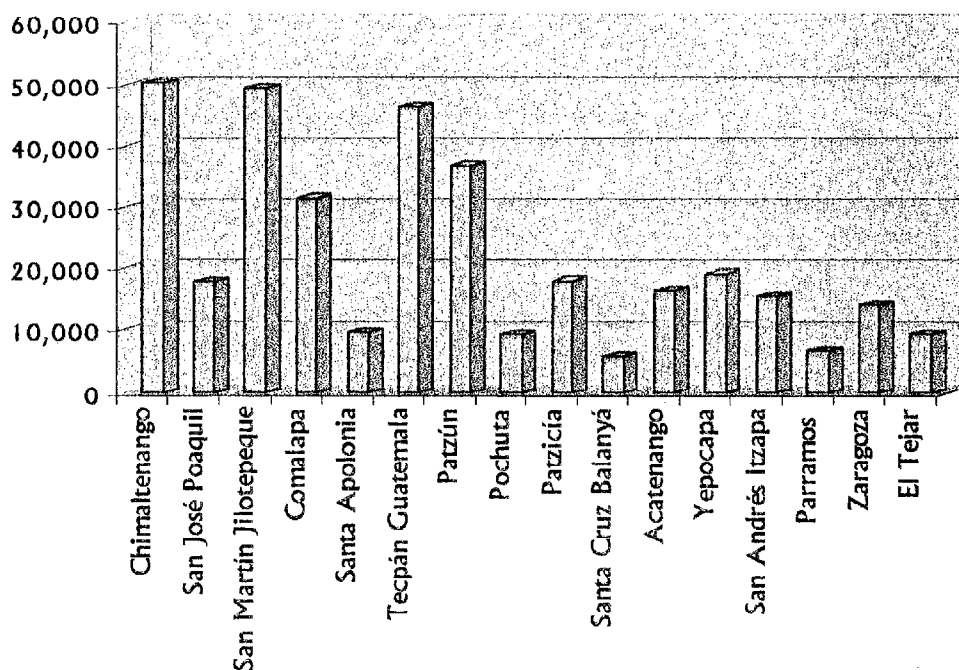
On the other hand, taking into consideration the ethnic origin of the population, the civil society is well organized at community, municipal and departmental levels. Based upon this fact, there are several non governmental organizations of local, national and international origin that provide assistance for development in the health, agriculture and education sectors.

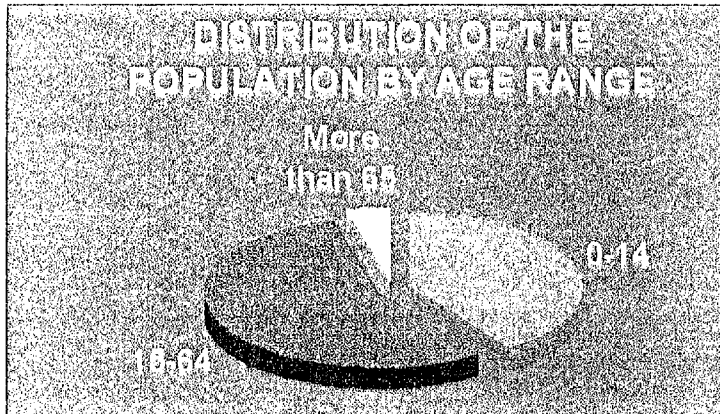
#### 2.1.4 POPULATION

Although according to the 1994 census the population was of 314,813 inhabitants, the estimates for 1999 are of 354,447, at a 2.4% annual growth rate.

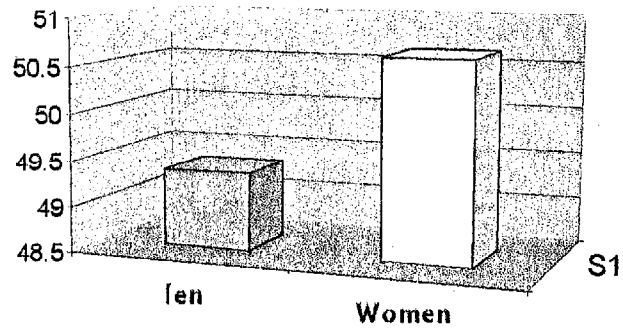
Statistical information regarding population issues is provided below.

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION DEPARTMENT OF CHIMALTENANGO

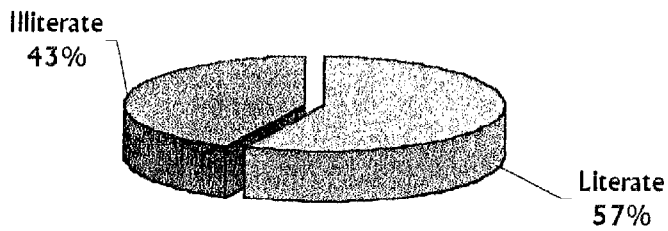




### DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BY SEX CHIMALTENANGO



### LITERACY INDEX CHIMALTENANGO



### DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BY ETHNIC ORIGIN

