



human rights policy statement



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NZAID

HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY STATEMENT

1. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

The central focus of the NZAID¹ programme is poverty elimination through sustainable and equitable development².

Poverty and inequality are not simply development issues. New Zealand, together with other members of the international community, is obliged under international law to address these as human rights issues. Working to eliminate poverty and remove inequalities directly addresses fundamental rights set out in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international human rights instruments.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

¹ Definitions: NZAID, the New Zealand Agency for International Development, Nga Hoe Tuputupu-mai-tawhiti, is the agency that carries out the Government's aid strategy: the NZAID programme is the development cooperation programme delivered by the agency.

² This Statement forms a part of and is to be read in conjunction with *Towards A Safe and Just World Free of Poverty: The NZAID Policy Statement*.



Integrating human rights and development requires bringing together the standards and principles of international human rights with the plans, policies and processes of development. These standards and principles include:

- the International Bill of Rights comprising the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT);
- the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Refugee Convention.

The right to “participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development” was proclaimed in the Declaration on the Right to Development at the United Nations General Assembly in 1986. It was reaffirmed as a universal human right at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. The inextricable links between human rights and development were reaffirmed by heads of state and government at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. World leaders committed themselves to “making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want”.

Human rights principles include those of universality and indivisibility, equality and equity, accountability, empowerment, inclusion, non-discrimination and participation. These operate within an international framework that is firmly grounded in agreed obligations, international law and consensus between states.

Achieving international consensus and applying agreed principles and standards is a complex process involving interaction with customary law and perspectives, and the participation of a wide range of stakeholders including civil society and indigenous groups. Recognition of this complexity is a critical element in integrating the policies and practice of human rights and development.

NZAID is committed to working with partner governments to identify gaps and issues to do with the implementation of human rights obligations and to providing appropriate assistance and encouragement.

NZAID’s mainstreaming of human rights will incorporate a specific focus on the human rights of women and girls as outlined in the *NZAID Gender Policy Statement*.

Some in the international community are increasingly looking beyond the integration of human rights and development to the introduction of “rights-based” approaches to development. NZAID will actively participate in the ongoing international debate about rights-based approaches with a view to reporting to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Trade on implications and longer-term options for New Zealand.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Responsibility for supporting and enhancing the rights of citizens rests with governments. In developing its aid policies, programmes and procedures in support of this work, NZAID recognises that:

- human rights are universal, indivisible and inalienable and apply to all people;
- human rights and equitable and sustainable development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Development is essential to realising human rights, and realising human rights is essential to addressing poverty and promoting development;
- human rights are at the core of all development policy and practice and will be reflected throughout the development programming cycle - from initial appraisal to evaluation and impact assessment.



3. MAINSTREAMING HUMAN RIGHTS

Specific steps, timeframes and responsibilities for the mainstreaming of human rights into all aspects of NZAID's operations will be developed. Mainstreaming will have the three following primary aspects:

- strategy and policy;
- programmes;
- organisational culture and processes.

3.1 Strategy and policy

A commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights will be clearly stated in all NZAID strategy and policy documents. This commitment will reflect the principles outlined above.

Effectively linking human rights and development policies is an important element in achieving policy coherence between development and wider foreign policy objectives. NZAID will maintain close and regular communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (especially the Human Rights Division), the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, relevant civil society organisations, other New Zealand Government ministries and departments, and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

3.2 Programmes

NZAID will put into practice its policy commitments by **mainstreaming human rights into all programmes and procedures.**

For bilateral and regional programmes, NZAID will establish appropriate linkages between the realisation of human rights and the development objectives, priorities and plans in all country and regional strategies. This will be achieved through dialogue with partners. NZAID will ensure that discussion of the links between human rights obligations and development priorities become a regular feature of NZAID's relationships with partner governments and inter-governmental bodies.

For multilateral and regional agencies, NZAID will take into account the ways in which the agency concerned integrates human rights and development when assessing agencies for new or ongoing funding. NZAID will work closely with other governments and stakeholders to ensure that the realisation of human rights and promotion of equitable and sustainable development are fully integrated into the policies, programmes and procedures of international organisations to which New Zealand belongs.

There is hope for change. It comes from the existence of a document, adopted by the countries of the United Nations, which defines the basic rights to which every person is entitled. These include not only life, liberty, personal security and dignity, but also education, work, social security and a standard of living sufficient to provide for the health and well-being of a family.

The Hon. Justice Silvia Cartwright, DBE.

A message on the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1998)



Sector-based NZAID programmes (eg. the Good Governance Programme and VASS) will formally integrate human rights principles and obligations into criteria and assessment processes.

Human rights considerations will be an integral element of all aspects of the project management cycle, from appraisal to evaluation and impact assessment.

NZAID will require that all staff and contractors working in and for NZODA have an understanding and awareness of human rights appropriate for their work, and that they put these into practice.

Supporting activities with human rights as a specific focus

Depending on the particular needs and priorities of partners and funding available, NZAID will support and encourage developmental activities with a specific human rights focus. Examples may include support for:

- national and regional human rights organisations;
- partner government initiatives to address obligations under human rights instruments to which they are a party;
- community-level human rights education, advocacy and other activities;
- multilateral agencies engaged in activities that bring together human rights and developmental perspectives.

3.3 Organisational culture and processes

The mainstreaming of human rights into New Zealand's international development efforts will be reflected in the culture and practice of NZAID itself. NZAID will seek to foster mainstreaming of human rights in the recruitment of staff and contracting of consultants, human resource policies and programmes, and relationships with all stakeholders.

NOTES:

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