Remarks on Release of the Spanish Edition
Faculty of Economic Sciences
National University of Columbia
Bogota, Columbia
August 17, 2005

Dear Professor Homero Cuevas, distinguished members of the faculty of the economic sciences of the National University of Columbia, Ms. Nohora Garcia, graduate and undergraduate scholars, and guests:

I am honored and pleased to return to Bogota this week to be with you on the occasion of the release of the Spanish edition of my book, Teoria de la contabilidad y el control (originally published in English under the title Theory of Accounting and Control).

I would like to thank Professors Luis Ignacio Aguilar Zambrano, Homero Cuevas, German Guerrero Chaparro, and the team of Ms. Nohora Garcia which included Claudio Niño, Diego Hernández, Manuel Muñoz, Pedro Nel Páez, and Andrés Montaña for the extraordinary effort over these two years to bring this volume to publication.

The framework of accounting is shared across many economies in the world today. While this sharing could be the result of independent but convergent evolution of accounting in different societies, direct transfer of concepts and practices through trade and education has also played an important role. Accounting systems evolve with organizational forms to fulfill the diverse demands of the latter. To the extent organizational forms converge, so do their accounting systems. This book is an attempt to understand the links between organizations and their accounting and control systems.

Observations inspire theories, which in turn direct and organize observations. The greater the scope of observations on which a theory can be based, the more generalizable the theory becomes. Most of my personal experience is drawn from India and the United States. Confronting this theory of accounting and control with observations from a broad range of business environments and cultures will help make it more robust. Therefore, I was delighted to learn that the alumni of the doctoral program of the faculty of economic sciences of the National University of Columbia wishes to introduce it to the Spanish readers.

In the summer of 2003, I had the privilege of visiting the National University of Columbia for the first time, at the invitation of Dean Homero Cuevas. My conversations with the faculty and the students at the University, the Central Bank of Colombia, and Yogesh B. Sharma of the Indian Railways helped me learn about the accounting traditions of Spanish speaking countries, and of the problems of accounting and control in the business environment of Colombia. Unique features of socio-economic environments call for adaptation of both organizational forms as well as accounting methods. In varied
conditions around the world, accounting systems can usefully combine such adaptation with an overarching framework to think about various forms of accounting.

My visits abroad sensitized me to the difficulty of translation. It is not easy to isolate thought from language. In the absence of exact correspondence among natural languages, taking ideas and thoughts from one language and society and expressing them in another language to another society is a demanding task. I owe Ms. Nohora Garcia, Andrés Montaña, Claudio Niño, Diego Hernández, Manuel Nuñoz, Pedro Nel Páez, Professor Luis Ignacio Aguilar, and Professor Gerardo Mejia and their colleagues a debt of gratitude for undertaking this challenge with meticulous care. I would like to thank Clara Forero Murillo for the beautiful design of the book. I am sure there are others, who I may have missed, whose assistance was essential for the success of this endeavor.

I am also grateful to the coordinators of the doctoral program, Professors Iván Hernández, Jorge Iván Bula and Professor José Félix Cataño for their support of the doctoral students. I hope its publication will assist others in using their knowledge of organizations and business practices to advance and refine an even more universal theory of accounting and control.

Shyam Sunder
Bogota, Columbia
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