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THE CAPEL ELECTORAL DICTIONARY

Ramiro de Valdivia Cano

- EXCERPTS -

The word “vote” is derived from the Latin *votum* . This illustrates the religious origin of the term: an offering or promise made to the gods, or any of the vows instituted by the Catholic Church for those wishing to enter the religious life (poverty, chastity and obedience). [In Spanish] the word “vote” also means an entreaty or petition made to God. Although expectation is intense as we approach a watershed moment in the life of this nation, only when we read the CAPEL dictionary (not just the etymology and the literal meaning, but delving into the semasiology and the context) do we find the profound, almost magical significance that Peruvian voters attribute to the vote and to democracy. There is so much to learn in a dictionary, that most faithful and permanent of friends! (...)

In 1989, the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR) published the first edition of its Electoral Dictionary, which was produced by a team of Ibero-American specialists headed by the then Director of the Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL), **Jorge Mario García Laguardia**. The dictionary of the *Real Academia Española* was originally intended to help young people continue to enjoy the language of the classic literature of the 16th and 17th centuries. The initial objective of CAPEL’s project was to make a contribution to the expansion and development of democracy in Ibero-America, through a dictionary designed to explain electoral concepts and institutions and serve as a source of reference for a wide variety of users.



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The second edition consists of two volumes. Eighteen of the terms that appeared in the first edition remain unchanged, 86 have been revised and 40 new terms have been included, making a total of 145.

The dictionary of the *Real Academia Española* has to contend with powerful external influences that are transforming Spanish culture, as a result of the advent of a foreign dynasty that is tainting our civilization and language. As the third millennium begins, social and political trends worldwide have brought about innumerable changes in the procedures, tools, mechanisms, etc., used in the electoral field. At any event, the function of both dictionaries (those of CAPEL and the *Real Academia*) now transcends the initial objectives and they have become indispensable tools, for preserving the Spanish language and democracy, respectively. □



CAPEL



Distinction for the Electoral Tribunal of Panama

REPRESENTATIVES OF ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL TO SPEAK AT MICROSOFT GOVERNMENT LEADERS' CONFERENCE

The Electoral Tribunal of Panama, as one of the institutions that has been most successful in implementing new technologies, has been selected to make a presentation at the Microsoft Government Leaders' Conference (GLC) that will be held in Seattle, Washington, at the end of March.

The purpose of the meeting, which brings together representatives of the world's most important government institutions, is to share experiences regarding new technologies and their application in public services.

The Electoral Tribunal will be represented by Erasmo Pinilla and Eduardo Valdés, the President and Vice President, respectively, who will make one of the most important presentations at conference.

On behalf of the Panamanian government, Valdés will present a paper entitled "Savings and efficiency in a government agency in the digital era (the case of Panama)." He will describe the Tribunal's experience in implementing and using digital certificates, a system instituted recently, thanks to a donation from the Organization of American States (OAS).

Mr. Valdés says that the presentation on Chile's "Digital Signatures" project last year inspired them to follow its example, introducing digital certificates at the institution.

The installation of a national digital communications network, with email and the digitalization of the new personal identity document and all the files of the civil registry, resulted in minimum monthly savings of roughly US\$35,000 for the Electoral Tribunal. The Tribunal is now in the process of quantifying the additional savings in paper, taxes, transportation, messenger services, space for files and the time of the secretarial staff, who no longer have to use paper in performing their bureaucratic duties. All this has made the personnel much more efficient in solving institutional problems and in their dealings with members of the public.

In addition to the judges of the Electoral Tribunal, also attending the Microsoft conference will be the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Mirtza Franceshi de Aguilera, the Minister of Health, Jose Terán, the Deputy Minister of Finance, Domingo Latorraca, and the National Secretary of SENACYT, Gonzalo Córdoba.

Information provided by **Esperanza de Bloise**

II. Projects and Activities

Competitive bidding process for the project for strategic planning, reengineering of processes and organizational development, of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal of El Salvador organized a competitive bidding process with a view to contracting consulting services for strategic planning, the reengineering of processes and organizational development.

The IIHR/CAPEL, which has a long record of providing specialized technical assistance, formed a consortium with the firm HG Consultores and presented a technical proposal that qualified for the next stage of the technical evaluation (only three of the 14 bids were selected for the second stage).

Although the contract was ultimately awarded to another firm, the IIHR/CAPEL team was pleased to have participated in a bidding process of this kind and to have been selected as one of the three finalists.

The IIHR/CAPEL wishes to thank the entities involved for their support throughout the process and wishes them every success in implementing this important project.

Organization of the First Annual Meeting of Electoral Training Units of the Electoral Bodies. Tikal Protocol.

Following the decision taken at the Fourteenth Conference of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean (Tikal Protocol), in its capacity as the Executive Secretariat, the IIHR/CAPEL, in collaboration with the Electoral Tribunal of Panama, is organizing the First Annual Meeting of Electoral Training Units of the member organizations. The members of UNIORE are also welcome to attend.

Scheduled to be held May 11-12 in Panama City, the aim of the meeting is to foster the sharing of experiences and know-how in the field of electoral training. It is targeted at the manager of the training unit or department of each electoral body.

If any members of UNIORE would like to take part in this activity, please contact CAPEL program officer Ileana Aguilar at: iaguilar@iidh.ed.cr

Presentation of the Electoral Dictionary in Peru

The official presentation of the Electoral Dictionary in Peru took place February 27 at the offices of *TRANSPARENCIA*, a leading civil society organization, which was represented by its Director, Rafael Roncagliolo.

The presentation was chaired by Diego García Sayán, the Minister of Justice of Peru and a member of the IIHR Board of Directors.

The IIHR/CAPEL was represented by José Thompson, the delegate of the Executive Directorate of the IIHR for CAPEL. Others in attendance included representatives of Peruvian political parties, academics, civil society organizations and officials of the National Elections Board (JNE) and the National Office of Electoral Processes (ONPE).



Diego García Sayán, Minister of Justice of Peru and a member of the IIHR Board of Directors

Other speakers at the event were the President of the JNE, Manuel Sánchez Palacios, and some of the experts who contributed to the Dictionary, such as Fernando Tuesta Soldevilla, the Head of the ONPE, and Ramiro de Valdivia Cano, a member of the JNE.

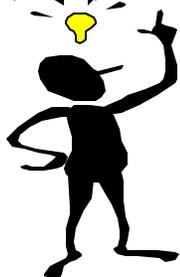
The presentation of the Electoral Dictionary in Peru was the sixth such event to be held in collaboration with the members of UNIORE. Similar activities have already been held in Costa Rica, Mexico, Paraguay, Guatemala and Panama.

These presentations help provide opportunities for public debates not only on the work itself, but also on the political-electoral context in Latin America.

Signing of a cooperation agreement between CAPEL and the National Elections Board (JNE) of Peru

A cooperation agreement was signed by the JNE and CAPEL at the JNE's Headquarters in Lima, Peru, on February 27. This was another formal manifestation of the work that is being carried out with support from the US Agency for International Development and the Canadian International Development Agency. It involves technical support for the JNE, which is responsible for monitoring the current electoral process in Peru.

The agreement was signed by José Thompson, on behalf of the IIHR/CAPEL, and the President of the JNE, Manuel Sánchez Palacios.



SUGGESTION BOX
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<http://www.iidh.ed.cr/siii/novedades/novedades.asp?categoria=2>

