



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Report from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to Congress on Development of a Policy on Indigenous Peoples

Pursuant to Section 7019(e) of Division K of Public Law 115-141, the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2018, which incorporates by reference the requirements of the Joint Explanatory Statement that accompanied Public Law 115-141, USAID is submitting this report to Congress on the development of a Policy on Indigenous Peoples.

The USAID Administrator is directed to develop, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies and indigenous peoples' organizations, a USAID policy to guide the Agency in effectively addressing the rights and needs of indigenous peoples in USAID programs, projects, and activities. The Administrator shall report to the Committees on Appropriations on progress in developing the policy not later than 90 days after enactment of the Act.

The Human Rights Division in the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (the “DRG Center”) in the USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) prepared this report.

Introduction

The over 370 million indigenous people in the world today are among the most-marginalized communities on earth, who face multiple forms of discrimination, exclusion, and oppression. In every country in which USAID works, indigenous peoples lag behind the general population on all development indicators: They suffer from higher levels of poverty, have less access to education and healthcare, and have shorter lifespans.

Over the past four years, USAID’s Advisor on Indigenous Peoples Issues conducted consultations with USAID’s Missions, Bureaus, technical experts, and previous Administrators on the Agency’s programming for indigenous peoples. The conversations indicated a clear need to establish a policy to ensure all the Agency’s programs emphasize a “do-no-harm” approach with respect to indigenous peoples and more-actively engage indigenous people themselves as stakeholders in designing and implementing activities, including monitoring-and-evaluation efforts.

In early 2017, awaiting the determination of the priorities of the new Administration, DCHA and the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) suspended the policy-development process, which began in November 2016. In the meantime, the Agency’s Indigenous Peoples Working Group (IPWG), led by the Agency’s Indigenous Peoples Advisor and comprised of members from across the Agency (including from several Missions), drafted an Indigenous Peoples Programming Guide, which will form the basis for the forthcoming Policy on Indigenous Peoples.

Progress in Developing the Policy on Indigenous Peoples

In May 2018, USAID re-established the Agency's formal process to develop a Policy on Indigenous Peoples. The Policy will offer an important opportunity to advance the Administrator's expressed commitment to inclusive development. The IPWG is in the process of completing the latest draft of the Indigenous Peoples Programming Guide, whose objectives are as follows:

- 1) Strengthen engagement with indigenous people to ensure USAID's programs align with their development priorities, and to safeguard them against harm;
- 2) Increase the integration of indigenous peoples' issues across all sectors, and promote cross-sectoral approaches; and
- 3) Empower indigenous peoples to exercise their rights, participate in decision-making processes that affect them, and practice self-determined development.

Next Steps in Developing the Policy on Indigenous Peoples

The Indigenous Peoples Advisor and the IPWG aim to complete the first draft of the Policy by the end of Summer 2018, and will share it with USAID/Washington and Missions for their review and comment. USAID will also consult with Congress and other relevant Federal Departments and Agencies on the Policy.

Also this Summer, USAID will launch a \$300,000 incentive fund to provide USAID Missions with resources to begin applying the tools and guidance set forth in the draft Policy to enable them to engage indigenous peoples more-extensively in the design and implementation of our programs. USAID will make these funds—which are a part of the \$3.5 million Congress appropriated for the USAID Advisor for Indigenous Peoples Issues in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018—available to Missions to incentivize them to conduct regular consultations, evaluate social impacts related to indigenous peoples, and identify opportunities for the inclusion of indigenous peoples and indigenous knowledge in USAID's programming. These early pilot studies and assessments will provide initial feedback the Agency will use to further refine the guidance the new Policy sets forth.

In the Fall of 2018, in each of the five regions where USAID works, the Agency will launch a series of consultations with indigenous peoples, their organizations, and their trusted allies. USAID will prepare and use reports on each consultation to further refine the draft Policy.

By early 2019, a final draft of the Policy which will incorporate feedback from an extensive network of stakeholders and reflect initial lessons-learned from pilot activities, will be ready for review by USAID leadership. Our goal is to translate and publish the policy in a number of major indigenous languages in the countries in which we work on indigenous issues.