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**Institutional, Economic, and Human Resource Issues
Associated with Solid Waste Services in Latin America**

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ABSTRACT

The management of municipal solid wastes (MSW) in Latin America is, and traditionally has been, a primary responsibility of local governments. In a large percentage of medium-size municipalities in the region, the management of MSW may use between 30% and 50% of the total municipal budget. The management of solid wastes is a complicated process that not only requires the proper selection and application of approaches for the storage, collection, transport, transfer, processing, and final disposal of the material, but also depends upon the close cooperation between the users, the private sector, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Most proposed solutions for the management of municipal solid waste generated in developing countries, and in Latin America in particular, concentrate on technical matters and ignore non-technical considerations. Some of the more important non-technical issues that must be addressed in the privatization of services are: development of a sound, achievable, and reliable national policy; preparation and implementation of adequate institutional arrangements; issuance and enforcement of appropriate and modern regulations; availability of trained and motivated personnel; optimal financial control and supervision of the services; and adequate allocation of timely distribution of funds.

At the present time, the environmental problems faced by most countries in Latin America are very similar and are related to their demographic situation and economic growth. Currently, the solid waste management system in Latin America is extremely deficient and has a substantial economic deficit. To overcome some of these problems, there is currently a trend toward strengthening the institutional situation and toward the privatization of solid waste management services. Private firms are taking on the responsibility for pollution control and have been given the authority to implement pollution control programs.

INTRODUCTION

Some of the major threats to public health and environmental quality in many economically developing countries include contaminated water supplies, as well as uncontrolled and improperly managed urban wastes, and human and animal excreta. Substantial environmental degradation is especially evident and problematic in the large metropolitan areas of those countries.