



The Inspection Panel

March 2, 2015
Washington, DC

Panel Comments to the Press Release by Inclusive Development International on Ethiopia PBS III Investigation

In response to a recent [press release](#) issued by Inclusive Development International (IDI), supporting the allegations leading to the investigation of the Ethiopia Promoting Basic Services Phase III (PBS III), the Panel provides the following comments.

The Panel adheres to the highest ethical standards when conducting its investigations. In its recommendation to investigate, the Panel clarified that it would not seek to verify allegations of specific human rights abuses linked to the Government's Commune Development Program (CDP), nor would it examine its underlying purposes, since this is beyond its mandate. The Panel investigates Bank's compliance with its policies and procedures but not borrower governments' actions.

In its investigation, the Panel carefully considered all information gathered in the meetings and interviews with the Requesters in South Sudan and Kenya in January 2013, and during its visit to Gambella in February 2014. To assist in the investigation, the Panel retained Dr. Eisei Kurimoto, a highly reputed anthropologist and one of very few world experts on the Anuak people and their history.

The Panel determined that harms related to involuntary taking of land and use of force and intimidation are alleged consequences of the resettlement under CDP but not of PBS. The Panel found that the Bank's Resettlement Policy does not apply to PBS, and that the Bank is not responsible for these alleged harms.

In the investigation report, the Panel recorded the mixed picture it came across in Gambella as it heard villagers who did not want to leave could remain in their villages; at the same time, the Panel's expert also heard allegations of intimidation and abuses in this context. As stated earlier, the Panel did not consider it within its mandate to verify any of the above information, or otherwise. The Panel was not aware of the transcripts mentioned by IDI before it finalized its report, but promptly issued a corrigenda when it became aware of them to correct the record. These corrections do not alter the Panel's findings or conclusions.

The Panel reiterates the importance of actions proposed by Bank Management in response to the Panel's findings, including providing support for small holder farmers in Gambella under forthcoming operations coming to the Board, ensuring that all national programs to improve the quality of services and alleviate hunger help to address the needs of all people across Gambella, and strengthening work on improving the development prospects of refugees and other people living in borderland areas such as Gambella as part of its new Horn of Africa Initiative, launched last October.