

COUNCIL OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF NICARAGUA (CEPAD)

TO : Friends and cooperating agencies

FROM : Damaris Albuquerque - Executive Director

RE : CEPAD INFORMATIVE LETTER –SECOND SEMESTER 2008

DATE : December 18, 2008

Dear friends,

1. Municipal elections were held on November 9. The Supreme Electoral Council announced that the Alliance led by the Sandinista party won 105 out of 149 municipalities, 18 more than those won in 2004. However, the opposition has claimed that the elections were rigged. For a few days after the election day, there were riots in the streets of Managua and Leon between supporters of both sides. The Parliament is now paralyzed because the opposition members have tried to introduce a bill to annul the elections and therefore, the President of the Parliament, a Sandinista has refused to convene the Board of Directors. Meanwhile important laws are waiting to be approved, including the National Budget and others necessary for the International Monetary Fund to disburse funds.

Meanwhile, the United States, the European Union and the IMF have declared a moratorium of 90 days on the government of Nicaragua where no more funds will be disbursed unless there is governance in the country and the votes are recalled. On a more positive aspect, the fuel prices have gone down, as a result of the international prices, but the food prices continue high as well as transportation.

2. Ceremonies were held in 5 regions of the country during November and first two weeks of December to close the accompaniment of CEPAD to 33 communities. During the period of 2009-2013 CEPAD will start work in 43 new communities of 6 regions of the country. At the ceremonies certificates were given to 810 persons who participated in the different programs, including advocacy, agriculture, patio projects, and psychosocial care.

3. On December 6, there was a closing ceremony in Bilwi at the North Atlantic Autonomous Region where the Hurricane Felix rehabilitation project was implemented. A final report is being prepared this week.

4. Ninety-four students graduated from high school at the CEPAD Institute in Leon. 31 of those are workers of the Health system under an agreement between the Health and Education ministries.

5. A big thank you to Ellen Sherby who completed her assignment with CEPAD on December 5. Ellen was our CEPAD Report writer and editor, as a partner in mission from the Presbyterian Church, USA. Ellen will be missed by everyone here at our office and at the partnerships she helped facilitate. We wish her and family the very best in her new responsibilities at the Presbyterian Church headquarters in Louisville.

CEPAD offices will be closed starting this Friday, December 19 until Monday, January 12 for holidays. Our 2008 activities finish with gratitude in our hearts to God and to all of you. Thanks to those of you who supported the work carried out by CEPAD, through visits, messages, prayers and funds. God bless you. As we start this new year, we wish you a merry Christmas.

Sincerely,