



Review and Update of the World Bank’s Environmental and Social Safeguard Policies
Phase 3
Feedback Summary

Date: March 8, 2016

Location: Washington DC, USA

Audience: Religious Leaders and Experts on Religion

Comments

- Religious issues often take on double-discrimination and double-jeopardy nature given their sensitivity.
- A major challenge for the World Bank will be to educate communities and religious leaders on the existence of the non-discrimination policy.
- It would be useful to have an Advisory Council on Religious Issues that could advise the Bank on how to implement the non-discrimination principle on the basis of religion.
- Recent studies have found a positive association between religious freedom and development.
- The World Bank should integrate the values of the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in its development work.
- Terminology plays a relevant role in development. The framing of a term matters and it either adds or reduces its value. The language in the proposed Framework should be more positive and use inclusion instead of non-discrimination.
- The World Bank should include a “religious freedom” indicator for countries as part of its SA and SIA.
- The World Bank needs to approach other lenders to educate them about the benefit of employing appropriate and internationally accepted Environmental and Social Risk Management measures.

- We need to have a “pastoral view” of the people that are the beneficiaries of development. That implies treating them like human beings, not statistics.
- World Bank needs to accept that discrimination on the basis of religion is rarely disassociated from economic disparity, ethnicity, historical legacies, land issues, and politics.
- It is important to treat vulnerable populations (including people discriminated against because of their religious beliefs and identity not as victims, but as active protagonists.
- The Bank needs to clear about how it will build greater capacity and competence/expertise in order to effectively operationalize the noble inclusion of religious identity in a non-discrimination principle, particularly because religious issues tend to be quite complex, multi-faceted and sometimes are polarizing and very sensitive.
- Religious dimensions are critical issues and cannot be ignored. The opening to address them more explicitly is welcome.
- To date: the Bank can be institutionally blind but often individually savvy. Without tools and a mandate, many avoid the topic until it is unavoidable.
- Project context offers specific entry points but can limit and distort. Analysis must be linked to country strategy, analysis, sector analysis, policy lending.
- Vital to explore examples to test possibilities and limits.
- Relate to religious freedom discussions and context: issue of proselytizing by religious actors most directly linked to development programs because it is a widespread concern and obstacle to constructive engagement.
- When developing SAs, the World Bank should take into account differentiated impacts due to casual and structural discrimination.
- The principle of non-discrimination has a longer precedent in the world of humanitarian assistance.
- Discrimination based on not having a religion must also be considered. Participants suggested that the UN's language is incorporated into the ESF: By stating that no one will be discriminated "based on religion or belief," you also safeguard individuals who are not part of a religious faith or, seen from a different perspective, may believe that all religions are myths.

Questions

- How is discrimination on the basis of caste managed in the proposed Framework?
- How often have issues pertaining to religion come up in past consultations?
- How are Social Assessments (SA) and Social Impact Assessments (SIA) developed?
- How frequently are religious minorities mapped in SAs and SIAs?
- What will happen if the borrower does not want to undertake a mapping of religious minorities as part of an SA or SIA?
- What is the relationship between religion and Indigenous Peoples?
- Does ESS 2 include provisions for adults as well as children?
- Does the proposed Framework take into account discrimination on the basis of immigration status?
- Does the proposed Framework address situations where religion may be used as the basis for discrimination? For example, religions that discriminate against members of the LGBTI community.
- Will the relationship between the World Bank and the Inspection Panel change once the proposed Framework is adopted?
- How will the World Bank ensure that “religious freedom” is not used as an excuse to discrimination against certain groups?
- What is the relationship between loans and grants that incentivize human rights outcomes and the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination at the project level?
- Does the World Bank consider preexisting conditions in a project area and how they may positively or adversely affect development outcomes?
- How does the World Bank decide if a Borrower’s Environmental and Social Management System can be used for World Bank-financed projects?
- How will the World Bank ensure that its projects do not alter existing agreements between governments and religious institutions?
- ESS 10 states that the Borrower will identify project-affected parties who, because of their particular circumstances, may be disadvantaged or vulnerable. It also states that depending on the potential significance of environmental and social risks and impacts, the Borrower may be required to retain independent third party specialists to assist in the stakeholder identification

and analysis to support a comprehensive analysis and the design of an inclusive engagement process. Who will determine what project-affected parties are disadvantaged or vulnerable? Who will be the third party specialist that guarantee that people are adequately identified?

- What happens to people who are not affiliated to any religion and are the target of discrimination because of their non-religious status?