

**INTEREST AND USEFULNESS FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION
OF SCHOLARSHIPS THROUGH THE REGIONAL
TRAINING CENTERS OF CITEL**

The Seventh Meeting of the Permanent Executive Committee of CITEL decided that the Chairperson of COM/CITEL would forward a note, which is attached herewith, to the Secretary General in order to emphasize the interest and usefulness for the region to have scholarships which, on the basis of the regular fund of OAS, are being offered through the Regional Training Centers of CITEL.

ANNEX

Mr. César Gaviria
Secretary General of OAS

His Excellency,

By means of the present letter and in view of the work being carried out by the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL), especially by the Coordination of CITEL with the Regional Training Centers, regarding the preparation and delivery of training courses in telecommunications for the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS), I respectfully address the present letter to you in order to provide you with a brief summary of the current situation.

The Member States of the region have been for many years enjoying the benefits of a scholarship program that is being offered through CITEL/OAS. This program has been consolidated over the last few years, not only as a result of the rising number of Regional Training Centers, since we now have eight centers, but also as a result of the number and capabilities of those interested in participating in this scholarship program.

For your reference, the Regional Training Centers of CITEL are as follows:

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| Canada | Telecommunications Executive Management Institute of Canada |
| Chile | International Telecommunications Training Center |
| United States | United States Telecommunications Training Institute |
| Mexico | Regional Training and Research Center on Human Resources in Information Sciences and Technology |
| Paraguay | Paraguayan Telecommunications Institute |
| Peru | Telecommunications Research and Training National Institute (INICTEL) |
| Suriname | Telecommunications Corporation Suriname Telesur Training Research |
| COMTELCA | Central American Training Center |

¹ Document COM/CITEL/doc.427/98

The Regional Training Centers thus provide to the other Member States of OAS the experience that has been gained in highly specialized topics, which is a priority for laying the groundwork to ensure the development of telecommunications.

This important scholarship program provides benefits not only to the beneficiaries of the scholarships but also to the institutions where they work and their countries. It also establishes ties that facilitate cooperation, the exchange of information, and therefore the creation of a regional telecommunications infrastructure, as set forth in the mandate for the area of telecommunications by the Second Summit of the Americas held in Santiago de Chile in 1998.

Unfortunately, over the last few years, there has been a cut in the budget allocated to CITEI for scholarships. It should be recalled that, in 1996, CITEI's training activities were conducted with OAS funds amounting to US\$190,000, which provided for 94 scholarships, but in 1997 this budget was reduced to US\$60,000, providing for 31 scholarships, and in 1998 the budget amounted to only US\$56,200, for 31 scholarships. (Let us remember that there are cost differences depending on the place in which the course is being taken and the place of origin of the beneficiary of the scholarship.)

We recognize the impetus given by the Secretariat General to these activities, and in view of imminent technological breakthroughs in the field of telecommunications in the entire world and, as a result, the growing demand, throughout the Member States of CITEI, for duly trained staff to study and analyze the introduction of new telecommunications technologies, as well the adequate formation of the human resources in the respective matter, I would like to share with you my concern about the attention that should be focused on this demand, with respect to the allocation of funds by the Regular Budget of OAS for the Regional Training Centers of CITEI so they can award scholarships.

I would also like to underscore that the budget cuts that this item has experienced, as well as possible additional cuts that are being envisaged for the near future, would be to the detriment of the timely dissemination of telecommunications technology and, likewise, the corrected formation of human resources in this matter, and ultimately the detriment of the installation development of these new technologies in the Americas.

My most cordial greetings,

Chairman of the Permanent Executive Committee of CITEI