

ANDRÉS BELLO FUND FOUNDATION for the Scientific Development of the Central University of Venezuela

CONDITIONS

**INTERNATIONAL  
IDEAS AND PROPOSALS COMPETITION  
FOR THE  
GRAND CENTRAL SQUARE  
A METROPOLITAN MEETING PLACE**



Description, Terms, Regulations and Programme

**ZONA RENTAL PLAZA VENEZUELA  
CARACAS - VENEZUELA  
JUNE, 2004**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Andrés Bello Fund Foundation for the Scientific Development of the Central University of Venezuela, which is the owner of the rental land Plaza Venezuela and Plaza Las Tres Gracias in the city of Caracas, Venezuela, is a foundation that is mainly responsible for the financial support of the scientific programmes of the Central University of Venezuela through the development of its building heritage, which affords a unique opportunity to foster a number of relevant urban development interventions in important locations such as these rental spaces. These types of actions would be aimed at promoting new forms of city development that better meet the demands of our times. Both the general urban needs and those of particular individuals should be met, in order to better fulfil the growing needs concerning life quality.

For that reason, the Andrés Bello Fund Foundation (FFAB), along with the Central University of Venezuela (UCV), have announced the “International Ideas and Proposals Competition for the Grand Central Square” under the auspices of the Venezuelan Association of Architects (CAV), the Pan-American Federation of Architects’ Associations (FPAA), the Regional Association of Architects from the Andean Group (RAGA), the Metropolitan Government, the Government of the Libertador Municipality, the company Metro de Caracas, the National Art Gallery and the International Association of Art Critics (AICA), to continue with the development of the urban complex proposed for this important sector of El Recreo parish, located in the Libertador municipality of Caracas. This competition is open for the participation of any professional architect who would like to contribute with their ideas and proposals to the project for the development of the Grand Central Square (in Spanish, *Gran Plaza Central*), which shall be part of the urban complex of the rental area (*Zona Rental Plaza Venezuela*). This urban development action is part of the plans that are being implemented nowadays in Caracas and would be a key element for the revitalization and quality improvement of urban life in this city. This competition was approved by the Board of Directors of the Foundation in its ordinary meeting no. 273 held on September 1, 2003.

## **1 - COMPETITION TERMS AND REGULATIONS**

### **1.1 - PROMOTER**

This competition is promoted and supported by the Andrés Bello Fund Foundation and the Central University of Venezuela, in conformity with the regulations and requisites set by the Venezuelan Association of Architects, the Pan-American Federation of Architects’ Associations and the Regional Association of Architects from the Andean Group. These associations delegate to the Venezuelan Association of Architects the support to the

competition's management and follow-up, as the latter is a member of and the Venezuelan representative to them.

## 1.2 - OBJECTIVES

This competition is aimed at:

- Promoting and strengthening the development of the *Zona Rental Plaza Venezuela* as one of the most important urban complexes of the city of Caracas by creating the necessary conditions for the harmonization of working, cultural and recreational activities.
- Developing original and creative architectonic, landscaping and town planning ideas and proposals that suit the requirements of the Master Plan for the Design and Urban Development of the Zona Rental, as well as the local regulations, and to contribute finding a better concept for the project of the Grand Central Square. The development of the concept shall be of the highest standards, taking into consideration the climatic and physical conditions of the local environment, ensuring the harmony among the different spaces and buildings of the urban complex, while establishing the guidelines for the integration and renewal of the adjoining urban areas.

## 1.3 - TYPE OF COMPETITION

This is an open one-phase competition that has been conceived as an exercise to elicit the best design ideas that should be taken into consideration when making the final project for the construction of a large-scale public square, which will be part of the urban complex *Zona Rental Plaza Venezuela* marrying productive and service activities with leisure and recreational ones. The entries submitted will be kept anonymous.

## 1.4 - TIMETABLE

Launching of the competition	June 3, 2004
Deadline for the reception of registrations	August 13, 2004
Deadline for the reception of questions	September 3, 2004
Deadline for the sending of replies	September 20, 2004
Deadline for the reception of entries (by courier or personally)	October 15, 2004
Jury meetings and deliberations	October 25-28, 2004
Verdict	October 29, 2004
Starting date for the exhibition of entries	October 29, 2004
Publication of the competition catalogue	Yet to be set

## 1.5 - ELIGIBILITY

This competition is open to architects worldwide. They must be members of a professional association in their country and hold a professional qualification giving them full right to practice their profession in their respective countries. They must also be able to show experience in their profession and comply with the registration procedures established in these competition conditions.

Either individuals or teams may participate in the competition. The teams can consist of professionals and technicians from other disciplines, such as landscaping, town planning, plastic arts and transport engineering. The team leader must be an architect, who will be the one to register and represent the team.

Members of the Technical Committee, of the Advisory Committee, of the Jury, employees and members of the Board of Directors of the FFAB, UCV authorities and advisors from these institutions (either firm employees or freelancers) are excluded from the competition, as well as their blood relatives.

## 1.6 - ORGANIZATION

The Andrés Bello Fund Foundation is the entity responsible for the creation of the Programme, Terms and Regulations, as well as of the development of all stages of the competition, from the preliminary work for its organization to its conclusion with the announcement of the final verdict and the publication of the event catalogue. To this end, the Foundation will be assisted by a Technical Committee that will support the jury throughout the competition and by an Advisory Committee that has been supporting the FFAB in the elaboration of the Competition Conditions.

Technical Committee: It is composed of the following professionals:

*Román Herrera, Architect and Urban Planner (Coordinator of the Technical Committee)*

*Adriana Guzmán, Architect*

*Frank Marcano, Architect and Urban Planner*

*María Isabel Peña, Architect and Urban Designer*

*Augusto Márquez, Architect and Urban Designer*

*Coral Daverson, Architect (from CAV)*

The Technical Committee will make a list of the entries to be submitted to the jury, check each of them for compliance with the competition requirements (regulations and programme) and make a short report in each case.

This committee will neither be able to disqualify entries nor to take part in the process to select the award winners.

Advisory Committee: This committee is composed of the following institutions and their representative members:

ANDRÉS BELLO FUND FOUNDATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF VENEZUELA

*Abner Colmenares, architect, (president)*

*Fulvia Nieves, anthropologist, (director)*

*Oscar Olinto Camacho, architect, (advisor)*

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF VENEZUELA

*Azier Calvo, architect, (dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning)*

*Gaspare Lavegas, architect, (director of Inter-Institution Relations).*

*Josefina Punceles, choral conductor, (director of the Cultural Section)*

*Ana Loreto, architect, (director of the Preservation and Development Council)*

*Adolfo Herrera, journalist, (director of the Information and Communication Centre)*

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF CARACAS

*Leopoldo Provenzali, architect, (secretary for Town Planning and Distribution)*

GOVERNMENT OF THE LIBERTADOR MUNICIPALITY

*Marta Benavides, lawyer, (director of the Strategic Urban Development Office)*

VENEZUELAN ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS

*Aurora Zapata, architect, (president)*

C.A. METRO DE CARACAS (Caracas Subway Company):

*María Calzadilla, architect*

NATIONAL ART GALLERY

*Francisco D' Antonio, professor of Arts, (director)*

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ART CRITICS

*Beatriz Sogbe, engineer, (former president)*

This Committee will provide constant advice to the Foundation and to the Technical Committee during all competition stages.

## 1.7 - ANONYMITY

All designs shall be submitted anonymously. This anonymity shall be maintained during the whole competition process. In order to do this, each competitor will choose two letters of the alphabet and five digits (1 cm high) and place them on all plans and documents constituting or accompanying their entry. There should be no other identifying signs.

All packaging will be destroyed on the reception of entries. The Technical Committee will mask the identification codes, replacing them with a serial number that will only be in the hands of the jury. The register of ID codes and serial numbers, along with the envelopes containing the competitors' identities will be put away in a safe place before a notary until the end of the jury's deliberations when the prizes have to be awarded.

## 1.8 - REGISTRATION

Those interested in taking part in the competition will be able to register in the following seventy one days after the date when the competition is opened according to the public announcement. Applications shall be accompanied by the following information:

The competitors' names and surnames, nationalities, addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail addresses. Besides, the team leader shall submit a copy of the registered professional qualification and a proof of payment of the membership fees to the Venezuelan Association of Architects—in the case of Venezuelan architects—and a copy

of the authenticated professional qualification and the licence to practice their profession in their own countries—in the case of foreign architects.

The registration fee is US\$ 150 and should be paid by bank deposit to the order of *Fundación Fondo Andrés Bello*, current account n° 01050026511026356644 of BANCO MERCANTIL, at the official exchange rate of the day of registration, or—in the case of participants living abroad— by bank deposit to the order of *Fundación Fondo Andrés Bello*, savings account n° 8302470920 (ABA n° 067010509) of the COMMERCEBANK (SWIFT code MNBMUS33A), 220 Alhambra Circle, Coral Gables, Miami-Florida, USA.

All bank taxes, as well as postage and packing expenses will be paid by the participants. Neither these charges nor the registration fee will be reimbursed.

The furnishing of the conditions of the competition is conditional on the payment of the registration fee. To apply for registration, it is necessary to send a copy of the proof of payment of the registration fee made by the individual participant or team leader, whose name should appear in that proof.

All documents must be sent by courier or fax to:

*Fundación Fondo Andrés Bello para el Desarrollo Científico de la UCV*

Address: Torre Centro Solano Plaza, piso 3, oficina 3-A, calle La Iglesia, Sabana Grande, Caracas 1050, Venezuela.

Telephone numbers: (+58) (212) 761 6515 / (+58) (212) 761 4750

Fax number: (+58) (212) 761 4486

E-mail: [fundafab@cantv.net](mailto:fundafab@cantv.net)

Person in charge: Architect Román Herrera

Only those applications for registration that comply with all the requirements will be processed.

The deadline for the reception of registrations is August 13, 2004.

## 1.9 - JURY

There is an international jury composed of the following five members:

*Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, architect* (Chile)

*Manuel de Solá-Morales, architect* (Spain)

*John Godfrey Stoddart, landscape architect* (Venezuela)

*Jimmy Alcock, architect* (Venezuela)

*Daniel Bermúdez, architect*, (Colombia, FPAA representative)

Deputy jury member:

*Fernando Gonzalo, architect* (Venezuela)

A résumé of each of the jury members is available on the Foundation's Web site.

In their first session, the jury will elect a chairman from among the members, who will act as the jury coordinator and will take on the responsibility of elaborating the verdict in written form. The jury will decide on whether entries can be accepted or not, after the Technical Committee has submitted a report on each entry.

The deputy jury member must attend all meetings of the titular jury members and shall take part in them, but will not have the right to vote. In case of permanent absence of one of the titular jury members, the deputy juror will immediately replace them. The jury shall duly

explain the reasons for their verdict. By accepting to be part of the jury, its members acknowledge and accept the competition programme, terms and regulations.

## 1.10 - QUESTIONS AND REPLIES

Competitors shall only request any information about the competition from the coordinator of the Technical Committee. It is forbidden to do a request directly to the jury.

The questions can be sent either by fax or e-mail.

The Technical Committee will send the answers to all the participants by e-mail.

The deadline for the reception of questions is September 3, 2004.

The deadline for the sending of replies is September 20, 2004.

## 1.11 - ATTACHED INFORMATION

All competitors will be provided with a CD containing the following information:

1. Geographical data, accessibility, surrounding urban areas.
2. Location, street maps of the sector.
3. Three-dimensional illustrations of the Zona Rental complex.
4. Grand Central Square area plan.
5. Normative general schemes.
6. Elements from the subway system (Metro de Caracas).
7. Botanical survey and register of the small wooded area.
8. Schemes with general information on the shopping centre of the Southern Unit (under construction).
9. Photographs of the Plaza Venezuela sector.

## 1.12 - DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED BY COMPETITORS

Competitors will present their proposals in graphic form —the technique is left to the competitor's judgement— in only two (2) boards of 118.90 x 84.10 cm (ISO A-0), on white paper, vertically presented one next to the other, mounted on a rigid support made of grade 1 expanded polystyrene or a similar material, which must contain:

- Overall design: Grand Central Square and built volumes, highlighting the road, visual, functional and spatial interconnection of the project area with the rest of the city. Scale: 1:1,000.
- Plans, sections and elevations showing possible overlapping of activities. Scale: 1:1,000.
- General perspective and/or axonometric view of the proposal. Sketches, perspectives and/or axonometries of relevant places and volumes of the proposal. Scale: of the competitor's choice.
- Design criteria, detailed specifications about materials, finishing, vegetation, urban polychromy and street furniture (benches, lights, litter bins, signposting, removable roofing, among others).

The boards shall be correctly packaged and sealed up for their protection.

Each entry must be accompanied by a letter-size (21.59 x 27.94 cm) identification folder containing the following documents:

- A descriptive report: brief description of the design and building criteria of the proposal of maximum two letter-size (21.59 x 27.94 cm) sheets of double-spaced typing, in Arial 12 font, and a full-colour set of the boards containing the proposal itself reduced to 43.18 x 27.94 cm (double letter size).
- A sealed opaque envelope containing the name and personal data of the competitor or competitors (in case of a team), so that they can be contacted at the end of the competition.
- A compact disc (CD) containing the entire proposal. Word documents shall be submitted in Arial 12 font and must suit Windows 98 or a higher version. Plans, illustrations, photomontages and similar documents shall be presented in JPG (minimal resolution 300 dpi), DWG and AutoCAD.

### 1.13 - LANGUAGES

The competition official languages are Spanish and English.

The US dollar will be the reference currency and the metric system shall be used by all participants.

### 1.14 - SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES

Entry materials should either be sent (by post or courier) or handed personally, from 8:00 to 17:00 hours (local time), at the headquarters of the Andrés Bello Fund Foundation, located at Torre Centro Solano Plaza, piso 3, oficina 3-A, calle La Iglesia, Sabana Grande, Caracas, Venezuela.

### 1.15 - PRIZES

1<sup>st</sup> prize: US\$ 20,000

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: US\$ 12,000

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: US\$ 5,000

The jury may award honorary distinctions (no money involved).

### 1.16 - VERDICT

The jury will make public announcement of the award winners at the end of the last day of deliberations. The Andrés Bello Fund Foundation shall notify the Venezuelan Association of Architects and all competitors of the competition results in the following week by sending them a copy of the verdict. In addition, photographs and images of the prize-winning designs shall be sent to the CAV, the FPAA and the RAGA for publication on their Web pages.



The Andrés Bello Fund Foundation will publish this information in the local press and on its Web Page.

### 1.17 - EVALUATION CRITERIA

The architectonic, landscaping and town planning ideas shall take into consideration the physical and normative variables of the urban context, as well as the requirements of the programme and the design criteria set by the Andrés Bello Fund Foundation. Considering this general premise, each entry will be evaluated in accordance with the following main criteria:

- The observance of the programme, the normative general schemes and the design criteria.
- The aesthetic effect and the image resulting from its interaction with the surrounding urban landscape.
- The flexibility and capacity to adapt in the future to the whole urban complex of the *Zona Rental Plaza Venezuela* when it is completely developed.
- The management of the vehicular and pedestrian accesses from and to the different elements and sectors of the immediate surrounding area, particularly of those set in the project for the shopping complex that is being built at the moment in the Southern Unit.
- The consideration of the climatic conditions and the quality of Caracas' landscape and environment, and the especial attention to the land regarding concepts, space, function, construction, street furniture and vegetation.
- The administration of the day and night lighting as a key element for security and, thus, for the quality of life offered by the complex.
- The value added to the investments as a result of the improvement of the sector urban quality.

### 1.18 - INSURANCE

The Andrés Bello Fund Foundation will secure financial compensation for damages or total loss of each of the entries from the moment when they are submitted at the FFAB headquarters until the end of the event when the exhibition that has been programmed as part of the competition has already been taken down. This will be done by means of an insurance policy that guarantees the recovery of the registration fee, postage and packing, as well as the material cost of the documents making up the entry dossier (CD, folder, envelope and boards).

### 1.19 - EXHIBITION

All entries to the competition will be displayed at a public exhibition area, as well as in a competition catalogue that will be published on the Foundation's Web site ([www.zonarentalucv.com](http://www.zonarentalucv.com)). The place, date and time of the public exhibition will be informed

at appropriate time. The FFAB will keep the entries' material and will be able to use it with the aim of publishing or advertising for the proposals.

## 1.20 - OBLIGATIONS

Competitors commit themselves to entirely accepting all regulating, technical and procedural provisions established in these competition conditions, which means that recourse to the courts, complaints and lawsuits are excluded. Consequently, by sending and/or submitting their entries to the Foundation, competitors are both entirely acknowledging and accepting the provisions set in the competition conditions, terms and regulations.

## 1.21 - COMMITMENTS OF THE FOUNDATION AFTER THE COMPETITION

As this is an ideas competition, the Foundation has not planned signing any contract for the development of the definitive project. However, when the moment arrives to develop it, the Foundation could come to an agreement with the winner(s) of the competition and even establish some sort of contractual relationship, which would require setting the contracting conditions and the professional fees in accordance with the regulations of the Venezuelan Association of Architects for the hiring of these types of services.

## 1.22 - COPYRIGHT AND USES OF COMPETITION ENTRIES

1. The participants in the competition guarantee to the Foundation the originality of their entries and the full ownership of the non-proprietary and proprietary rights over them, in order to guarantee the peaceful enjoyment of such rights, on the terms of the assignments and authorizations referred to in the following clauses, releasing the Foundation from any liability to third parties.
2. Participation in the competition implies, by operation of the law, the acceptance of all the provisions related to the copyright contained in these competition conditions.
3. The Foundation recognizes the full effectiveness of the non-proprietary rights over the entries submitted, including that of authorship of the authors and the integrity of their works, as inalienable, non-transferable, non-attachable and not subject to prescription.
4. With the sending of the documents of the respective entry, the exploitation rights of the work and the authorization for the protection of the non-proprietary rights thereof are understood to be assigned to the Foundation, applying by analogy the provisions contained in Article 59 of the Copyright Law of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 59 of the Venezuelan Copyright Law: *“It is presumed, unless otherwise stated, that the authors of the works created under employment relationships or by commission, have assigned to the employer or principal,*

5. Consequently, by the sole fact of their participation, the competitors assign to the Foundation, free of charge, without limit, worldwide and for their entire duration, in accordance with Venezuelan legislation<sup>2</sup> the exploitation rights over their works, by any means or procedure, without prejudice to the provisions of clause 10 of this section.
6. The assignment referred to in the preceding clause includes the authorization for the Foundation to exercise the right to modification referred to in Article 21<sup>3</sup> of the Venezuelan Copyright Law and Article 12 of the Bern Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works<sup>4</sup>, for which purpose the Foundation may entrust a third party with the pertinent transformations or the development at project level of any of the entries submitted.
7. Likewise the competitors authorize the Foundation to protect the non-proprietary rights over their respective works against any violations by third parties.
8. The assignment referred to in the previous provisions does not imply any obligation for the Foundation to use a specific entry or exploit the work in any form.
9. The Foundation only assumes the obligation to conserve and maintain the physical media that contain the entries submitted for a period of thirty (30) calendar days from the date on which the verdict is published, after which the Foundation declines any responsibility with respect to the existence or conservation of such media.
10. The winners of the competition shall assign to the Foundation the respective agreement that formalizes the preceding assignments and authorizations, it being understood in these cases that payment under the agreement shall be limited solely and exclusively to the amounts that they receive by way of prizes. If the Foundation decides to use non-winning entries totally or partially, the only consideration for the assignment of the rights on the terms of clause 4 of this section is an amount not greater than the professional fees established by the Venezuelan Association of

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*as the case may be, without limit and for their entire duration, the exclusive exploitation right defined in Article 23 and contained in Title II of this Law. The delivery of the work to the employer or who commissions the creation, as the case may be, implies authorization for the latter to disseminate them, as well as to exercise the rights referred to in Articles 21 and 24 of this Law and that of protecting the non-proprietary rights, as necessary for the exploitation of the work. The assignment referred to in this article does not implicitly apply to the lectures or lessons given by professors in universities, schools and other education institutions.”*

<sup>2</sup> Article 25 of the Venezuelan Copyright Law: *“The copyright lasts for the entire lifetime of the latter and is extinguished after sixty years from January 1 of the year following his death, even with respect to the works not disseminated during his lifetime.”*

<sup>3</sup> Article 21 of the Venezuelan Copyright Law: *“The author has the exclusive right to do or authorize the translations, as well as the adaptations, arrangements and other transformations of his work.”*

<sup>4</sup> Article 12 of the Berne Convention: *“The authors of literary or artistic works shall enjoy the exclusive right to authorize the adaptations, arrangements and other transformations of their works.”*

Engineers at the date of the agreement which in no case shall be greater than those established in these conditions for the third prize.

11. For all purposes of these terms and conditions with respect to the enjoyment and exercise of the proprietary rights assigned or, as the case be, for the protection of the non-proprietary rights over the works, worldwide, including the author and ownership regime, the provisions of national, community and international legislation in force in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela at the date of opening of the competition shall apply.
12. Any controversy that arises with respect to the performance of these terms and conditions or any others derived from the competition, which cannot be settled on a friendly basis by the parties, shall be subject to settlement by amiable compositeurs or arbitrators ex aequo et bono, according to the independent arbitration system established in the Commercial Arbitration Law, published in Official Gazette of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela No. 36.143 of April 7, 1998. The parties shall attempt to appoint a single arbitrator and only in case of disagreement shall there be three, one chosen by each of the parties and the third, chosen by the other two. If the two arbitrators cannot agree on the appointment of the third, the court of first instance of competent jurisdiction shall make the appointment. The arbitral award shall be final in each case and totally and absolutely binding on the parties, for which reason they renounce the exercise of any ordinary or extraordinary appeal or means of challenge against the award.

## **2 - PROGRAMME**

This competition seeks to continue the development of the *Zona Rental of the Central University of Venezuela*, located in *Plaza Venezuela*, based on a large-scale urban project that marries productive, service, leisure and recreational activities. The area shall become one of the highest quality and most dynamic urban spaces of the city of Caracas, where ideas, art, science, business and service provision can come together. This new metropolitan public-spirited centre that shall offer secure access and staying conditions would be spatially articulated around a grand square of about two hectares.

In order to fulfil the competition objectives, the development of a large public area has been proposed, which shall:

- enable the coexistence of recreational and cultural activities within the framework of the nature and scale variety that characterizes a big city;
- constitute the key receiving and distributing point of those who either pass through the zone or use the services offered in the complex;
- take advantage of the privileged location and environment;
- ensure a high quality of life to the citizens;
- make the urban complex of the Zona Rental of Plaza Venezuela attractive to investors.

## 2.1 - SITE DESCRIPTION

### Location and urban environment

Caracas, the capital city of Venezuela, is located in a narrow valley, which stretches westbound, with a total length of 15 km, a maximum width of 3.5 km, and a flat area of around 11,000 hectares.

The Zona Rental Plaza Venezuela is located in an area known as *Plaza Venezuela* considered the geographical centre of the city of Caracas. This sector was one of the first areas that underwent an urban expansion in the fifties with the construction of the *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas* (University campus). Nowadays it is one of the key urban centres of the capital city, characterized by the presence of one of Caracas' largest ornamental fountains, surrounded by emblematic buildings of architectural significance, such as Edificio Polar, Torre Phelps and Centro Capriles, as well as some other buildings that have become referential elements of the city like Torre La Previsora and its famous digital clock, Torre Domus, Torre Lincoln and Centro Teleport, among others.

The Plaza Venezuela sector is surrounded by Los Caobos Park, the Botanical Garden and the Central University Campus (headquarters of the Central University of Venezuela). The latter is the masterpiece of Architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva and has been recently declared World Heritage site (164 hectares), immediately next to the Francisco Fajardo highway at the southern limit of the Zona Rental. From this area, it is possible to see a number of buildings standing out within this architectonic complex, such as the Stadiums, the Covered Gymnasium and the Central Library. The site is also near the Science Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Contemporary Art Museum of Caracas, the National Art Gallery and the Ateneo de Caracas.

The Plaza Venezuela sector is bound to become a business, commercial and recreational centre of metropolitan Caracas. It features a mixture of land uses —mainly industrial and commercial— generating constant vehicular and pedestrian traffic aimed at the satisfaction of commercial, financial and working needs. At the moment, there is an approximate daily traffic of 650,000 people in the area going from one place to another either by foot or in private or public vehicles. There are estimates that this number will amount to over one million in the future. A wide range of retail-commerce and service provision activities are carried out at different hours of the day. This includes restaurants, nightclubs, hotels, stores selling personal or household goods, or providing automobile-related services, as well as private and public offices of metropolitan and regional scale.

In general terms, this sector is experiencing great dynamism at the moment and there are signs that the current conditions of the urban landscape will change, mainly due to the intervention of the stock company CA Metro de Caracas, which is constructing a new subway line (line 4) and the new subway station Zona Rental, which will be connected to the existing lines 1 and 3 and their respective subway stations within the area (Plaza Venezuela I and II). This construction work is already well advanced and is due to be completed by the first quarter of 2006. The Plaza Venezuela sector can be therefore considered to be the articulating point for one of the axis with the highest urban development potential in the city of Caracas.

## Environmental and climatic conditions

The *Zona Rental Plaza Venezuela* is located in a city characterized by a tropical climate. Caracas is a city that stretches along a valley of an average height of 1,000 m above sea level. It is surrounded by mountains and features excellent scenographic and landscaping values, namely El Ávila National Park to the north (a mountain chain that separates the city from the sea, with its highest peak at over 2,700 m above sea level) and a lower mountain range to the south.

The valley is characterized by warm temperatures that barely fluctuate throughout the year, where minimum and maximum temperatures are between 19°C (66°F) and 32°C (90°F), with an annual average of 25°C (77°F).

The continuous, clean westbound winds that flow through the valley refresh the environment and carry polluting particles away from the city. A short rainy season and a long dry season, with direct fall of sunrays, affords great possibilities for open-air activities.

## Physical conditions and development capacity

The *Zona Rental Plaza Venezuela* is a 10.3-hectare portion of land right at the heart of the city of Caracas.

Due to its central location and accessibility from any city point, the *Zona Rental Plaza Venezuela* can be considered a privileged area right in the heart of Caracas, where the most important town planning project of the last decades shall be developed: the largest commercial and business complex of the city, with a floor area of more than 600,000 m<sup>2</sup> for offices, different types of shops, five stars hotels, recreational and cultural centres, public squares and a great place for spectacles and events. This complex shall become the main civic, cultural and business centre of Caracas.

Its development will include three main elements: the border buildings, with a continuous uniform image; the towers, as referential elements, and the Grand Central Square—bordered by the latter—as a space where people get in contact with the city. All this will be built in the largest land lot within the metropolitan area of Caracas that has not been developed yet. This land lot has been divided into four land units, which can be totally or partially given in usufruct, independently developed and subdivided in accordance with the conditions established by the Foundation based on its interaction with the market.

These land units, which have been named depending on their location within the Zona Rental, are the following:

**NORTHERN Unit:** located among Casanova, Gran Avenida and Oropeza Castillo avenues, and the Plaza Venezuela. Apart from shops and offices to be located in border buildings that shall be constructed along Casanova Avenue, there are plans to build a thirty-floor tower for either offices or a hotel in the western edge facing Plaza Venezuela's fountain.

**SOUTHERN Unit:** located along the borderline of the Plaza Venezuela feeder to the Francisco Fajardo Highway. The construction of a shopping and entertainment centre with a floor area of about 180,000 m<sup>2</sup> has already begun in this area, which will be endowed with a hypermarket, fast-food restaurants and eighteen high tech cinema screens. This land has been recently given in usufruct to the Ltd. consortium Desarrollos Cativen S.A., where the

French group Casino, the Colombian merger Éxito-Cadenalco and the Venezuelan corporation Empresas Polar jointly operate.

**EASTERN Unit:** located along the borderline of the Oropeza Castillo Avenue, between the Gran Avenida Avenue and the Plaza Venezuela feeder to the highway. This land unit will be devoted to the construction of a hotel, shops and offices, together with a centre for conventions, spectacles and events (*Escenario Metropolitano*) that should provide a capacity of 4,000 persons and be able to be enlarged when opened towards the grand square. A covered pedestrian passageway with the name Boulevard Olimpo will be built in the middle of this area in the north-south direction.

**CENTRAL Unit:** located in the south limit of the Casanova Avenue among the Northern, Southern and Eastern Units. It has an approximate total surface area of 23,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The old Rental Building's basements structure, with a floor area of more than 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> comprising four floors, is located within this land unit below the square surface height (868 m above the sea level) except for the upper plate (869.90 m above the sea level). Another thirty-floor tower for offices, shops or a hotel shall also be built in this unit.

The area that will be devoted to the development of the Grand Central Square basically comprises the Central Unit and part of the land areas of the Northern, Eastern and Southern Units, specifically those between the pedestrian galleries of the buildings to be built in those three units and the Central Unit. The Casanova Avenue will also be part of the grand square as a complementary area that might serve as an extension to it in case of special events.

## 2.2 - DESIGN CRITERIA

### General Guidelines

The entries to the competition shall adequately comply with the parameters established in the Regulations of the Master Plan for Design and Urban Development and with the following particular parameters:

- The reference height corresponding to the area devoted to the construction of the *Grand Central Square* is +868 m above the sea level, which coincides with the road surface level of Casanova Avenue in the middle point of the northern boundary line of the Central Unit.
- The presence of the old Rental Building's basements structure in the Central Unit (with four floors and a basement) shall be considered by the participants and its intervention would be considered valid in case they propose it. One of the floors (869.90 m above the sea level) juts out 1.90 m over the square level, while the remaining three floors are under the level of the Grand Central Square. This building will be used for cultural and artistic activities, such as exhibitions. This type of activities can also be carried out on top of it, provided that this floor is left open.
- The uses shall be adapted to those established in the Design Guidelines for the Zona Rental complex.
- Green areas shall be incorporated in the design of the grand square, as they will reinforce Caracas' tropical nature. There is also a small wooded area of large trees, the use of which shall be left to the participants' judgment.
- The ground floor of the tower to be built in the north-western corner of the square must be left open and transparent, so that it can be physically and visually linked to the adjacent areas.

- It must be taken into consideration that three levels of basement will be built just under the Grand Central Square for public car parking (ca. 5,000 parking spaces), as well as the Grand Central Station (a transport intermodal transfer station with its related services) that will link the subway system (Metro) with the main short and long distance roadways, and will offer early check-in service for domestic and international plane, ship or luxury bus travelling. Pedestrian exits will end up directly in the Grand Square.

### **Urban life quality**

The urban and landscape design expected for the competition shall be oriented to the raise of the citizens' quality of life by means of an adequate management of the climate, the vegetation and the natural and built landscapes, as well as the architecture.

### **Massively attended events**

The square shall be provided with recreational areas, so the entries should include easily identifiable leisure and entertainment spaces of no less than three thousand square meters (3,000 m<sup>2</sup>) that could be temporarily covered and become an extension to the centre for spectacles and events that has been proposed (*Escenario Metropolitano*).

### **Integration and connectivity optimization**

Due to the key location of this urban complex, the entries to the competition should not only ensure an optimum internal articulation, but also a studied integration to the existing surrounding structures of the city, with the aim of creating an adequate equilibrium with the different elements of the Grand Central Square, namely:

The *covered galleries* (double-height arcades) of the buildings surrounding it, which shall be opened towards this space in the form of a continuous public passage.

The *Casanova Avenue* (cross section of 30 m), as an extension to the Grand Central Square, which could be thus subject of special treatment, so as to make vehicular speed restriction compulsory and provide pedestrians with more safety.

The components of the urban complex of the Zona Rental, such as the *Olimpo Boulevard*, *the Sabana Grande and Estadios main accesses* and *the passages* (public paths through the buildings) that allow for a continuous pedestrian movement between different elements of the sector.

The particular location of the square and its development call for special consideration of its relation with:

- the accesses to the Grand Central Station and the Metro stations,
- the stops of the surface public transport routes,
- the most important open public spaces of the sector —Sabana Grande Boulevard, Los Caobos Park, Simón Bolívar Square—,
- the Central University Campus.



### **Promotion of public art**

The entries shall include art works that would enable for the creation of an integrated complex that constitutes a vital urban space where aesthetic values can be appreciated by the citizens.

The FFAB will not be obliged to make use of all the art works proposed by participants in the development of the square. The FFAB will organize competitions or will resort to a Committee of Experts to select the art works that will be definitively included.

### **Support services**

The entries should schematically specify the spaces and facilities that would ensure the efficiency and the quality of the Grand Central Square.

### **Influence of the development in stages**

It is worth mentioning that the Grand Central Square could be concluded even before the buildings of the other Units of the Zona Rental. The development of the complex could be carried out in either continuous or discontinuous stages.

## **3 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

It is advisable that the competitors, especially foreign ones, visit the following Web sites, in order to get additional information on the city of Caracas and Venezuela.

[www.marn.gov.ve](http://www.marn.gov.ve)

[www.mpc.gov.ve](http://www.mpc.gov.ve)

[www.igvsb.gov.ve](http://www.igvsb.gov.ve)

[www.alcaldiamayor.gov.ve](http://www.alcaldiamayor.gov.ve)