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Contact: Meredith MacKenzie, West End Strategy Team,
Meredith@westendstrategy.com, (202) 427-2007

World Bank Admits Stunning Failures in Resettlement Policy, Proposed Remedy Insufficient

San Francisco – Wednesday, in an unprecedented admission of its own failing, the World Bank [announced](#) that it had failed to properly implement its own resettlement policy, leaving untold thousands without their homes, businesses, land or any compensation to show after they were displaced to make way for World Bank development projects.

“Not only has the World Bank failed to follow its own policies on how to account for and compensate those they displace with its projects, its proposed solutions are utterly inadequate to make up for the vast harm caused by its cavalier accounting of land and livelihoods lost,” said **Natalie Fields, Executive Director of Accountability Counsel**, a legal organization that defends the rights of communities around the world harmed by internationally-financed development projects.

“The World Bank claims that it is ready to transform its failings into reform and respond to those who have been displaced or suffered other harm as a result of its projects. But by failing to act in good faith and with a commitment to its policies in the first place and by now proposing half measures without focusing on improving accountability, the bank seems poised to fail those it has displaced a second time.”

In addition to admitting to failure to follow its own policy with some of the globe’s most vulnerable populations, internal reviews conducted by the World Bank reveal a wide range of failures ranging from a lack of project oversight and monitoring to basic disregard for the bank’s own policies on forced displacements. Recent statements show that for two decades, the bank neglected to collect even minimal information on the resettlement of individuals and communities.

“While the Bank’s admission of failure and the release of its internal reviews is commendable, the proposed remedial action plan was created without any consultation with the very civil society groups who have worked to help resettled and wronged communities around the world,” said Fields. “This proposed plan fails to provide staff or officials in borrower nations with any incentive to learn from these failings and provides no real consequences for maintaining the status quo. Improving the Bank’s accountability for harm it causes must be part of the agenda moving forward.”

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[Accountability Counsel](#) defends the environmental and human rights of marginalized communities around the world. As lawyers for people harmed by internationally financed projects, it focuses on innovative ways to provide access to justice.