



**World Bank Regional Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples
Guna Yala, Panama, January 30-31 2014**

Summary

Background and objectives

The Indigenous Peoples Dialogue in Latin America was initiated in April of 2013 as part of the Bank's overall consultation process for the updating and reform of the safeguards policies. The Dialogue has allowed for a substantive and ongoing exchange with Indigenous leaders and organizations going far beyond a series of meetings. The LCR Dialogue has been designed and implemented jointly between the Bank and the only regional network of Indigenous organizations in Latin America, the Abya Yala Indigenous Forum.¹ The output of this first phase of the Dialogue process is a proposal with specific recommendations for the Bank safeguard policies reform. The initial draft of this proposal was prepared by Abya Yala's technical committee and resulted from an analysis of the current policies and how they have been applied in eight WB projects from several countries and sectors.

The objective of the two-day workshop in Guna Yala was to give a broader network of representatives an opportunity to review, analyze, discuss, and further enhance the aforementioned draft proposal, share lessons learned from the application on the safeguard policy on indigenous peoples, identify the critical issues the safeguards policies review should take into account, and finalize the proposal and plan for phase two of the dialogue. During the meeting, the participants also gave feedback on what they believe would be the most appropriate communication and socialization tools to build the necessary information base to undertake the dialogue. The two-day workshop brought together around 40 representatives of indigenous peoples organizations from 17 different countries. Several of these representatives are actively engaged in Bank projects.

Format

The meeting was run by Abya Yala's technical committee and consisted of welcoming remarks by the traditional authorities of the Guna Yala territory of Panama, a brief overview by Bank staff of the background and global context of the dialogue, a presentation of the technical committee's draft proposals, and breakaway thematic group sessions that developed recommendations to enhance the proposal. The output of the meeting is a revised proposal incorporating these recommendations.

¹ The Foro indígena de Abya Yala is the only Latin American network of Indigenous organizations including: Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas (CAOI), la Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA), el Consejo Indígena de Centro América (CICA), el Consejo Indígena de Mesoamérica (CIMA), la Red de Mujeres Indígenas sobre Biodiversidad (RMIB), y el Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas.

Key comments, observations, and recommendations

Integration of the concept of 'good living'. The participants emphasized that it is necessary to drive the tone and objectives of the Indigenous Peoples Policy (OP 4.10) away from a western concept of development (based on capital accumulation and prioritizing economic development), to the holistic concept of 'good living' (buen vivir). Such concept encompasses economic, political, cultural, and spiritual well-being, and is rooted in a harmonious and reciprocal relationship with the natural environment. It can be also summarized as 'plentiful living' (vida plena).

Adoption of free, prior, and informed consent. The participants asked for the adoption, in line with the UN, IFC, and other multilaterals, of language that provides a more explicit recognition of their rights in regards to decision making and participation in projects that affect their territories and/or natural resources, including free, prior and informed consent on aspects of projects that directly affect them, as opposed to OP 4.10's current principle of broad community support, which the technical committee found too ambiguous and difficult to document.

Recognition of indigenous lands and territories. The participants stressed the importance of the legal recognition of their rights over the lands and territories they have traditionally occupied or used, as a prerequisite for any intervention.

The policy should also establish mechanisms to ensure restitution or compensation for indigenous peoples when their lands, territories or socio-cultural environments have been negatively affected by Bank-financed projects.

Protected Areas. World Bank projects funding the development of protected areas should avoid involuntary restrictions to indigenous peoples' access to resources. Any development of protected areas in indigenous land or territories should be subject to free prior and informed consent.

Respect for Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation. The Bank should recognize the existence of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and respect their autonomy and self-determination to live as such in their harmonic relationship with nature. There should be no interventions or interference in the territories of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation.

Enhanced participation in project design and development The discussion of this topic was centered around changing Indigenous Peoples' role in the IP policy from passive actors or receptors of impacts/benefits to becoming an active player and partner in project design and implementation.

According to the participants, this entails establishing mechanisms where the Bank can work directly with indigenous peoples through support for their projects, technical assistance, knowledge, and convening services. IP representatives also mentioned the importance of working with the States to allow indigenous communities access to World Bank resources.

The discussions also touched upon the necessity of supporting and strengthening the indigenous governance and administration institutions to develop the necessary capacity to engage with the Bank as partners.

Furthermore, the participation of indigenous peoples all projects in which they are stakeholders must be full and effective, and it must encompass all stages of the project including design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Broader participation in national and regional programs and strategic planning. The participants agreed that the Bank should promote more effective mechanisms for the participation of Indigenous Peoples in national or regional programs where they could be affected or benefit. In particular, they mentioned the need for a more meaningful role in the Bank's strategic planning processes with governments in countries where they have a significant presence.

Enhanced communication and socialization The discussion emphasized the need to develop more adequate communication tools to allow indigenous peoples to be informed and participate in Bank projects.

Social assessments and indigenous peoples planning frameworks and plans should not only be made available to affected communities, but should also be socialized as in many cases there are people in these communities that cannot read or write. The language of the instruments should be simple and easily understood.

Support for Indigenous Peoples' own institutional organizing and capacity There should be more support to the Indigenous Peoples' own institutional organizing and capacity to engage as partners with the Bank in the shared prosperity agenda.

Increased focus on indicators and results. World Bank policies should have a greater focus on indicators and results, including indicators to measure "good living".

Improved grievance-redress mechanisms. The Bank should establish a grievance redress mechanism beyond a project context that would allow indigenous peoples to resolve issues efficiently without the need to go through the Inspection Panel.

Greater access to senior management and board. The Bank should facilitate an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples to voice these proposals directly to the Board of Director or Sr. Bank Management at a high level meeting.

Feedback on dissemination tools for the dialogue process. The participants provided the following feedback on a draft documentary video on the dialogue process. Dissemination tools should:

- Communicate clearly that the Bank's objective through this dialogue process is to strengthen the safeguards policies.
- Explain the content and implications of the Policy on Indigenous Peoples (OP 4.10).
- Clarify the specific roles of the Bank, State, and IPs in Bank financed projects.
- Show examples of good and bad practices in the application of the policies.
- Explain the relationship between indigenous peoples and their territory, beyond natural resources.
- Be easy to understand, containing only non-technical language.

- Contain a larger variety of interview, including specifically indigenous elders.
- Be less linear and make better use of audiovisual effects and music.
- Balance the use of images familiar to IPs of different sub-regions (Caribbean, Central America, Andes, Amazon, etc.).
- Name explicitly the indigenous organizations involved.