TRANSPORT SECTOR DEVELOPMENT (UGANDA) - Board Approves Investigation

The Panel received a complaint from three representatives of the Bigodi and Nyabubale-Nkengo communities in Uganda on September 11, 2015 related to a road paving project. The complainants raise a number of allegations, including sex with minors and teenage pregnancy caused by road workers, increased sex work, spread of HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment of female employees, child labor, school dropouts, lack of or inadequate compensation, fear of retaliation, lack of participation, poor labor practices, and lack of adequate road and workplace health and safety. The Panel registered the complaint on September 28, 2015. As a result of postponements in the Management Response, the Panel’s eligibility visit to Uganda was also postponed to December 18-21, 2015. The Panel recommended an investigation of the issues raised in the complaint and the Board approved the Panel’s recommendation on January 29, 2016. The investigation is underway and the Panel is in the process of identifying expert consultants, reviewing all relevant documents and preparing for the investigation visit.

POWER PROJECT (KOSOVO) - Investigation Field Visit

The Panel received a complaint from residents of Obiliq municipality in Kosovo on June 12, 2015 regarding issues of resettlement and compensation. After its eligibility visit in September 2015, the Panel submitted a report and recommendation to the World Bank Board of Directors recommending an investigation. The Board approved the Panel’s recommendation for an investigation, and a Panel team visited Kosovo in January 2016. During this visit, the Panel team met with a range of stakeholders. The Panel is in the process of preparing its investigation report.

ELECTRICITY EXPANSION (KENYA Olkaria) - Panel Team Makes Return Visit

A Panel team led by Panel Member Jan Mattsson and a team from European Investment Bank’s Complaints Mechanism (EIB-CM), returned to Kenya to share the compliance reviews with the stakeholders that both institutions undertook. Between November 30 and December 2, 2015 both teams met officials from the Ministry of Energy and KenGen, a state-owned electricity generating company in Kenya. The team also held meetings with over 150 community members in the presence of the Government and KenGen and the two mediators supported by the EIB-CM and briefed on the findings of the investigations. During this meeting, everyone expressed support of the process and confidence that problems will be resolved.

ANDHRA PRADESH ROAD SECTOR (INDIA) - Panel Issues Notice of Non Registration

On December 18, 2015, the Panel received two complaints related to the road widening of National Highway 216 (previously known as NH 214) in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh, India. In the following days, the Panel received another 28 complaints on behalf of over 80 affected persons, raising the same concerns from communities in and around, Bhatnavili, Anathavaram and other nearby villages. They raised concerns regarding harms caused by the involuntary resettlement process. Following its due diligence, the Panel concluded that the complaints are inadmissible since the road activities are not Bank-financed.
Panel Member Jan Mattsson has written a blog reflecting on the question: Do accountability mechanisms make a difference? He felt this question must ultimately be tested against timely and effective redress of any harms caused because of non-compliance with safeguards. He also shared the positive experience collaborating with the Complaints Mechanism of the European Investment Bank (EIB-CM) in the Olkaria case, and the differences in mandates of the Inspection Panel and EIB-CM. Read more about the Inspection Panel’s case in a Maasai community in the Kenya blog here.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Following the Panel’s earlier investigations on past complaints, Bank Management submitted progress reports on the status of the implementation of its various Action Plans. Full reports are available on the Panel’s website. Here are a few highlights:

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (KENYA)

In its first and final report, Management reports that a Colloquium on Deepening Dialogue with Stakeholders in the Forest Sector was held on March 3-6, 2015, and attended by more than 300 people. A training session was also conducted on social safeguard policies for 30 vulnerable and marginalized community members. Full report.

URBAN ENVIRONMENT SANITATION (GHANA)

In its third progress report the Bank Management reports that the Government of Ghana intended to reverse its decision to expropriate land in Kwabenya, thereby restoring land rights to the affected people. Management noted that although this is the last progress report, it will follow-up with the Government until it implements this decision. Management will then issue a final note to the Board accordingly. Full report.

PRIVATE POWER GENERATION (UGANDA-Bujagali)

In its fifth progress report, Management reports following up on three remaining actions through joint Lenders’ missions and the Bank’s ongoing water and energy sector operations in Uganda which will be reflected in the next report. This includes implementation of the Sustainable Management Plan for the Kalagala Falls; electrification of households in the Naminya resettlement area; and, issuance of land titles. Full report.

VISHNUGAD PIPALKOTI HYDROELECTRIC (INDIA)

Management’s first progress report to the Board explains that a detailed “Water Loss and Alternatives Report” for 15 villages is available as a planning tool to develop alternative water supply schemes if water loss is reported. Management plans to submit another progress report in 12 months. Full report.

Rivers of Siberia and the Far East International Conference

The Panel participated in the International Conference “Rivers of Siberia and the Far East” in Irkutsk and Baykalsk, Russia on November 10-12, 2015. The Conference brought together scientists from Russia, China, Mongolia and Uzbekistan to share experience on river conservation issues in Siberia and Lake Baikal.

Myanmar Virtual Meeting with CSOs

Staff from the Inspection Panel (IPN) and the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO) held a video conference with CSO representatives from Myanmar on November 18, 2015. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the accountability role and compliance work of the IPN and CAO, and listen to CSO concerns. More.

COP21 in Paris

In December 2015 Panel Chairman Gonzalo Castro de la Mata and Panel Member Jan Mattsson participated in various events during the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris. They participated in several meetings and events with an emphasis on sharing accountability experiences relevant to emerging mitigation and adaptation strategies and institutional processes.

12th Annual Meetings of IAMs in Paris

The Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAMs) held their 12th Annual Meetings in Paris around COP 21. The IAMs examined themes of common interest including an update on recent reforms or safeguard reviews and their potential impact on the functioning of accountability mechanisms, and shared experiences on effectiveness and development of common methodologies to measure it. More.

Emerging Lessons Series

The Panel is working on a publication series to reflect on its 22 years of experience in development and to draw emerging lessons from its caseload. The series will consist of separate publications on involuntary resettlement, indigenous peoples, environmental assessment and consultation. The first installment on involuntary resettlement will be published in the spring.

Visit by NYU Students

On November 19, 2015, a group of students from NYU School of Law visited the Panel to discuss the research project they are undertaking as part of NYU Law School’s International Organizations Clinic on the proposed draft of the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework.

Staff Announcements

John Garrison retired from the Inspection Panel in December 2015. After working nearly 20 years to manage Bank relations with civil society, John had joined the Panel as a Senior Civil Society Specialist in October 2014. John spearheaded the Panel’s outreach efforts for over a year.

Noura Al-Saket interned at the Panel in January 2016. Noura, a Jordanian lawyer pursuing her LLM degree at Harvard Law School, supported a variety of current cases.

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