



Review and Update of the World Bank's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policies

Multi-stakeholder Consultation Meeting

Bengaluru, April 8, 2013

Feedback Summary

The multi-stakeholder consultation meeting was held on April 8, 2013. The meeting started with a statement [see statement [here](#)] from a group of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Participants from CSOs expressed serious concerns about the work of the World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) in India, and the Bank's overall development model and projects outcomes. They shared examples of violations of protection measures for the environment, marginalized and vulnerable people, including Indigenous Peoples, women and children. Serious concerns were also raised about the way the Bank handles consultations, including those for projects. Participants from government and implementing agencies did not express their views in this meeting. A minute of silence was observed in memory of a 17-year old boy who was shot to death by the police in Narmada many years ago.

This is a summary of key points raised by the participants.

Issues and challenges encountered in the application of the safeguard policies

Examples of projects where the safeguards did not work

- In a GEF funded project, Biodiversity Conservation and Rural Livelihoods, social and environmental assessment was done as per the safeguard policies. Consultations were used to collect stakeholder feedback. Six consultations were done and a report was produced. Presentations were made in Delhi where World Bank officials participated. Conflicts in the landscape were discussed, for example, the fact that local people were not allowed to collect forest produce. The consultants were asked to remove references to these conflicts in their report and send it back to the Ministry of Environment and Forests so that the Project could move forward. An eight-point letter was sent to the consultants regarding issues with their work. The consultants refused to change the report and were not paid. An earlier, pre-consultation version of the Environment and Social Assessment Plan – prepared under the previous eco-development project – was posted on the website. The consultants sought to share this information and appreciated that other participants could also share feedback on how the policies have gone wrong.
- The IFC funded West Coast Paper in the Dandeli district, which was operating without an effluent treatment plant (ETP) and using old chlorine bleach technology. This was near the pristine forests in North Karnataka, where tribals/adivasis were living using traditional knowledge. Bamboo forests were provided free of cost, along with electricity and land. People have been suffering; there have

been neo-natal deaths, and cattle were found to have tumors. In 2004, IFC funded this paper mill to expand its operations. An ETP was installed but it was too small to meet the requirements. Up to two out of three people continue to suffer, including from skin infections and other problems. Land can only be used for bamboo and the pulpy, polluted water of the Kali River cannot be used for other purposes. There are high levels of heavy metals and carcinogens. About 62,000 ha of forest land has been given for monoculture for pulp supply. Complaints were sent to the World Bank/IFC but nothing was done. This is an example of a project that has been implemented under these policies.

Comments on overall World Bank policies and approaches

- Serious economic downturns in the developed world are pushing the Bank to increase lending in the developing world. While the Bank is doing business in India, it is not facilitating development. Commoditization and privatization are what Bank policies stand for. These have proven to be socially unjust and financially imprudent, because they put a country in debt and harm vulnerable and marginalized people. The policy of user fees applied in health and public goods sectors is highly unsuccessful and places people at risk. Such overarching policies have already damaged Latin America and Africa; safeguards do not work.
- Moreover, there is no respect for the law of the land. Indians are governed by the Constitution of the country and policies affecting the country should emerge from the Constitution.
- There are violations across the country in Bank funded projects and there is a structured approach towards excluding people from the development process. Many projects using privatization initiatives, from health reform to water supply, have shown failures on the ground while being highlighted as successes in reports.
- Water privatization is being promoted in Northern Karnataka with Bank support. Water is a necessity, not a luxury commodity. Water is needed for life. Water should not only be for people who can afford to buy it. Bank policies are not protecting vulnerable and marginalized people.
- In Karnataka, many things are being done through privatization of health services. It is same in health as it is with water. People are caught between a highly degraded health system and an exploitative private sector. Poor women are forced to deliver by the side of the road. These kind of policies and programs are not working and they are not safeguarding marginalized and vulnerable people. Such policies have decimated the public health sector in Karnataka.
- The Bank is not needed for governance and policy-making.
- The Bank does not respect the law of the country.
- Bank-supported projects are actually going in reverse / backward rather than promoting progressive development.
- The statement of the Jubilee Movement (statement collected in writing), seeks to put an end to the system of external debt. This is a system that does not enable a country to develop on its own steam as it promotes dependence.
- There are 40 million homes without power and the private sector is profiting through green energy projects. The social and environmental damage that these projects cause are not being considered. There is opposition to the IFC solar park project but the Bank is not interested in addressing this opposition.

- Despite all safeguard policies IFC is financing operations that are causing harm to people and communities (for instance the financing of the expansion of the Paper Mill Project causing damage to the environment and communities).

Emerging Areas

- Having worked on violence against women for the last 30 years, the CSOs present note an exponential increase. This is not a personal and domestic issue restricted to the family. This goes much beyond. There is a destruction and devaluation of women in the macro policies.
- The micro-credit schemes being popularized in Andhra Pradesh are leading to high levels of suicides – which we believe that the Bank is facilitating – and causing complete destruction.
- Free, Prior and Informed Consent should be part of the policies and applied consistently.

Consultation Process

- For the process to be meaningful, the Bank should consult with project affected communities and seek views from people who don't live in urban settings. Public hearings where everyone is invited should be considered. A space where everyone can easily attend should be provided. Other languages should be used to reach different constituency groups. Stakeholders representation should be ensured.
- The Bank has been holding consultations for many decades. Informed participants can understand and appreciate Free & Prior Informed Consent. The views and opinions of those who may not have this privilege should be carefully sought and taken into account.
- Better public dissemination of the consultations is needed. Wider participation especially from stakeholders affected by Bank funded projects and from stakeholders who are familiar with development should be ensured. Consultations should be inclusive.
- Locations for consultations should be places where people feel comfortable
- People need to be informed before they join the consultations and made aware of the purpose of the consultations and what they are being asked to contribute.