

## Costa Rica's democracy threatened by lack of participation; concerns high over corruption and discrimination: report

October 25th, 2013 (AFP & InsideCostaRica.com) – Despite the high level of human development in Costa Rica, exclusion and discrimination are rampant in the country, where nearly half of people say they have felt discriminated against at some point, according to a report published by the United Nations yesterday.

The National Human Development Report 2013, entitled “Learning to live together: Coexistence and Human Development in Costa Rica,” said that Costa Rica is ranked 62 in terms of human development among 187 countries.

The country also has the highest life expectancy in Latin America and the Caribbean (79.4 years) and overall life satisfaction is high (7.3 on a scale of 0-10), very close to Denmark which is the number one in the world at 7.8.

However, the study stresses that the country has major challenges to overcome in areas such as various forms of discrimination, corruption, insecurity and unemployment.

The report details that 26% of Costa Ricans said they have felt discriminated against because of age, 16% by religion, 14% because of their gender, 7% for a disability, 6% by the color of their skin and 5% based on their ethnicity.

As for the perception of the country's problems, citizens state that corruption is seen as their top concern (20%), followed by insecurity (18%) and unemployment (15%).

Moreover, despite being a mature democracy, the report called attention to the low participation of Costa Ricans in politics and various civil society bodies.

“Costa Rica is a kind of delegate democracy. A paradox. On the one hand, people do not want to participate, but on the other hand, they expect much of the state,” Gabriela Mata, one of the researchers of the report, said.

According to the study, only 13.9% of Costa Ricans are involved in community associations, 5.7% are involved in professional associations, and just 2.3% actively participate in a political party.

The report is based on 2012 figures compiled by the Latin American Public Opinion Project, which were interpreted and analyzed for the report along with other sources such as surveys and focus groups.

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