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*Australian Government issues Safeguard Guidelines*

## Displacement and Resettlement of People in Development Activities

Australian Government (AusAID) has issued its Safeguard Policy “Displacement and Resettlement of People in Development Activities”. This became effective from October 2012. The policy outlines AusAid's approach to managing development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR).

Safeguarding the interests of vulnerable people is a key priority of AusAid. Development activities such as the building of economic or social infrastructure and the establishment of conservation areas sometimes require the use of land that local communities already occupy or use. When these communities are required to move or when their access to land is restricted, it is known as displacement.

Development has the potential to

benefit everyone, but where physical or economic displacement occurs as a result of development activity, it may lead to long-term hardship and impoverishment if not addressed. Resettlement is a process that helps people build new lives at a different location while mitigating the effects of displacement on their standard of living. When done well, resettlement can ensure that displaced communities share the benefits of development and vulnerable groups improve their living standards.

AusAid aims to:

1. avoid displacement and resettlement wherever possible by considering all viable alternative activities or design options
2. minimize, mitigate or compensate for adverse project impacts on those affected where such impacts cannot

be avoided

3. enhance or at least restore the livelihoods of affected people relative to pre-project levels, and improve standards of living for displaced poor and other vulnerable groups

The objectives, requirements and principles are outlined in Displacement and Resettlement of People in Development Activities

AusAid's approach reflects a commitment to align with the Involuntary Resettlement policies of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank and reduce the burden of multiple donor requirements on partner governments.

For further information, contact the Governance and Social Development Branch at [resettlement@ausaid.gov.au](mailto:resettlement@ausaid.gov.au)

## World Bank Launches Review of Social, Environmental Safeguards

by Carey L. Biron

The World Bank has begun a highly anticipated reappraisal of its social and environmental “safeguards” policies, a process that is slated to take place over the next two years. “We’ve begun the process of updating ... these critical policies, which have been the cornerstone of our collective efforts to protect people and the environment,” Cyril Muller, the World Bank's vice-president for external affairs, said at the institution's Washington headquarters, which saw initial discussions on the review process. “This is a key process as a way to make our institution as effective as possible,” he said.

In fact, the implications of the safeguards are broader than just the World Bank's own work. As the bank stated in an approach paper review process released in mid-October, the policies have become a “global standard for other development partners”. Yet many analysts have suggested that the bank has, over time, fallen behind

the social and environmental assessments that have become standard in other multilateral development institutions.

Following a critical internal report in 2010 that led to the current review, the Bank appeared to agree. Within weeks of the report's publication, then-World Bank President Robert Zoellick admitted, “To date, more attention has focused on financial risk than human risk. We need to redress that imbalance.” In the immediate run-up to the beginning of the review process, high-level U.S. government officials have begun to emphasise the high stakes of the endeavour, including worries that the process could weaken rather than strengthen the safeguards. “While it is important for the World Bank to move forward with a review of its current safeguard policies, there are concerns that the review could be used to dilute the ... safeguards,” Nancy Pelosi, the minority leader in the U.S. House of Representatives,

said in a late-September letter to U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner.

“The review has the potential to produce a set of strengthened and innovative procedures that will be transparent enough to be enforceable and with sufficient budget associated with them to be effective. I support strengthening these safeguards to include prior assessments of human rights, working conditions, and a stronger focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation.”

The safeguards review will now proceed through three consultative phases through 2014, with the bank promising a wealth of updated information in this website, where the public can also register questions or concerns. A report on the first consultative phase is to be published in April.

For more details read: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/11/world-bank-launches-review-of-social-environmental-safeguards/>

## Social Risk' Test Ordered by China for Big Projects

By Keith Bradsher

*Extracts from the report "Social Risks' Test ordered by China for Big Projects" by Keith Bradsher from The New York Times, 12 November 2012, received from Michael Cenrea, is especially reproduced below for the readers of Resettlement News.*

Beijing The cabinet of China has ordered that all major industrial projects must pass a "social risk assessment" before they begin, a move aimed at curtailing the large and increasingly violent environmental protests of the last year, which forced the suspension or cancellation of chemical plants, coal-fired power plants and a giant copper smelter. The announcement came at a news conference on Monday held in conjunction with the 18th Party Congress, at which several senior officials addressed social issues ahead of the once-in-a decade transition of power in the Chinese leadership.

"No major projects can be launched without social risk evaluations," Zhou Shengxian, the environment minister, said at the news conference. "By doing so, I hope we can reduce the number of mass incidents in the future."

When the protests began, they drew mostly middle-age and older Chinese who had little to lose if the police put disparaging remarks about them into the files that the government maintains on

every citizen. But over the past several months, angry youths have gathered from several towns and have used social media to coordinate their activities during clashes with security forces trends that are certain to have dismayed the country's political leadership.

The national government had previously said on several occasions that it was studying ways to conduct social risk evaluations, and the current Five-Year Plan through 2015 calls for a mechanism to be created to make such assessments. Some local and provincial governments already have procedures for assessing whether a community will reject a planned project, separate from environmental risk assessments.

But Mr. Zhou is the first to say that the cabinet, known as the State Council, has actually ordered that no more major projects be started without a social risk assessment, said Ma Jun, the director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, one of the best-known environmental groups in Beijing. Mr. Zhou also noted that effective Sept. 1, all government agencies in China had been ordered to make public all environmental impact assessments by posting them on the Internet, with a description of what the government planned to do about the assessments. The decision was announced at the time, but received limited attention.

Mr. Zhou said that mass protests tended to happen because of one or more of the mistakes that the government now intends to remedy. These mistakes involve projects that start without official approval, without proper environmental impact assessments and without an assessment of community sentiment, he said, and weak local governments may also be a factor.

He did not provide a description of how social risk assessments would be conducted, but he indicated that they would involve looking at the likelihood that a project would set off a public backlash.

Societies inevitably become more aware of environmental issues as they develop, and this is happening in China, Mr. Zhou said. He took a fairly sympathetic tone toward the protesters, changing tack only once, when he used a derogatory term for those who object only to the proximity of a project and not to its environmental fundamentals. "We are beginning to see a 'not in my backyard' phenomenon," he said....

Many environmental officials in China want the introduction of social risk assessments because protests against industrial projects often involve broader issues than just the environment and may extend to questions like whether the land for the project was lawfully obtained with proper compensation for its previous owners, Mr. Ma said.

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

### International Geographical Congress, Cologne, Germany, August 2012

#### Development-induced Displacement: Addressing Conflict and Impoverishment

Report by Jane Singer, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University, Japan

"Development-induced displacement (DID): Addressing conflict and impoverishment" was the theme of a key session held on Augusts 27, 2012 at the 2012 International Geographical Congress held in Cologne Germany. The session, led by Andreas Neef and Jane Singer of the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies at Kyoto University, featured four presentations emblematic of recent concerns in DID, including land grabbing, dam-induced displacement and impacts of urban renewal projects.

Kerstin Nolte of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies examined four recent examples of foreign land investments in Mali, concluding that participation of and leverage by affected populations is a key factor in determining outcomes. Local participation was also the

theme of Jane Singer's presentation. She suggested that for dam projects in central Vietnam, the loss of productive land and residents' inability to meaningfully influence decisions continued to impede successful resettlement, despite an improved regulatory framework.

Narae Choi of the Department of International Development, Oxford University, presented her research on adverse impacts on residents remaining in a locality after others are forcibly resettled. By focusing on the "hidden losers" of a railway upgrading project in Metro Manila, she sought to present a more inclusive analysis of overall socioeconomic impacts and policy considerations for resettlement projects. Finally, Chiara Marrotti of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, adopted a political

economy approach to examination of dam displacement in Andhra Pradesh, India. She argued that poor compensation procedures and limited off-farm employment resulted in "adverse incorporation of the displaced population into the local process of economic development."

Brooke Wilmsen of La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia, who is currently focusing on resettlement in China, including displacement by the Three Gorges Dam and voluntary poverty alleviation projects, provided a final commentary on the issues raised by presenters before the floor was opened for discussion. Several of the session's papers will be included in a planned special issue of the new Oxford University Press journal Migration Studies.

## International Conference on Development-Induced Displacement and Resettlement: Bridging Research and Practice, Filling the Knowledge Gaps

Hosted by Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, 22-23 March 2013

There is virtually no limit to what can be called a development project. It can range from a small scale infrastructure or mining projects in a mega hydropower plant construction, can be public or private, well planned or rushed into land-based development initiatives, may and often do cause physical and economic displacement that results in impoverishment and disempowerment of affected populations. Despite decades of experience and study on development-induced displacement and resettlement, the severity of the problem persists, with its adverse impacts not yet

being effectively addressed.

DIDR has been intensifying in frequency and scope propelled by the increasing needs of growing populations and globalization, whereas the discussions on the subject have become disappointingly scant. Different interests and ethical considerations pull the academia, private and civil sectors apart, creating inescapable traps and sources of bias in research policy and practice. The disconnection manifests itself in the knowledge gaps. Whilst controversies in policy-making and practice remain understudies, academic

findings endure unincorporated.

International Conference on Development-induced Displacement and Resettlement, which took place on 22-23 March 2013, is a volunteer initiative of PhD students and hosted by the Refugees Studies Centre. Its aim was to revive the discussions on DIDR and to facilitate cross-communication between different stakeholders, disciplines and perspectives, and seek to bridge research and practice with a view to fill the knowledge gaps and move the DIDR studies forward.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

#### Displacement and Resettlement in India: The Human Cost of Resettlement

by Hari Mohan Mathur London and New York: Routledge 2013 (Publication Date: May 2013)

In the past ten years or so, displacement by development projects has gone on almost untamed under the globalization pressures to meet the demand for land from local and increasingly foreign investors. Focusing on India, this book looks at the complex issue of resettling people who are displaced for the sake of development projects.

The book discusses how the affected farming communities are fiercely opposing the development projects that often leave them worse off than before, and how this conflict is a matter of serious concern for the planners, as it could discourage potential capital inflows and put India's growth trajectory into jeopardy. It analyses the challenge of protecting the interests of farmers, and at the same time ensuring that these issues do not hinder the path of development. The book goes on to highlight the emerging approaches to resettlement that promise a more equitable development outcome.

A timely analysis of displacement and resettlement associated with development projects, this book has an appeal beyond

South Asian Studies alone. It will be of interest to resettlement and development policy makers, planners, administrators and trainers, as also researchers and students of social sciences, resettlement and development studies.

**REVIEW** *This volume is an outstanding contribution from India to the international scholarship in the domain of development-caused displacement and resettlement. A richly packed idea resource, this book will be indispensable for development practitioners, as well as researchers and students of resettlement, social sciences and development studies everywhere, not in India alone.* Michael M Cernea, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution, Washington DC, and Former Senior Adviser for Social Policies in the World Bank

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### Displaced: The Human Cost of Development and Resettlement

by Olivia Bennett and Christopher McDowell New York: New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2012

Millions of people are resettled every year in the name of development and progress. Many of these individuals endure social and cultural disruption as well as economic upheaval, and a significant number never regain their former quality

of life. Despite this, the voices of these with direct experience of displacement are rarely heard.

Panos London marks the International Day of Sharing Life Stories on May 16, by announcing the publication of Displaced:

The Human Cost of Development. A powerful book that seeks to address the absence of voice in the resettlement debate, it draws upon an extensive archive of vivid first-hand accounts by the displaced themselves, gathered by Panos London and



partners in Africa and Asia.

The six case studies that form the core of the book feature the voices of men and women displaced by the Tarbela Dam in Pakistan, pastoralists in Kenya displaced by agricultural and conservative initiatives, groups of San in Botswana and Namibia resettled as a result of government schemes and conservation policies, farming families in India who lost their land and livelihoods

to coalmining, and mountain villagers in Lesotho, resettled by Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

In bringing together these individual experiences, the book reveals the loss of cultural continuity and identity, shifts in family responsibilities and gender roles, and fractured relationships between generations that are just some of the complex challenges people face as they

attempt to rebuild their lives and communities. Although these narratives are sufficed with regret and a sense of loss, they also demonstrate resourcefulness and resilience in the face of profound change. Development's social cost continues to be under-reported; these stories are a crucial reminder of its often devastating consequences.

## Impacts of Large Dams: A Global Assessment

by Cecilia Tortajada, Dogan Altinbilek and Asit K. Biswas (eds). Berlin: Springer 2012.

One of the most controversial issues of the water sector in recent years has been the impacts of large dams. Proponents have claimed that such structures are essential to meet the increasing water demands of the world and that their overall societal benefits far outweigh the costs. In contrast, the opponents claim that social and

environmental costs of large dams far exceed their benefits, and that the era of construction of large dams is over. A major reason as to why there is no consensus on the overall benefits of large dams is because objective, authoritative and comprehensive evaluations of their impacts, especially ten or more years after their construction, are conspicuous by their absence. This book

debates impartially, comprehensively and objectively, the positive and negative aspects of large dams based on facts, figures and authoritative analyses. These in-depth case studies are expected to promote a healthy and balanced debate on the needs, impacts and relevance of large dams, with case studies from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Latin America.

## Bort-les-Orgues, les mots sous le lac, Recits et temoignages

Armelle Faure 2012: Paris: Privat

Armelle Faure in her book that translates as *Bort-les-Orgues, Worlds under the Lake: Words and Witness Accounts* presents a moving account of about 140 families whom the dam of Bort-les-Orgues (a lake, 22 kilometers long on the Dordogne River) displaced 60 years ago. This study is based on conversations of the author with 31 witnesses of this dam, one of the tallest in Europe at that time and regarded as a feat of engineering. They talk about the life that they had lived on their farms along the lake during the post-World War II era. They tell how the life changed once the lake submerged the three train stations, cutting them off from the links with the world outside and affecting their commercial activities. Even the aristocratic family of d'Arcy had to abandon their medieval

castle, as the productive farms, land and wood were all gone. The Chateau de Val still stands on the bank of the lake, though. Nobody wanted to leave their settlements but they had no choice as all farming land had gone under the lake. The 62 families of Port-Dieu fought for the building of a new village in Confolent on the hill above in order to stay together. With the help of then Prime Minister Henri Queuille, they finally succeeded. The words recorded in this book have a profoundly universal tone, emotional but dignified. The international resettlement norms have since improved, and people today are displaced and resettled in a way that is much better planned. The witnesses consider it important that their voices on what they need must be heard. Development planners

can learn much from the resettlement experience of the Dordogne Valley's displaced people

**RESETTLEMENT News** published twice a year in January and July reports on current operational, research and capacity building work in resettlement from around the world. The aim is to disseminate practical experience, information and ideas among those working for resettlement agencies, development research centres, and management training institutes. It is published by the Resettlement News Network - an informal network of individuals with a concern for the fate of people who are forced to relocate due to development projects.

The submission of material relating to any aspect of development-induced resettlement is welcomed, and should be addressed to the Editor:

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## Preventing Displacement

Special Issue of Forced Migration Review Issue 41 December 2012

Preventing displacement is obviously a worthwhile objective. Being displaced puts people at a higher risk of being both impoverished and unable to enjoy their human rights. Such a situation is worth preventing.

People know that displacement brings with it risks and vulnerabilities such as loss of land and work, homelessness, food insecurity, health risks, loss of access to

common resources such as education, and possibly destruction of social networks upon which people depend, particularly during crisis. "The effects of displacement can last a lifetime and beyond, damaging the prospects of future generations," says Valerie Amos in the opening article. "We can do more to prevent displacement and the suffering it brings."

Source: From the Editors of FMR