Luis Felipe Duchicela:

Good morning, everyone, and good afternoon, and good evening for those in the Far East. Thank you so much for joining this event. My name is Luis Felipe Duchicela and I'm the senior advisor for indigenous peoples at USAID in Washington, DC. In March of this year, former USAID administrator, Mark Green, approved the first ever policy on promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, or PRO-IP, as we call it. The process to develop this policy took more than four years and we're very happy that now it is a reality. Yesterday, August 9th, we celebrated the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, and today we at USAID are proud to have this public launch of the PRO-IP policy. Our hope is that in the following 90 minutes, we achieve a few objectives. First, we would like to hear USAID leadership and US Congress's thoughts on the meaning of this policy for the agency's work in the future.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:

Second, we would like to hear the voices of indigenous peoples in regard to how to best implement this policy to address their needs and aspirations, considering the challenges and opportunities that they face, and finally, we see this as an opportunity to begin a strong engagement process between USA and the indigenous peoples of the world. After the opening remarks by our keynote speakers, I will moderate a panel discussion with five indigenous peoples, experts, and leaders who will give us constructive insight into each of the four key objectives of the PRO-IP policy. After that, we will have a short period of time for questions and answers. Given the time limitation, some questions may not be answered at this point, but we're planning to review the questions carefully afterwards and follow-up directly with you. So please, do provide your name and contact information so that we can get back to you on this.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:

We have prepared for you a number of video clips, one segment from USAID missions, and another one from the Indigenous Peoples' Organizations from a number of countries. I would like to thank all of you who took the time and efforts to prepare those videos and who share those compelling messages with us. Without further ado, I am pleased to introduce our first speaker, Mr. Tim Meisberger, who is the director for the Center for Democracy Rights and Governance of USA, and under whose leadership we have developed this policy, and in my particular case, since I started roughly one year ago at USAID, I've been very happy to work under Tim's leadership and great support for the indigenous peoples' issues. So over to you, Tim.

Tim Meisberger:

Thank you, Luis Felipe, and thank you to all of you for joining us today. I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to welcome you to this celebration of the launch of USAID's policy on promoting the rights of indigenous people, which goes by the very cool acronym PRO-IP. This is a truly groundbreaking breaking policy for the agency, and I'm thrilled, and frankly a little relieved, to finally be here to launch it. We had hoped to do this in a big public event, but that was derailed, like so many other things, by COVID-19. Given the challenges we all have faced, we're deeply appreciative that so many of you could join us here today. While USAID has worked on indigenous peoples' issues for many years, we've never before had an official policy to guide our engagement and partnership with indigenous peoples on development programming. I wish I could take credit for this, but development of the policy began long before I joined the center in 2017.

Tim Meisberger:
In fact, it goes all the way back to 2012, when Brian Keane, the agency's first senior advisor on indigenous peoples, began the policy development process. The policy also owes a lot to the tireless efforts of our chief advocate and promoter, Tim Rieser, who you'll hear from later, and to our current senior advisor who just spoke, Luis Felipe Duchicela, and to Dr. [inaudible 00:05:06], and also, I want to thank the members of the Indigenous Peoples Working Group for their work on this over the past four years. Without you, this never would have been done, or it would have been done in a way that is not near as good as the policy we have today. The policy we have today was a bit of a process to develop, a bit like sausage making, we say. We put a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but from my perspective, it was one of the best policy development processes we've ever had and I'm very happy with and proud of the policy that's come out of it.

Tim Meisberger:

The policy's important to me as the leader of the DRG Center, because it's important for our sector, but also it's important to me for personal reasons. 25 years ago, my wife was doing a socioeconomic study in Northeastern Cambodia among the indigenous Hill tribes there. The war was over by then and [inaudible 00:06:05] were moving into the Hills. They were grabbing land for timber and for mineral exploitation, gem mining, and all sorts of things were going on, and sorts of tragic things. We watched that with feelings of frustration and despair, unable really to do anything from the position we were in, and seeing that same old story, the same ruthless exploitation, and it affected indigenous peoples in other parts of Asia, Polynesia, in Australia, in the Americas, in Africa, and in Europe, even, and I hope and pray that this policy can help in some small way to prevent and mitigate that type of exploitation, and can and will contribute to sustainable development over the longterm. So with that brief introduction that I want to introduce our acting administrator, John Barsa, who also cares deeply about this issue, and who's going to open the seminar.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Tim, and at the last minute administrator John Barsa had to make a trip. So instead of him, we have chief of staff Bill Steiger. Bill, please go ahead.

Bill Steiger:

Thanks, Luis Felipe. [foreign language 00:07:44] I can't say good morning in Russian, but welcome everyone. It's great to be with you here from USAID headquarters, on behalf of the acting administrator who, as Luis Felipe said, had to travel at the last minute this weekend, to celebrate the international day of the world's indigenous people and to kick off this launch of our agency policy on promoting the rights of indigenous people. I want to thank Luis Felipe for his dedication to empowering indigenous organizations around the world. This launch is only possible because of his vision and leadership.

Bill Steiger:

So I want to thank you on behalf of the entire agency. I also want to thank to Tim Meisberger for his leadership and the whole staff of the Center for Excellence and Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance for the work they've done to advance this document and our programming in this area. I also want to recognize Tim Reiser, who's following me, and thank him for his long standing commitment and partnership with USAID. His passion for keeping Americans focused on the plight of indigenous peoples around the world is just one of the many ways that he has stood with the agency and our beneficiaries over the years. So thank you, Tim.
Bill Steiger:
Some of you know that I started my life as an academic and I did my academic work in Latin America, focused on the Brazilian Amazon and the period of time in the 1930s and 40s when the Brazilian government first began to exploit that period, that part of the country, and to encourage settlement from other parts of the country, often at the expense of indigenous communities. So I know the long and tragic history in our hemisphere that Tim just talked about in Asia, and we recognize that indigenous communities continue to face persecution and security and threats to their homes, livelihoods, and families all over the world. They're often excluded from critical decision making by governments that directly affect their rights, territories, and physical wellbeing. But the experience of indigenous peoples, as you know better than I do, is one that is much more than just struggles.

Bill Steiger:
Indigenous populations have deep roots in their communities, and we as development practitioners can learn a lot from their devotion to their history, culture, land, and traditions. Put simply, they have been there a lot longer than we have. The launch of this new policy, PRO-IP, to promote the rights of indigenous peoples is an important moment that marks a new era for our efforts to work directly with these communities around the world, and we're not just doing it because we think this is a standalone effort. This is part of an integrated strategy and the new policy fits into three large goals that we have had in our agency's transformation over the last three years. One is the promotion of self-reliance, what we call the journey to self-reliance in each of the countries in which we work, our championing of local solutions to development problems, and our desire to diversify our partner base. There is no more local partnership than a partnership with an indigenous community or an indigenous organization. This model is exactly what the journey to self-reliance is all about. When communities, especially indigenous peoples, take a leading role in their own development, this magnifies the impact and sustainability of the outcomes of all of our programs. Lots of people around the agency -

Speaker 1:
Feel bad here, it's giving me a heart attack here.

Speaker 2:
Let's remain on mute, thank you.

Bill Steiger:
Lots of folks in the agency -

Speaker 2:
You can go ahead, Bill.

Bill Steiger:
Thanks ... had the idea traditionally that because of the funding that Tim has helped secure for us, which has been mostly focused on Latin America, that our work with indigenous peoples was restricted to this hemisphere. One of our goals with the policy is to globalize our work with indigenous peoples to make sure that in every place that we're working, that in almost every country in the world, we are ensuring the inclusion of indigenous peoples in our development processes, empowering them to advocate for their rights, supporting them to safeguard them against potential risks, and promoting self-determined
development. All of our programs should have indigenous peoples components in them, and that’s the core goal of what we’re doing with this strategy. To support the implementation of the policy, we’re creating the new Indigenous Peoples Alliance for Rights and Development. The five-year, $13 million program you’ll hear more about later that’s creating a worldwide platform to develop innovative solutions to secure indigenous rights, establish sustainable solutions to the management of natural resources, and fully integrate and strengthen indigenous economies and livelihoods.

Bill Steiger:

So let me say thanks one more time to those who have worked over the years to bring this policy to being. First, the many indigenous people’s organizations and leaders who provided input during the development of the document, many of you are with us today virtually, and your voices in the planning of PRO-IP, the inclusion of your voices makes me confident that the policy can achieve our goals. Next I want to thank our colleagues from across the US government. Our policy is strongest when we adopt a whole of government approach and we appreciate the consultation and partnership that they have brought. I thanked Tim Reiser earlier, but I want to express appreciation for the strong and consistent support from others in Congress, both sides of the aisle during the development of this policy and when it comes to funding our work with indigenous communities around the world.

Bill Steiger:

And finally, I want to acknowledge the hardworking staff of USAID, both here in Washington and in our missions around the world, many of whom are tuning in as well. We are always proud of the work that you do and this exciting new approach should be showing results in your missions very soon. To close, let me say that we’re constantly looking at USAID to be more innovative, to be more inclusive, more sustainable, more collaborative, more local. We emphasize partnerships over mandates and we celebrate relationships over handouts. Policies like this one, the policy on promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, reflect the best of these ideals and action, and so I applaud those of you who worked to bring us to this point and I look forward to seeing what we will accomplish together. Thanks so much for letting me substitute for the acting administrator and I wish you good luck for this event.

Thanks. Luis Felipe, over back to you.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:

Yes, and now we welcome Tim Reiser. Please, Tim, are you there? Tim Reiser? I can see you.

Tim Reiser:

Okay. Can you hear me now?

Luis Felipe Duchicela:

I can hear you now, loud and clear. Welcome Tim. Please, maybe you can introduce yourself briefly first and then please go ahead. Over to you.

Tim Reiser:

Thank you very much, Luis Felipe, and Bill, thank you for that excellent summary of why this position exists and why we are talking about this today. I work for Senator Patrick Leahy. I have for 35 years in the US Senate on the appropriations committee that funds all our international programs, which includes the budget for the state department and USAID, as well as our contributions to the United
Nations, thousands of NGOs around the world, governments, international organizations, and it was ... I've lost track of when Senator Leahy decided we needed the position of adviser for indigenous people's issues at USAID. It was at least a dozen years ago, but in any event, at the time ... and the reason that I mentioned this is because listening to Bill, it really illustrated ... and Tim and Luis Felipe ... it really illustrated for me just how far we have come in the last decade in recognizing why this issue deserves real priority attention. At the time back then when we suggested that aid needed a position like this, AID's response was, "We already know all that. We're already doing that. It's not necessary."

Tim Reiser:
And I think that if anything, that convinced me more than anything that we needed it, because I think what you've heard illustrates just how far we've come in recognizing the threats and challenges facing indigenous people around the world who have unique rights, who have unique needs, who are being constantly threatened and killed, their territory stolen from them, their resources robbed from them, and we see the threats that they are facing to their own survival all around the world, often as a result of government neglect or worse, active actions by governments, which threaten the lives and the territories and the cultures of indigenous people, and so the purpose of this position was really to help, one, identify what those rights are, what those needs are, and to enable USAID, which has programs in many countries where indigenous communities exist, to both be supportive of their rights, to be accessible to them in ways that hadn't been the case before, to advocate for them and help them become better advocates for themselves, and to try to work with governments to ensure that the rights of indigenous people and their territories and their cultures are protected.

Tim Reiser:
And that's really the role of the advisor for indigenous peoples issues. It's to be a liaison for indigenous people all around the world. It's to educate people throughout the US government about the importance of respecting and considering the needs and the rights of indigenous people, wherever we are carrying out programs, and it's to work to bring people together in ways like this is, to better understand how to ensure that indigenous people achieve their potential, their rights are protected, and can advocate for themselves the most effectively. The policy that USAID has now put in place, thanks in large measure to Brian Keen, who worked over many years to achieve what I think we all recognize is a very strong policy.

Tim Reiser:
This will hopefully set the framework for how we go forward from here, and our hope is that it will also be a model for other countries, because obviously this is not an issue the United States can confront or address single handedly. Every country where indigenous people live should be developing their own policies like this, to ensure that indigenous people's rights are protected, and we ave a long way to go, but I think we've also come quite a long way, as Bill's remarks indicated. We're very, very pleased with the policy that's been developed, the work that went into it. I think Luis Felipe is going to carry on what Brian put in place in ways that will take us to a different level, and our hope is that in doing so, finally indigenous people will regard the United States as an ally, a country, and a government that it can turn to for support when rights are being threatened and people are being killed, simply because they're standing up for their territories or their resources.

Tim Reiser:
This is something that we see happening every day, and we know that indigenous people are the best stewards of their territories, they're the best advocates for themselves. Our job is just to try to help support them in every way that we can. That is the rule that we see for this advisor position and the programs that it oversees. Senator Leahy has every year provided funding for this office and for these programs and will continue to do so, because he feels it's that important, and I think the fact that now USAID has taken it upon itself to develop this policy and to organize this event [crosstalk 00:21:32] ... oh, the blessings of modern technology ... that AID has taken it upon itself to draft this policy, to now put it into effect. It's up to all of us to make it a reality, and that is what I think we'll be working together to do in the coming years. So thank you very much, Luis Felipe. Thank you, Brian Keen for getting us to this point. Thanks Bill and Tim and everyone at USAID, but most of all, the indigenous organizations that we look to for advice, for input, and ways that we can support them.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Thank you. Thank you very much, Tim, for your very, very inspiring words. I really appreciate that and I'm sure that everyone that's listening will do the same or has done the same. So thank you, Tim. Now we're going to continue with the first video segment, which comes from the USAID mission. Please pay attention to this. Our USAID missions have wanted to tell us what they're doing or what they intend to do, what their plans are and how they view, from their perspective, the new PRO-IP policy. So Laura, please, let's go on with the video and then we'll go to the panel discussion. Thank you.

Speaker 3:
USAID has partnered with indigenous peoples in Brazil for nearly two decades now. We assisted Brazil in creating a policy that has helped strengthen indigenous peoples' human, territorial and environmental rights. USAID also helped improve sustainable, productive activities, such as Brazil nut and Acai berry production. Together, we have improved access to markets and peoples' lives. Our current programming has a direct footprint on 89 indigenous lands in the Brazilian Amazon region and benefits more than 40 different indigenous peoples. We welcome this new policy and look forward to sharing our expertise.

Evelyn Rodriguez:
Working well with different cultures is not teaching them how we envision their development. It's having the humility to unlearn, to be able to see life through their eyes and respect their priorities. Doing that's not easy, and that's why I welcome having a policy that will mark an improved roadmap for our mission to engage with indigenous communities in Paraguay.

Teodora Benitez:
[foreign language 00:24:18].

Speaker 4:
USAID is working with regional leaders and local universities Uganda to advance locally owned and locally led development. As part of this effort, USAID is partnering with University of science and technology, as well as the Gulu University constituent college in Moroto to conduct research that captures the voices and aspirations of indigenous populations, such as the Batwa in Southwestern Uganda and the Tippett, people in North Eastern Uganda. The regional leaders and universities will use their research findings -

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:25:04]
Speaker 5:
...thunder. The regional leaders and universities will use their research findings to design development activities that address the vulnerabilities of these often marginalized people and advocate with government and development partners.

John Groarke:
The new indigenous peoples rights policy reinforces and reaffirms USAID's commitment in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous people in Southern Africa. It supports our ongoing efforts to deepen investments on the rights of indigenous people across all of our sectors, such as strengthening engagement with the government. This ensures that development does not come at the cost of indigenous people's way of life and that they can continue to advocate for, and exercise their rights as they pursue their own development priorities.

Anu Rajaraman:
Hi, everyone, USAID has long been committed to the ideals of sustainable and inclusive development. This requires that all stakeholders have a voice in the decisions that affect their future and their lives. I'm proud to serve as Mission Director of USAID Guatemala, where nearly half of the population identifies indigenous. Unfortunately we know that these communities represent some of the most underserved populations in the country. Our mission cannot achieve its development goals unless the indigenous communities are brought into the conversation. This is why we have made indigenous engagement a core component of our new CDCS and why I'm so proud that USAID Washington and specifically Luis Felipe and his team have launched the policy on promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, that commits the agency to the global empowerment of indigenous communities. The entire US Embassy team in Guatemala has committed to supporting the Guatemalan government in achieving the goals of its [foreign language 00:01:57] initiative, which seeks to better engage and serve indigenous communities to ensure broad-based development throughout the country.

Anu Rajaraman:
We recognize that indigenous communities bring unique knowledge and perspectives to the development dialogue and serve as critical partners in our overall development goals. Internally, the mission has hired an indigenous engagement advisor, Ajb'ee Jimenez, who helps ensure that our mission and our embassy take indigenous context and perspectives into account in all that we do. We've assembled a working group that seeks to engage all technical offices, FSOs and FSNs alike, and adopting a whole of mission approach to supporting indigenous communities and ensuring that their unique needs are taken into consideration throughout the design and implementation of all of our programs and activities. Having had the privilege of serving in Guatemala and other countries with large indigenous populations, I was so pleased to see the agency finalize the PRO-IP policy. It is a critical and powerful symbol of USAID's continued commitment to work together with indigenous peoples to support their vision and their priorities for their own communities. Thank you very much.

Jene Thomas:
Greetings from Lima. The Amazon region is home to more than 1.6 million indigenous people. Their communities represent rich cultural diversity and possess deep knowledge of sustainable practices and conservation. USAID Peru and the South America Regional Environmental Program are committed to ensuring the voices of indigenous people are heard in the development and conservation of the Amazon biome.
Lawrence Sacks:
Over the last three years, I've come to learn that Colombia's strongest asset is its extraordinary culture and its ethnic diversity. The more than 100 indigenous communities who inhabit this beautiful country, their languages, their rich traditions, their courage, and their resilience are an important part of Colombia's identity as a nation and an inspiration to all. Over the years USAID Colombia has proudly woven strong partnerships with traditional authorities, leaders, organizations, and communities, which every day enrich Colombia's path to an inclusive and a sustainable peace. Today, as we celebrate Indigenous People's Day and the issuance of USAID's policy on promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, we honor the leadership, the strength, and the courage from indigenous peoples in Colombia. We look forward to continuing to safeguard what the Arhuaco, Wiwa, Kogui, and Kankuamo indigenous peoples know to be a [foreign language 00:31:10], the heart of the world.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Thank you. Thank you, Laura. Well, I hope you were also inspired by this great video. Thanks again to all the USAID missions who put that together. So now we're going to be into the main... The main part of this event really is the panel discussion with five indigenous peoples leaders and experts from around the world. I'm very happy really to have this panel discussion because we're going to be able to hear directly from these leaders, their voices and their thoughts and recommendations. In order to set the stage for this, our Chief of Staff, Bill Steiger will give us a few words in order to set the stage for this panel discussion that is going to focus on the PRO-IP policy. So please go ahead, Bill.

Bill Steiger:
Thanks, Luis Felipe. And I just wanted to take a minute, as you say, to just set the stage for the policy, give people who haven't read it, just a flavor of exactly what we're talking about in the document and its goals. As we've said already this morning, the overarching goal of the policy is to enhance the ability of indigenous peoples to promote and protect their rights, determine their own development priorities, and advance their self-reliance. The policy has four objectives. Strengthen our engagement with indigenous peoples and safeguard them against harm, integrate their priorities into our portfolio and promote cross-sectoral development, empower indigenous peoples to advocate for an exercise their rights, and foster an enabling environment for indigenous rights.

Bill Steiger:
As I said in my opening remarks, the policy is global. We're not just talking about this in one country or one region, but everywhere around the world. There's almost no country in our portfolio that does not have an indigenous population. And we're hoping that all of our missions, we're expecting that all of our missions will integrate this policy into their work. And to do so, the policy has five key operating principles. Identifying indigenous peoples, and as others will talk about, that means in some cases, working with groups that governments do not recognize as indigenous peoples, but we might by virtue of their characteristics. Two, analyzing indigenous peoples' opportunities and challenges. Three, engaging them. Four, safeguarding their rights and well-being. And five, establishing partnerships with them.

Bill Steiger:
All of these grounded in respect for the importance of communications engagement and partnership with indigenous peoples and their organizations themselves. We talked about the Indigenous Peoples Alliance for Rights and Development. The new public-private partnership, the first one we've ever
created specifically for indigenous peoples to help our missions implement the policy through expert advice, knowledge, technical knowhow, and best practices. And that we have other tools and resources to guide our missions and bureaus as they do this work. So Luis Felipe, that's the overarching view of the policy. And now I'm excited to listen as you engage with leaders from indigenous communities around the world and hear their voices. Back to you.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Thank you very much, Bill. And that's an excellent introduction to the PRO-IP policy.

Mercedes:
Hello? Yes?

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
So I'm very, very happy to first introduce Mr. Francisco Souza. Francisco is an economist who is a member of the Apuriña indigenous peoples of the Brazilian Amazon. He's currently the managing director of the FSC Indigenous Foundation and is leading a team for developing and implementing programs and partnership to support and promote the rights and self development of indigenous peoples worldwide. He has almost 30 years of working experience with organizations in 15 countries and more in programs and projects related to human rights, community development, sustainable resource management in Latin America and the Amazon basin.

Francisco Souza:
Okay. Thank you, Luis Felipe. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, everyone. Especially to indigenous brothers and sister joining this conversation today. Thank you Luis Felipe for invite me in USDAID for launch of this important policy. Second, this is the moment to offer solidarity, the condolence to thousand of indigenous women, children, and men [inaudible 00:39:33] of COVID-19. We have 70,000 of indigenous members affected by the global pandemic, thousand of death among indigenous communities so far. Now, in response to Luis Felipe question, I'm bring the voice from my people in the [inaudible 00:14:51] indigenous land in the Amazon, from other brothers and sister in Latin America. I split my response in two parts. First, what is the real meaning of engaging indigenous people? Most important, I think, what's the expected for indigenous people to achieve their vision needs, aspiration while facing the ongoing global pandemic?

Francisco Souza:
Indigenous people are the wardens of the one quart of the planet. Where we find 80% of the global [inaudible 00:15:23]. Indigenous lands are key source of solution to climate change, poverty, and sustainable development. To talk about the indigenous people engagement is to talk about the opportunity to bring 5% of the global population to ensure real and long term impacts from programs,
project, and responsible business investment. It's also to talk about promoting social participation in all phase the decision of any investments. And also about to build trust, effective transparency, and safeguard mechanism. Finally, it's about the indigenous concept, a vision of living well and right living. Now the question is how can the USAID new policy help effective engagement with the indigenous people to support the rights, vision, and self-determined objective? The question brings the fact that the post-pandemic cycle, we increase pressure on indigenous rights with more and more violence against forest, against indigenous community, against indigenous defenders in Latin America, especially in the Amazon basin.

Francisco Souza:
We need to have new project, market investment models should push national government from different, and also company, to the right direction. Learning from different initiatives in Latin America that have provide important support to indigenous people, such as the GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, the USAID Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources Activity, the Amazon Fund. We could suggest three possible recommendation.

Francisco Souza:
One, partnership and engagement strategy should respond to country, regional specificity. However, indigenous engagement across national, regional, international leaders should [inaudible 00:42:23] to improve the capacity of the indigenous organization would be very important to work to engage with different stakeholders to support indigenous organization.

Francisco Souza:
And also to face critical challenges between [inaudible 00:42:37] and national policies and process in investment. So, it's quite important [inaudible 00:42:44] national, regional, indigenous community. And we hope [inaudible 00:42:48] of indigenous people as the key unit to advice development and implementation of [inaudible 00:42:55] investment, guide by FPIC, the UN indigenous people. The creation of [inaudible 00:18:01].

Francisco Souza:
Finally, is the allocation of the [inaudible 00:43:06] to support indigenous people lead project to raise impact on the ground, and create empowered organization [inaudible 00:43:14] is quite important. Finally, I'd like to end my message by saying that the USAID new policy have present a very, very important start point for this ambition. Thank you for the opportunity. Now it's over to you, Luis Felipe, again. Thank you very much.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Thank you. Thank you very much, Francisco. Thanks for your insightful words.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Now, I'm very happy to introduce Mr. Rodion Sulyandziga of the Forest Stewardship Council, Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee. Dr. Rodion Sulyandziga is a chair of the Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee under the Forest Stewardship Council. He is the Founding Director of the Center for the Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North Russia Indigenous Training Center, and was the former first Vice President of the Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North. He also served as a co-
chair of the Indigenous Peoples Global Steering Committee of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change. Dr. Sulyandziga is an Udege, which means forest people in his language, one of the small number of indigenous peoples from the Eastern Siberia Community of the Russian Federation. Rodion, welcome to this panel discussion.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
The second objective of the PRO-IP policy directs USAID to integrate their priorities of indigenous peoples into the USAID portfolios, and to apply a cross-sectoral approach to programming. From the standpoint of indigenous peoples globally, what are your recommendations for USAID to effectively achieve this objective, considering the challenges and opportunities you face today in the world. And I would beg you to please keep in mind that we have a four interpretations, simultaneous interpretations, so that speak a bit slowly so that they can interpret correctly. Thank you so much Rodion. Over to you.

Rodion Sulyandziga:
Thanks, Luis Felipe. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. And of course, thanks for this invitation. I strongly believe it’s very symbolic to celebrate today the USAID policy jointly with the International Indigenous Day, August 9th [under the United Nations 00:00:46:01]. Thanks to the organizers for this important event, the launch of this USAID policy on promoting the rights of indigenous peoples. Obviously, the policy takes a innovative and holistic approach through its program and action-oriented implementation. And I’m so pleased to continue through the dialogue and celebration of the policy from the indigenous peoples' perspective.

Rodion Sulyandziga:
Indigenous peoples' positions at the front line, facing the impacts of the [inaudible 00:46:37] to face the direct consequence of this post-colonialism expansion [through all the regions. 00:46:44]. They have been guardians of their environment for thousand years, and possess a broad knowledge base of the complex ecological system. But at the same time, indigenous peoples are excluded from the most highly centralized decision making processes, especially in the national and regional level. But there's a want to [be told 00:22:12] and included in the process of negotiations, governance, and decision-making. And it would be particularly crucial to develop new platforms that put indigenous initiatives at the forefront of sustainable development in [traditional sense 00:47:31] and enable constructive, rights-based, multi-stakeholder dialogue between indigenous peoples, and governments, and business group.

Rodion Sulyandziga:
And as the indigenous peoples committee chair under the FSC International, I would like to highlight and contribute to the new partnership between USAID and the Forest Stewardship Council Indigenous Foundation. To achieve objective truth and to increase the integration of indigenous peoples' concerns across all sectors of USAID portfolio of investment and promote cross-sectoral development approaches. The new Indigenous Peoples Alliance for Rights and Development would be very helpful. The alliance will strengthen the leadership, technical and management capacity of indigenous peoples organizations. But it also plans to allow the enabling environment in the national, regional levels to secure indigenous people rights, strengthen their territorial governance, and promote self-determined development.

Rodion Sulyandziga:
Working with USAID country missions, indigenous peoples institutions and governments [agencies 00:48:52], the alliance will also create a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder platform for global action, to build the technical and institutional capacities for indigenous peoples. With longterm plans and programs to generate financial and technical resources. The alliance will support the development of innovative solutions to secure indigenous rights, strengthen indigenous economies based on sustainable approaches to natural resource management, integration with sustainable market chains and full respect of indigenous rights and visions based on free, prior, and informed consent. The FSC Indigenous Foundation will act as the lead and operational management agency of the alliance. We will coordinate and provide support to implement this, including indigenous organizations and strategic partners within regional, national, and community-level approaches. On the other hand, FSC International will mobilize its global network of members, certificate holders, and partners-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:50:04]

Rodion Sulyandziga:
... global network of members, certificate holders, and partners and act as a convenience of all sectors, including companies, CSOs, certification system in [inaudible 00:50:12]. In conclusion, around the world, indigenous people and their communities are still facing immense range of challenges, from infrastructural development and human rights abuses [inaudible 00:50:31] and marginalization. Respect and recognition is a cornerstone for the political agenda of indigenous people to protect and promote their human rights.

Rodion Sulyandziga:
The new IP Alliance as a global partnership aims to change that working together with USAID. Also bilateral agencies, bilateral entities, civil society, and governments to enhance the dramatic action and inputs for indigenous people. And this is very ambitious, but I strongly believe, very committed global actions. And I would like to congratulate USAID for the new policy and for the new partnership.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Thank you very much Rorian. Thank you. And there'll be some questions coming right after we finish, so standby for other comments that you might make. Now, I'm very happy also to introduce Ms. Rukka Sombolinggi, who is the secretary general of the Alianci, I'm not sure if I'm going to pronounce this well, Alianci Masyarakat Adat Nusantara AMAN, which is the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago of Indonesia. Rukka is the first female secretary general of AMAN, the world's largest indigenous peoples organization. Before joining AMAN in 1999, Rukka worked for JAPHAMA, a network of indigenous people defenders, and a key convener of the first Congress of Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Rukka served as a program specialist for the UNDP regional indigenous peoples program based in the UNDP Asia Pacific regional center in Bangkok, from 2007 to 2011. From 2009 to 2012, Rukka served as a member of the executive council of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pack, the AIPP, represented Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste. Rukka has written the Indonesian chapter of the Indigenous World, an annual global report on indigenous peoples by the International Working Group on indigenous affairs based in Copenhagen Denmark.
Luis Felipe Duchicela:
I'm very happy to present the following question to Rukka. So objective three of the new USAID policy is to empower indigenous peoples and their representative organizations to exercise their rights and practice self-determined development. Rukka, from the perspective of indigenous peoples, what are your recommendations for USAID to achieve this objective in light of the challenges and opportunities, particularly in Indonesia and in Asia. Over to you, Rukka.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
Thank you, Louis Philippe, and allow me first to say greetings with morning, with evening, with afternoon in my language, we say [foreign language 00:53:48], which means, have the food ready. Are the food cooked? That signifies how important is food in our culture, et cetera. First, allow me to congratulate USAID for the launching of this new policy on promoting the rights of indigenous peoples as we call it PRO-IP. I believe this historical policy, and they call it historical policy because it took us a long way to get to this.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
And I believe this will allow USAID to advance their work with indigenous peoples across the globe. Ladies and gentlemen, our communities and landscape are based on foundation of diversity with thousands of languages and millions of species. Our traditional way, however, of life is threatened by modern political and economic approaches. That value only productions of commodities that destroy our lifers way of life and ecosystems.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
In my country, Indonesia, indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable from the COVID-19, due to our remote locations and lack of state health services. However, and indigenous people whose land has been ceased and forced to leave as Palmer Farmers take over our land are among the most threatened during this pandemic. But yet in respond to this ongoing pandemic, hundreds of our indigenous communities, and in AMAN who have 2,371 indigenous communities as a member or in 20 million men and women, we are increasing our resilience through expanding our food productions and strengthening our immune system through our traditional medicines.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
And indigenous youth and indigenous women are leading this impressive effort. Indigenous people in the other end, indigenous peoples who still live in harmony with nature have now proven that we have adequate food supplies. And in the spirit of reciprocity we are helping other fellow Indonesians who lack of food. And it's truly shows us that, yes, indigenous peoples, we are the last guardians of Indonesian archipelago. And we believe this is the most important lessons that we can learn from this pandemic, indigenous communities, Indonesia and elsewhere across the globe ar the stewards of all natural resources in our territories.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
Rivers, mountains, fresh water lakes, and oceans. The current economic structure has failed. It's no longer feasible, not even an option. We must stop massive exploitations of our resources and they say it loud. As we cannot afford to continue killing our mother earth, that eventually will cost the end of our humanity. We need to take some transformative actions to survive the ongoing crisis and build, we call
it in AMAN, a new, better sustainable and just life. Ladies and gentlemen, indigenous peoples, we believe we can fix the world and we can strengthen our economy can strengthen global economy.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
And we believe that we all together can create a better life as a global community, as a family, based on the spirit of respect, solidarity, and reciprocity. In line with the objective three of the USAID PRO-IP policy, we need to take some actions. First. We need to develop a new paradigm. We need the paradigm shift to ensure the receipt with it to help indigenous peoples resiliency, that allow us, the indigenous peoples to contribute to the global resiliency. The second one is to support indigenous peoples organizations and communities to strengthen our capacity in policy making processes.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
And in the other hand, USAID should also play active role to ensure that government continue to recognize, fulfill, ensured, and promote the rights of indigenous peoples in the countries where you are working, especially in my countries like Asia and Africa. And the third is to really support the self determined development of indigenous peoples. This means to fully support indigenous knowledge, traditions, and innovations with technology and markets. And this will allow us to have sustainable production of food and other goods, and the consumer will get a better quality of foods at the cheaper rate.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
The fourth is to promote the empowerment of indigenous women and young generation. This is so important. This is the key in every aspect of development. And this is also my experience in last 20 years, working with indigenous people, they seal a successful development projects, believe me. Under the five, we also need to build a resiliency mechanisms that include crisis response mechanism from the local to the global level. That is something that we are missing at this very moment.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
Last but not least the true to empowerment is take extra miles, to ensure that the support will really directly go to indigenous peoples organizations and community. Allow us to truly exercise our self determined development and we commit to continue to work with you all for a better life of you, and me, of us, indigenous non-indigenous. I would say thank you very much. And with evening in my language, we say [foreign language 01:00:44]. Thank you Louis. Back to you.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Thank you. Thank you Rukka for your wonderful words and very powerful messages. Please stay on for questions that are going come forth, but thank you so much. I'm very proud. I’m very happy and sorry to now introduce Dr. Kanyinke Sena. Kanyinke is a certified mediator and the Director of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee IPACC. It's a network of 135 indigenous peoples organizations in 22 countries in Africa.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
He serves as a member of the African Commission Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Previously, he served as a chairperson of the United Nations permanent forum on indigenous issues, an
advisory body to the UN economic and social council. He holds a doctorate degree in indigenous peoples law and policy from the university of Arizona. And is a lecturer in law at Egerton university in Kenya.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Very happy to have Dr. Kanyinke Sena with us. So objective four of the PRO-IP policy is to foster an enabling environment for indigenous peoples to advocate for, and exercise their rights. From the perspective of the African indigenous peoples, Kanyinke, what are your recommendations for USAID to achieve this objective in light of the challenges and opportunities in your region? What [inaudible 01:02:25]?

Kanyinke Sena:
Thank you so much, Louis, for that introduction. And on behalf of indigenous peoples of Africa, I congratulate USAID for its policy on promoting the rights of indigenous people, which correctly points out that indigenous peoples communities often face cultural, legal, social, and institutional barriers to the realization of their rights. And leveraging environment for indigenous people advocate for, and exercise their rights is therefore critical.

Kanyinke Sena:
With this policy, USAID is now in a position of leadership to build equitable, inclusive, and assessable political, economic, and social institutions necessary to fulfill the self-determined development needs of indigenous peoples. In partnership with governments, donors, private sector, civil society, and indigenous communities, USAID can effectively force the enabling environment by focusing on the four following goals. Number one, systematically support, legal and policy frameworks, the implementation and enforcement.

Kanyinke Sena:
This can be achieved by mobilizing political goodwill at the highest political decision-making levels, reviewing of existing laws and policies at local national or sub regional and regional levels to identify gaps and opportunities for supporting indigenous peoples development needs. Assisting governments in complying with their obligation international and domestic law, including court positions.

Kanyinke Sena:
Supporting the strength and strengthening of political, social, and economic regulatory frameworks, including social impact assessments that include the participation of indigenous peoples through consultations on ethic. Assisting indigenous activists in their advocacy efforts, and supporting engagement by indigenous activists in regional and sub regional processes. Number two, strengthen institutions, including coordination and defining clear roles and responsibility of key entities, such as governments, nonself actors, including civil society and the private sector.

Kanyinke Sena:
This can be achieved through the following actions, mapping political social and economic institutions that impact on indigenous peoples rights at the regional sub-regional and national levels. Strengthening indigenous peoples institutions and organizations and networks, to engage at the regional, sub regional, and national levels. Strengthening regional institutions like the African commission working group on indigenous populations to engage with regional bodies like the African development bank and economic
commission for Africa, supporting indigenous communities to develop the resources in their territories and contribute to national economies as a way of guarding their land and resource rights.

Kanyinke Sena:
Number three, develop and strengthen the capacity of all actors so that they can assume their roles in a more effective way. This can be achieved through the following actions and are taking and supporting training on USAID PRO-IP policy and on indigenous peoples rights in general. Focus on the capacity of government agencies, that are responsible for engaging with and providing services to indigenous peoples.

Kanyinke Sena:
Training, indigenous rights activists on the political, economic, and social processes at the regional sub regional and national levels. Strengthening indigenous communities, decision making and engagement structures. Building indigenous peoples negotiation skills. Supporting learning exchange visits at all levels. And strengthening indigenous communities, political and business skills.

Kanyinke Sena:
Finally, promote and support a social dialogue, including the participation of all key stakeholders. We say they should use its convening power to bring together indigenous people's communities, host country governments, the private sector and civil society to remove barriers for the realization of indigenous people's rights, promote adherence to international standards of human rights and improve the capacity of host country governments to engage indigenous peoples as partners in the journey to self-reliance. Thank you very much. And I'm available for your questions and comments. Over to you Louis.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Thank you very much, Kanyinke. Thank you so much. Next in our panel, I'd like to introduce Ms. Jessica Vega Ortega, who is a co chair of the United Nations Global Indigenous Youth Caucus. Jessica Vega Ortega serves as the co-chair of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, and is a coordinator of the Yani Tundavii Dikuintii Collective, which works for the empowerment of indigenous youth and children research on the use of natural resources.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
She is also her promoter and trainer in human rights for the Red de Jóvenes Indígenas America Latina which is an indigenous youth network and Latin America and the Caribbean. Jessica studied political science and public administration at the National Autonomous University in Mexico. She comes from the indigenous community of San Miguel, with name that's very long to pronounce, Ahuehuitlán in Oaxaca Mexico. She's part of the Mixteco people.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Welcome Jessica and Jessica has been invited to this panel not to talk about a specific objective, but rather a very important issue, which is the perspective of the young people, the indigenous youth. So from your perspective, Jessica, how do you see this new policy of USAID helping the indigenous people's youth achieve your goals. Over to you, Jessica.
Jessica Vega Ortega:

Greetings, sisters and brothers. My name is Jessica Vega Ortega indigenous Mixteca from San Miguel Ahuehutitlan Oaxaca. And also I am resident in the state of. As part of the network of Indigenous Youth of Latin America and Caribbean. And as one of the coach players of the global indigenous youth caucus, I want to say thank you for this invitation and the opportunity to tag my reaffirmation from indigenous youth and recognition of the diversities of youth.

Jessica Vega Ortega:

We are aware of the war and all regions are experience of difficult COVID and this current pandemic. And before this important recognition, it's necessary say the historical resilience of the communities and territories for this pandemic and many other pandemic we have. The challenges continue to appear, but are now more even with more isolated [inaudible 01:10:20]. We are commitment but we need more commitment of the estate achievements in [inaudible 01:10:28] and collective rise for indigenous youth and children.

Jessica Vega Ortega:

That is why today presentation is important, because institutional policy like presented by USAID today is necessary and essential for its pending affirmative actions. The impact of the indigenous issue is not limited for the future. We are the constant presence on the front lines and action lab work and is stronger. For this reason policies, programs, and project most have an assisted developed focused on equality incorporated, intersectionality like education and training that grant participation mechanics on different sectors of society.

Jessica Vega Ortega:

It's necessary to support and finesse the empowerment of indigenous youth, but create spaces. Specific like the internship for indigenous youth in USAID office, for example. It's important to recognize the contribution of indigenous professional lives. For example, [inaudible 01:12:12] woman from Guatemala has participated in the [inaudible 01:12:18] project. The recognition on her professional is not only contribution for her individual empowerment, but also fulfill for worthy inclusion on diversity youth and invested in innovative, non discrimination efforts.

Jessica Vega Ortega:

The next week, I would have a one intervention for this process in the project in USAID office in Guatemala. And this is important to try to have connection with different projects and different action, not only in the central offices [inaudible 01:13:08] state. It's imperative to crack mechanism, to strengthen technical capacities on also achieving full and effective participation. So assist training language skills [foreign language 01:13:52].

Jessica Vega Ortega:

Okay.

Jessica Vega Ortega:

[foreign language 01:14:11].

Jessica Vega Ortega:
Efforts like this kind [inaudible 01:14:52] bilateral war in the regions and countries where this institutional has had presence. This policy regarded the indigenous youth population [inaudible 01:15:01] for advances in other policies...

Jessica Vega:
Regulation. What I love for advances in other policies that affect a reactive bilateral cooperation. One focus on the cultural advance moving from one legislation, like 2031, will provide an opportunity for inclusion development and the search to the guaranteed individual and collected human rights. [foreign language 00:00:25].

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
[foreign language 00:00:55] Your message, Jessica, very firm and clear. Thank you so much and thank you so much for your efforts also to read it in English, which you did great. Thank you so much. Now we’re going to be moving on to the questions and answers part. And I must say that we have received many, many comments and questions, which will be impossible for us to respond at this moment because of time limitations. So what I would like to do is to briefly comment some of the questions and most are actually directed to USA and in relation to the PRO-IP Policy. I will not be able to respond to all, but we will follow up directly with you and we will organize other events, more webinars style form, so that we can have more opportunity to interact and to go deeper into these very important issues.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
But let me just address some of the questions that we have here. For instance, does this policy allow and encourage the integration of ancestral knowledge of indigenous peoples into the regular programs and strategies implemented by USAID? Absolutely. Absolutely. It encourages the integration because the objectives of the policy are based on engaging with indigenous peoples and empowering indigenous people. So it will all depend on the indigenous people's representative organizations to ensure that ancestral knowledge is taken into account in the design process of programs.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Another question is how might we gain support or resources from USA to help indigenous peoples deal with the COVID-19? So that has been a challenge and I can say that thus far, we have been able at USAID to direct some resources through the human rights support mechanism. And we have plans to implement a program for the Amazon basin, with the NGO Internews, and also in the Philippines with the NGO American Bar association, ABA, to focus ON COVID. There are other projects also being planned through the local sustainability office of USAID that will direct that first for COVID-19, but we will continue working in that area, which we think is very important.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Another question is whether any of the speakers are working with indigenous peoples with disabilities. What types of unique barriers do indigenous peoples with disabilities encounter to participate in political and public life? How can we support them. From my knowledge and I beg your pardon to the panelists, but from my knowledge, I am totally confident that all of the speakers, that all of the organizations that are represented by the speakers in this panel take into account persons with disabilities, from my experience I know that for a fact, as I know that they take into account the role
empowerment of women and youth. So we can be confident that that is being taken into account by the indigenous people's organization.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
So this policy, the PRO-IP Policy of USAID, we have to keep in mind that our main objective is to support the indigenous peoples to exercise their rights and to empower them to lead the way for their self determined development. So it's not so much whether USAID wants to do this, or one thing or another it's more to recognize and support indigenous people's organizations to carry out their own vision and their own plans.

Speaker 10:
[foreign language 01:20:55]

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Okay, Laura, they're saying that the translation to Spanish is not working. Can we look into that?

Laura:
Absolutely. I'll take care of that [inaudible 01:21:14]

Speaker 10:
[foreign language 01:21:15].

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Okay. Okay. There's a question here about how [crosstalk 01:21:19] There's a question here about how does this policy address the extractive industries activities regarding the respect and fight about the indigenous territories? I would like to, perhaps in regard to extractive industries activities, perhaps... May I ask, I don't know, Kanyinke you may want to briefly address this. I know that the question is in relation to the IP-Policy, which we have just started to implement right now, and the policy has clear guidelines to protect indigenous peoples rights. But Kanyinke can you elaborate in one minute or so in regard to the issue of extractive industries? Go ahead Kanyinke.

Kanyinke Sena:
Yeah. Yes to thank you for that question. And I think as you say, the policy has its, I'm trying to look for the English word, holistic approach to the entire process. So when we look at some of the recommendations that I give, engaging the private sector will be one key thing that will be necessary to be done by USAID and the private sector in this case includes extractive industries, which are having an immense impact on indigenous people's rights. But I always also think that I must come also for indigenous people if they're interested in the choose to also be pleasantly extractive industry sector, not only to scream about their rights being affected, but also to invest in those extractive industries for their own development, if that is what they are interested in. So I think, as I said earlier, the social dialogue would be very important with the extractive industries and with all other sectors that have something to do with extractive industries. Thank you.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Sorry. This aspect of instructive industries also brings us to the economic aspect in general. And I would like to ask Rukka to very briefly in one minute or less, tell us about your vision of the indigenous economies. How can indigenous peoples strengthen economic development while protecting your rights? Very, very brief. Please Rukka, go ahead.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
Yeah. Thank you very much Luis Felipe. This is a very interesting questions and both for non-indigenous and also for indigenous. Some of the indigenous are really affording to talk about the economy because we've seen the economy. The argument has been always the one that is used to justify the grabbing of our land for the private sectors, corporates, for examples, for extractions. But I think it is now the time to really change the narrative because we already have our economic valuations of indigenous people's territory just from the direct access to our resources. And that allow us to argue that actually the value of indigenous economy, the indigenous territory is much higher than the contributions from indigenous territory to development of our country is actually much higher than the contributions from the private companies, because they only give tax and all these things why I actually, our contributions have never been counted.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
And I think that's the fallacy of developments so far. So in the future, we need to... As now we do have the pyramid like this. The only thing is we need to reverse the pyramid. So the people will be on top and that's the local economies as we see. I see the future global economy is actually like a bowl, the mosaic. It's like a beautiful painting that is based on the foundations of a small, small, robust, and solid economy at local level. And because that proven, it's now this time, it's just really the local economy that is surviving. So that's I think that is a very important, that's why we in Aman, in Indonesia, we are starting up our indigenous, we call it coupling the indigenous resiliency in food productions, in food as a guarantee with economy strategy.

Rukka Sombolinggi:
So it probably it's time to go back and visit the concept of small is beautiful, but of course we need to update with the current situations and we cannot receive globalizations because that's actually where we can also build the solidarity as one global family. And that's, that's where indigenous peoples can continue to support others in different regions, in different part of the globe. Thank you. I hope that I've made myself clear.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Very clear at Rukka. Thank you so much. That's always very clear. Thank you so much for your words.

Luis Felipe Duchicela:
Unfortunately, our time is over, almost over right now. I would really like to show you the video of the messages from the indigenous peoples organizations that we have received. And also there is a video from our colleagues in Paraguay that we want to show. So what we're going to do is we're going to show the video, but we're going to have to say goodbye here. In case some of you may have to leave at the top of the hour, I'll stay through until the end and those of you that can stay, please do stay to say goodbye. But otherwise those that can be, you can leave whenever you need, but please thank you again for your participation. Let's continue with the video, please.