

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

1. Introduction

Assistance to Afro-Colombians is a high priority for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Colombia (USAID/Colombia). Since the inception of Plan Colombia in 2000, USAID/Colombia has worked extensively with Afro-Colombian populations to improve their economic, political and social development through activities in the following sectors: alternative development, democratic governance, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable groups, and demobilization, reintegration and victims' assistance (See Annex 1). U.S. Congressional interest in Afro-Colombian issues, primarily through the Congressional Black Caucus, has increased significantly in recent years. In 2008, Congress earmarked \$15 million of USAID/Colombia funds to expand economic development opportunities for Afro-Colombians and indigenous populations (See Annex 2).

Other US Embassy agencies are also implementing activities that benefit Afro-Colombian communities throughout the country. Through the Sports Diplomacy Program, the US Embassy donates sports equipment to Afro-Colombian children. The Embassy Military Group has renovated elementary schools and provided health services in Afro-Colombian communities. The US Public Affairs Section (PAS) has supported an exchange program for Afro-Colombian professionals under the International Visitors Program and provided English training to Afro-Colombian university students through the Martin Luther King English Fellows Program. PAS has also invited African-American cultural ambassadors, speakers and sports figures to participate in Embassy-sponsored events; conducted Afro-centric music exchanges; sponsored photo and art exhibits and theater plays; and organized activities to commemorate Black History Month. In addition, the US Embassy Human Resources Office has begun a Minority Groups Recruitment Initiative to expand recruitment of minorities in the US Embassy workforce.

In 2007, USAID/Colombia commissioned the Phelps Stokes Fund to conduct a qualitative assessment of all USAID activities benefiting the Afro-Colombian community. Consultations were conducted with over 50 beneficiaries and their communities. The assessment highlighted the valuable work of USAID, but emphasized the importance of recognizing the cultural and regional particularities of the Afro-Colombian population. The following five-year strategy (2009-2014) was developed based on the results of this assessment; consultations with US and Colombian stakeholders; and lessons learned from other programs. It is focused on three main areas essential for the development of the Afro-Colombian community: i) increasing economic development; ii) strengthening representation and participation; and iii) increasing responsiveness to Afro-Colombian needs. This strategy is a living document and will adapt to continued consultations with the Afro-Colombian community and the GOC.

2. Background

Demographics:

There are varying estimates of the total population of Afro-Colombians, Afro-Descendants, Palenqueros and Raizales in Colombia¹. The results of the 2005 Census estimate that 10.5 percent of the total population self-identifies as Afro-Colombian (i.e. around four million people). However, the World Bank estimates that Afro-Colombians constitute between 20-25 percent of the population². Approximately 72 percent of Afro-Colombians live in the coastal areas of the Caribbean and Pacific regions³. More recently, and due in part to the intensity of the armed conflict and the lack of economic opportunities in most of these regions, Afro-Colombians are migrating or are forcibly displaced to main urban areas where 66 percent of Afro-Colombians now live. (See Annex 3 for details)

¹ Palenqueros are originally from Palenque San Basilio, Bolivar. Raizales are originally from the San Andres, Old Providence and Santa Catalina islands. These two groups are included in the definition of Afro-Colombian from this point forward.

² World Bank. The Gap Matters – Poverty and Well-Being of Afro-Colombians and Indigenous Peoples, July 20, 2005.

³ National Government of Colombia Census, 2005.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

Historical Background:

Afro-descendants were forcefully brought as slaves to Colombia in the 16th century by the Spanish, Portuguese, Genovese, French, and Dutch and entered mainly through Cartagena. Upon their arrival, many settled along the Caribbean coast. Others were taken to the Pacific coast, where they were forced to work in the gold and salt mines. Prior to the official abolition of slavery in 1851, there were emancipation and Cimarron⁴ movements throughout the country that sometimes resulted in the creation of *palenques*, or settlements of escaped slaves.

The 20th Century brought important changes in the constitutional and legal framework for Afro-Colombians. The 1991 Constitution recognized Colombia as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation for the first time in its history and allowed for affirmative action legislation. It also created two special seats in the House of Representatives for Afro-Colombians. As a result of the modification of the Constitutional framework, the GOC passed Law 70 in 1993 to protect the cultural and property rights of Afro-Colombian communities, incorporating concepts such as collective property rights.⁵

Challenges:

In spite of the significant legislative advances, the situation of most Afro-Colombians remains grim. At least 82% of Afro-Colombians have unsatisfied basic needs⁶. Life expectancy of Afro-Colombian men is 64.6 years, compared to the national average of 70.3 years; for women, the difference is even greater, from 66.7 to a national average of 77.5⁷. The average infant mortality rate for Afro-Colombians is 45/1000 births, almost two times the national average of 23/1000 births⁸. In addition, up to 30 percent of IDPs are estimated to be Afro-Colombian.⁹ Afro-Colombians often reside in regions of economic and strategic importance affected by the conflict and drug trafficking, making them highly vulnerable to political violence.

Although affirmative action policies have been designed in recent years, most have not been fully implemented. Afro-Colombians lack significant political representation at the national level. Only three percent of the members of Congress (9 out of 268) are Afro-Colombian. Despite advances such as the appointment of the first Afro-Colombian Minister in 2007, greater efforts are needed to ensure adequate representation. Finally, Afro-Colombians in Colombia do not have significant representation in the private sector, particularly at higher levels.

At the regional level, Afro-Colombian community councils¹⁰ and several Afro-Colombian civil society organizations (CSOs)¹¹ were established to represent communities' needs and priorities. Some of these organizations wield significant political influence at local, regional, national and international arenas. Nevertheless, they are fairly new and often lack capacity and/or face organizational and financial challenges.

⁴ Movement of escaped slaves.

⁵ Afro-Colombians have historically viewed land as belonging to the community, not the individual. In 1993, Law 70 recognized this tradition, and legally allowed for collective titling of land.

⁶ Naciones Unidas – Consejo Económico y Social: EL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACIÓN RACIAL, LA XENOFOBIA Y TODAS LAS FORMAS DE DISCRIMINACIÓN - Informe del Sr. Doudou Diène, Relator Especial sobre las formas contemporáneas de racismo, discriminación racial, xenofobia y formas conexas de intolerancia, February 23, 2004 found on <http://www.acnur.org/biblioteca/pdf/3183.pdf>

⁷ Rodríguez, Cesar, et al, El Derecho a no ser discriminado – Primer Informe Sobre Discriminación Racial y Derechos de la Población Afrocolombiana, Universidad de Los Andes, October 2008

⁸ Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians - AFRODES. www.afrodes.org. These statistics differ from those gathered by the Colombian government (Acción Social), which as of August 6, 2007, stated that less than 6% of registered IDPs are Afro-Colombian.

⁹ Ibid, www.afrodes.org.

¹⁰ Regulatory Decree 1745 / 95 of Law 70 / 93. Afro-Colombian community councils are the higher authority within the Afro-Colombian collective territories.

¹¹ Ministry of Interior and Justice Decree No. 2248 / 95. Afro-Colombian civil society organizations have to register with the Ministry of Interior of Colombia to be officially recognized and fully exercise their rights.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

The case of Afro-Colombian women merits special attention. Afro-Colombian women disproportionately suffer from discrimination, poverty and violence. Within the Afro-Colombian population, education levels for women are lower than those of men and unemployment levels are higher. Teenage pregnancy among Afro-Colombian displaced women is 30 percent, twice the national average¹², and violence is a pervasive problem. The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), verified that the situation of Afro-Colombian women is particularly precarious and alarming because their gender adds another layer of discrimination and vulnerability and exposes them to greater abuse by the actors of the conflict¹³.

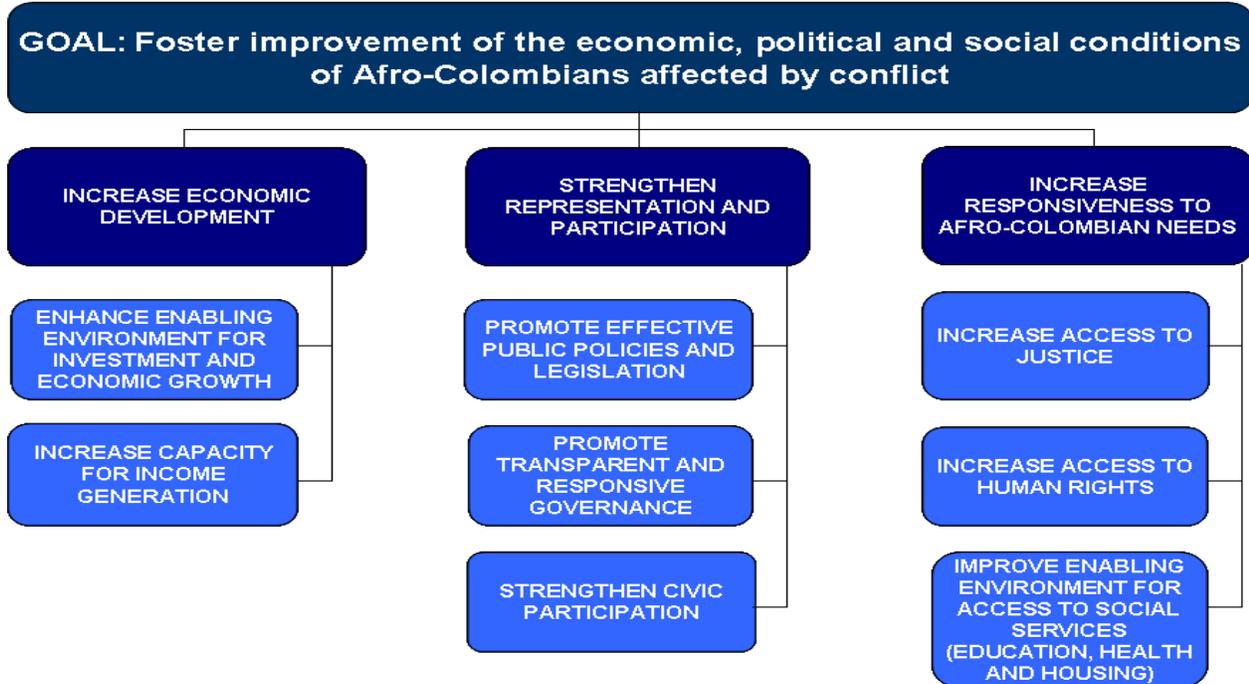
3. Critical Assumptions

While formulating this strategy, USAID/Colombia made the following critical assumptions.

- The security situation enables USAID partners to implement programs without major threats.
- There continues to be a constructive environment that permits U.S. participation in Afro-Colombian development issues.
- The GOC continues its commitment to advancing Afro-Colombian communities.

4. Goal and Purpose

The goal of this five-year strategy is to improve the economic, political and social conditions of Afro-Colombians affected by conflict. This will be achieved through the following strategic framework.



¹²United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA). Scaling Up Initiatives Against Gender Violence in Colombia. <http://colombia.unfpa.org/documentos/Scaling%20Up.pdf>.

¹³ Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women, Violence And Discrimination Against Women In The Armed Conflict In Colombia Violence And Discrimination Against Women In The Armed Conflict In Colombia. <https://cidh.oas.org/women/Colombia06eng/exesummaryco.htm>.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

5. Cross-Cutting Working Principles

The following working principles will guide programmatic choices and influence implementation of activities:

5.1 Differentiated, Participatory Approach¹⁴

All Mission programs directed toward Afro-Colombian communities will be based on their specific needs, strategies, priorities and capacities. Programs will also recognize and respond to the geographic, cultural, demographic and ancestral heritage of the communities.

To ensure this, communities and other stakeholders will be extensively consulted in the design, implementation and monitoring of activities, taking into account existing power relationships among the key actors and promoting broad participation of those at-risk of being under-represented. This process will facilitate partnerships with the Mission, foster a sense of ownership and legitimacy, and enhance program sustainability.

Three levels of stakeholders shall be a fundamental part of this participatory approach:

1. Primary stakeholders such as direct beneficiaries and local government officials (mayors, Afro-Colombian mayors' associations, members of Community Councils, producer associations, civil society leaders, etc.)
2. Secondary stakeholders such as intermediaries (professionals, consultants, experts, etc.)
3. External stakeholders such as policy and decision makers (high-level GOC officials, members of the US and the Colombian Congress, etc.)

5.2 Increased visibility

A recent report on racial discrimination in Colombia establishes two main issues that help explain discrimination in the country: the denial of the existence of racism and the invisibility of Afro-Colombians in both government and the private sector".¹⁵ The latter issue is due in part to absent or insufficient statistics on Afro-Colombians in most public entities and GOC programs. USAID/Colombia will strive to increase visibility of Afro-Colombians through its communication strategy and its information systems. USAID will strengthen communications with partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders to raise awareness and provide information about USAID-supported initiatives and the overall socio-economic and political situation of Afro-Colombians. USAID will also collect disaggregated information on ethnicity and gender to inform program design and monitoring.

5.3 Improved Governance and Capacity Building

USAID will continue its efforts to strengthen the institutional and organizational capacities of Afro-Colombian communities and organizations by providing technical assistance on issues such as administration of collective territories, self-government, transparency and accountability, natural resource management and negotiation skills.

5.4 Harmonization with stakeholders and public-private alliances

The US Embassy, GOC, private sector and other donors have recently placed greater emphasis on programs targeting Afro-Colombians. USAID will work with these actors to ensure collaboration, share best practices and avoid duplication of efforts. USAID will also solicit active partnerships with the private sector to leverage additional resources and help ensure sustainability of programs.

¹⁴ UNHCR defines "Differentiated Approach" as the commitment to respect cultural differences and guarantee ethnic rights in Colombia to assure the effective exercise of equity and actions against discrimination." ACNUR - Balance de la política pública de prevención, protección y atención al desplazamiento interno forzado 2002-2004.

¹⁵ Rodríguez et al (2008)

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

5.5 Sustainability

By fully engaging communities, CSOs, GOC, private sector and other stakeholders throughout the development process and simultaneously strengthening the Afro-Colombian community's organizational capacities, USAID will strive to ensure the sustainability of its initiatives, thereby contributing to significant, long-term improvement in the lives of Afro-Colombians.

6. Strategy Areas

The following strategy areas have been identified as USAID priorities. All are interconnected and interdependent. As far as possible, resources will be dedicated to each one of them. However, if resource levels are insufficient, USAID will focus on economic development and complementary governance and capacity building initiatives that are necessary to increase income generation and improve the enabling environment for investment and economic growth. As resources become available, USAID will implement programs in the remaining strategic areas.

6.1 Increase Economic Development:

6.1.1 Enhance Enabling Environment for Investment and Economic Growth

Challenges:

Inadequate policies promoting economic development and exclusion have resulted in a poor enabling environment and limited economic opportunities for Afro-Colombians. Afro-Colombians have a higher than average unemployment rate in the informal and formal sectors; and communities' often do not respond to typical development policies and interventions. Further, barriers exist regarding access to formal, transparent financial services¹⁶. Most significantly, Afro-Colombians lack formal property rights and protections. Many live on collective territories that are inalienable, with indefinite titles that cannot be seized¹⁷. Thus, they cannot use their land as collateral to apply for credit. In addition, there is significant 'red tape' associated with credit applications. The lack of roads, general connectivity¹⁸ and other infrastructure, including telecommunications, in isolated rural areas further impedes these communities' access to products, services and markets.

Strategic direction:

USAID will continue to work with the GOC to design public policies and improve the regulatory environment. Priority will be given to programs that increase access to formal and transparent credit. Depending on resource availability, USAID may also promote Afro-Colombian employment opportunities; improve access to national and international markets; and assist Afro-Colombian councils to establish environmental and economic development plans for their territories (in accordance with Law 70). USAID will continue to draw upon available policy analyses and consult with the GOC, private sector and targeted communities to determine how to direct resources and policies to have the greatest impact on economic development and income generation.

¹⁶ Although 90 percent of the Afro-Colombian population admits to having access to credit at some point in their lives, 83 percent of this access to credit has been through informal, high-interest loans. National Informal Market Survey - MIDAS Program – USAID/Colombia. September 2007.

¹⁷ Decree 1745/1995

¹⁸ Last Mile Initiative Colombia. Concept Paper, November, 2005. One of the main challenges for Afro-Colombian community is isolation and lack of government presence, which limits access to social services in their regions. Furthermore, economic development has been difficult due to limited private sector investment and inadequate access to external markets. Therefore, telecommunications can play an important role in the development of the Afro-Colombian community because it increases access to information, key social services and economic opportunities. Colombia only has 100,000 broadband internet subscribers, a small number considering the total population is 45 million.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

6.1.2 Increase Capacity for Income Generation

Challenges:

The policy and structural barriers mentioned above are compounded by a lack of investment in Afro-Colombian communities, limited education and inadequate job-training. These issues together with socio-cultural factors hamper Afro-Colombians ability to engage in a diversity of income-generation activities. A predominant consideration of Afro-Colombian communities is preservation of their culture and way of life, thus some communities prefer income generation projects related to handicrafts, agriculture, tourism, and forestry and fishing.¹⁹ Another inhibiting factor is the politicized, census-oriented nature of decision-making in Afro-Colombian communities, wherein one or several *consejos* may approve a project only to be overturned or pressured to reject the project from other *consejos* in surrounding areas.

Strategic direction:

USAID will draw upon lessons learned from the Productive Ethnic Territories Initiative (TEP), an initiative implemented in 2008-2009 that is focused on income generation and job creation in Afro-Colombian communities, and continue to identify sustainable income-generation activities. Once identified through a consultative process, initiatives will include the following, as required: (i) vocational training; (ii) technical assistance to transfer technology and knowledge to beneficiaries; (iii) promotion of investment in critical social and productive infrastructure; and (iv) the creation of linkages with other sources of technical expertise and organizations. As the success of income generation projects depends on local governance and capacity-building of local Afro-Colombian community councils or *consejos*, and producer organizations, enhancing the capacity of community leaders and productive and social organizations will be a priority.

6.2 Strengthen Representation and Participation:

6.2.1 Promote Effective Public Policies and Legislation

Challenges:

The Colombian Constitution addresses anti-discrimination laws, and certain Supreme Court and Constitutional rulings have been made to address the needs of Afro-Colombian communities. Further, numerous laws, decrees and policy documents (CONPES) exist that focus on Afro Colombians²⁰. However, they have not been fully or effectively implemented. Moreover, there is inadequate representation of Afro-Colombians in government. While Afro-Colombians represent between 20-25 percent of the population, only 3.3 percent of the Colombian Congress is Afro-Colombian. Only 13.7 percent of Afro-Colombians feel represented in Colombian social system and 16.7 percent feel included in municipal decisions.²¹

Strategic Direction:

USAID will continue to work with the GOC to design and implement Afro-Colombian policies, directives and laws, at all levels of government (municipal, departmental, and national) and foster the inclusion of Afro-Colombian priorities in the legislative agendas of Congress in the three strategic areas identified in the strategic framework (increased economic development, strengthened representation and participation and increased government responsiveness to Afro-Colombian needs). This will include continued support to the Afro-Colombian Bancada²², a multi-party caucus comprised of Colombia's seven Afro-Colombian representatives and one Afro-Colombian senator. Established in late 2006 with the support of USAID, the Bancada develops and advocates for legislation that promotes the interests of Afro-Colombians while seeking to bolster the political participation of Afro-Colombians.

¹⁹ Long Term Plan for the Afro-Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal Communities, Bogotá. January, 2007

²⁰ For example, Law 70/1993 is supposed to guarantee the social, economic, political and cultural rights of Afro-Colombians.

²¹ World Bank, 2005.

²² With the exception of Senator Piedad Cordoba, all Afro-Colombian representatives and Senators are members of the Bancada.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

6.2.2 Promote Transparent and Responsive Governance

Challenges:

Corruption and lack of transparency are two deeply-rooted problems that affect Afro-Colombian communities. For example, in Chocó, as of 2007 there were 536 investigations of corruption against 602 public servants, and 197 sanctions and destitutions have been made by the Inspector General's Office since 2002²³. Due to corruption and lack of government transparency, Afro-Colombians cannot efficiently maximize the financial resources they receive from the GOC. In addition, in some parts of the local, regional and national government, there is limited awareness of the needs of the Afro-Colombian community and often times a lack of political will to address these needs.

Strategic Direction:

USAID will support initiatives to increase the capacity of Afro-Colombian elected officials at all levels of government and civil society to ensure greater transparency and decrease corruption. USAID will provide training and technical assistance to national, departmental, and local authorities in a range of governance issues including public administration, financial management, participatory planning, and citizen participation. Assistance will continue to emphasize building constructive relationships between government and civil society to increase transparency of governance, citizen involvement in governance, and accountability of elected officials. Since 2002 USAID has supported the establishment of several hundred citizen oversight committees (*Veedurías Ciudadanas*)²⁴, which give citizens the opportunity to oversee and monitor the provision of government services, thereby increasing government transparency. USAID will target such programs in communities with large Afro-Colombian populations. Furthermore, USAID will work with Colombian public institutions (executive, legislative and judicial branches at all levels) and civil society to raise awareness about corruption.

6.2.3 Strengthen Civic Participation

Challenges:

Many Afro-Colombian CSOs and their political representatives are politically and administratively weak. These groups often lack effective communication and negotiation skills, and administrative and financial management capacity. These factors along with the inability to develop a common political platform have not only limited their ability to advocate but diminished their credibility with their stakeholders.

Strategic direction:

USAID will provide institutional strengthening and technical assistance to civil society organizations such as Afro-Colombian Community Councils and Afro-Colombian NGOs. This will increase their advocacy and negotiation capacity; and help strengthen and improve the dialogue amongst the groups and with the GOC.

6.3 Increase Responsiveness to Afro-Colombian Needs

6.3.1 Increase Access to Justice

Challenges:

Ineffective implementation of anti-discrimination norms, lack of differentiated policies for Afro-Colombians, and insufficient disaggregation of information challenge the right of Afro-Colombians to access justice services. There are several norms that recognize the principle of non-discrimination. However, none contain specific courses of action to effectively provide reparations to victims. To date, there have been only 12 cases of discrimination brought to the judicial system, three of which have been recent tutelas.²⁵

²³ "Corruption is devouring Chocó", *El País*, <http://www.elpais.com.co/paisonline/notas/Abril012007/corrupcion.html>.

²⁴ Articles 103 and 270 of the Constitution state that a citizen oversight committee is a participatory mechanism to control public officials' behavior and public investments.

²⁵ Rodríguez, et al (2008). A tutela is a judicial action developed in the 1991 Constitution to protect civil rights. However, it is subsidiary, and cannot be applied for specific compensations.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

Norms do exist which provide Afro-Colombian communities the authority to carry out mediation according to their own traditions and practices. However, this authority is not as extensive as the one conferred to indigenous authorities, which are permitted to exercise judicial power within their territories and among community members.

Strategic direction:

USAID will carry out an assessment on how to improve Afro-Colombian's access to justice and continue its support of Justice Houses and Colombian courts in areas with a high concentration of Afro-Colombians, being mindful of Afro-Colombian culture and heritage. Justice Houses inform community residents about their rights, prevent crime, fight against impunity, and provide conflict management and dispute resolution services. In addition, USAID will continue to support Afro-Colombian organizations to strengthen ancestral and communal justice alternatives in Afro-Colombian territories. USAID will also continue its work with Afro-Colombian grassroots and community organizations to build their capacity to use the justice system as a tool to achieve justice.

6.3.2 Increase Access to Human Rights

Challenges:

According to UNHCR there has been a high rate of human rights violations against Afro-Colombians mainly in rural areas. These violations include selective assassinations, disappearances, death threats and forced displacement because Afro-Colombians inhabit areas used by illegal groups for illegal crop cultivation and trafficking of drugs and weapons²⁶. Thousands of child combatants have been forcefully recruited by illegal armed groups. Afro-Colombian children are particularly vulnerable due to a combination of factors including poverty, lack of education and economic opportunities and the presence of illegal armed groups.

Strategic direction:

USAID will strengthen the organizational capacity of communities-at-risk and assist them in the development of contingency plans to react to human rights abuses. USAID will also strengthen the capacity of Afro-Colombian organizations to document, respond and process cases involving human rights violations; and support Afro-Colombian social networks and organizations to design and monitor human rights related public policies and learn negotiation techniques. In order to address the problem of forced displacement, USAID will assist the GOC in recuperating land or returning displaced Afro-Colombians to their lands. USAID will also work on reparation and reconciliation programs in Afro-Colombian communities; continue to support programs that prevent the recruitment of Afro-Colombian children in armed conflict; and reintegrate former child combatants into their communities.

6.3.3 Improve Enabling Environment to Access to Social Services (Education, Health and Housing)

Challenges:

A UNHCR report on Afro-Colombians states that 82% of Afro-Colombians lack basic needs, with little to no access to potable water, infrastructure, housing, healthcare and education²⁷. Limited access to these basic social services, especially education and healthcare, diminish prospects for community development.

Education: There are four major problems regarding education in the Afro-Colombian community: (i) High illiteracy rate (43 percent in rural areas compared to 23.4 percent for non-blacks and 20 percent in urban areas compared to 7.3 percent for non-blacks²⁸); (ii) High drop out rate, especially in secondary and higher education due to the need to contribute to family household income; (iii) Lack of quality education

²⁶ United Nations United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Consideraciones sobre la protección internacional de los solicitantes de asilo y los refugiados colombiano, Geneva, March 2005

²⁷ Diene (2004)

²⁸ Proceso de Comunidades Negras - La Situación de los Afrocolombianos. Síntesis del Informe a la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. Washington DC, March, 2007 found on [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(http:Documents/01369747C9F9BB25C1257315002CCCF0/\\$file/Presentacion_Final1_1.doc](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(http:Documents/01369747C9F9BB25C1257315002CCCF0/$file/Presentacion_Final1_1.doc)

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

(65 percent of public schools in Afro-Colombian territories were categorized as inferior or very inferior institutions²⁹); and (iv) Lack of implementation of ethno-education curricula³⁰.

Health: Afro-Colombians face higher mortality rates than non-Afro-Colombians. They are disproportionately impacted by diseases such as respiratory infections, tuberculosis and acute diarrhea due to a lack of basic sanitation. In Chocó, for example, the Afro-Colombian maternal mortality rate (400 per 100,000 live births) is four times higher than the national average (105 per 100,000 live births) and the pregnancy rate for an Afro-Colombian adolescent woman is double the national average.³¹ On the supply side, there is little access to quality health care in Afro-Colombian areas. In addition, Colombia's health system does not take into account the ancestral practices or specific epidemiological characteristics of this community.

Housing: Many Afro-Colombians lack access to adequate housing and public services such as water and sanitation³². Furthermore, in the past, adequate consultation was not done with Afro-Colombian communities, resulting in many unoccupied housing projects.

Strategic direction:

Education: USAID will support GOC efforts to increase access to education through continued support for scholarships for higher education, leadership development and English training for university students. Access to basic education for Afro-Colombians will continue to be a component of USAID assistance to vulnerable populations. USAID may take advantage of targeted opportunities to improve educational infrastructure.

Health: USAID will continue to provide assistance to the GOC to improve the health coverage of Afro-Colombians, fostering actions to link individuals with state health insurance (SISBEN³³) and provide support to the GOC to strengthen health systems in Colombian departments with large Afro-Colombian populations. In addition, USAID will foster prevention activities to address domestic violence and adolescent pregnancy among Afro-Colombian youth.

Housing: USAID will work with the public and private sector and the Afro-Colombian community on policies and perhaps small-scale projects that enable increased access to suitable housing and subsidy programs offered by the GOC for new and/or improved housing.

7. Selection Criteria for Projects:

The following selection criteria will be used for USAID projects.

- Self-identified needs of the Afro-Colombian community.
- USAID priorities, available resources and areas in which the USG has a competitive advantage.
- Geographic locations: The U.S. Embassy is currently designing a framework for five-year, GOC-led integrated democratic security, counter narcotics, and rural development effort in five priority zones:
 - Montes de María corridor
 - Catatumbo-Bajo Cauca corridor
 - Urabá and Northern Chocó corridor
 - Meta – Buenaventura corridor
 - Putumayo – Nariño corridor

²⁹ World Bank - Más allá de los Promedios: Afrodescendientes en América Latina – Los Afrocolombianos, February, 2006.

³⁰ Ministry of Education Decree 1122/1997 required all Colombians primary, secondary and vocational schools to teach about the importance of Afro-Colombians as part of the education curriculum.

³¹ UNFPA. Scaling Up Initiatives Against Gender Violence in Colombia.

³² CONPES 3310/2004 - According DANE's 2003 Household Survey that included 68 municipalities throughout the country, 62% of Afro-Colombians are home-owners but their residences are deficient or deteriorated.

³³ Identification System for Potential Social Program Beneficiaries, in Spanish, *Sistema de identificación de Potenciales Beneficiarios de Programas Sociales, SISBEN*. Its goal is to establish an objective and equitable mechanism to identify potential beneficiaries through local and national social institutions. <http://www.sisben.gov.co/>

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

Priority will be given, but not restricted, to these corridors.³⁴ Given the demographic spread of Afro-Colombian populations, USAID resources will support programs in both rural and urban/peri-urban areas.

- Priority will be given to programs, projects and activities included in municipal or departmental development plans, and Afro-Colombian ethnic-development plans³⁵.
- Programs must be aligned with/complementary to GOC programs and institutions.
- If possible, projects that include particularly vulnerable populations within Afro-Colombian communities such as the disabled, women, children, youth and internally displaced persons will be given priority.

8. Implementation Modalities

This strategy will guide allocation of all USAID/Colombia resources directed towards the Afro-Colombian community. During the five years of implementation of this strategy, USAID will continue to channel its efforts through current programs to maximize impact and generate results as quickly as possible. However, contingent on the availability of resources, USAID also expects to have Afro-Colombian specific programs.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to effectively track the performance of strategy-related initiatives, USAID/Colombia and its implementing partners will monitor activities using both quantitative and qualitative means. From a quantitative perspective, USAID will continue to disaggregate indicators by sex, ethnicity and geographic location, which will enable the Mission to track program coverage within Afro-Colombian communities.

From a qualitative perspective, survey work and focus groups will help determine factors such as interaction between the communities and their local governments; changing perception of Afro-Colombians; increased institutional strengthening of Afro-Colombian organizations; and capacity to effectively advocate for their needs will be considered when monitoring projects.

Establishing baseline data is indispensable; it sets the foundation for measuring change in supported communities, organizations, territories, and institutions. Ideally, baselines will be set using primary sources of information such as the Afro-Colombian Commission workshops.³⁶ However, because this can sometimes be an onerous and lengthy process; additional sources (i.e. previous studies, research papers, census information, government analyses, etc.) will also be utilized to construct such baseline data.

³⁴ Other areas with high Afro-Colombian concentration will be considered, i.e. rural areas such as Southern Chocó, Bolívar, Córdoba, Sucre, Magdalena, and the San Andrés and Providencia Islands and urban centers such as Bogotá, Medellín, Cartagena, Santa Marta, Sincelejo, Montería and Pereira.

³⁵ Municipal and departmental governments as well as Afro-Colombian Community Councils are required to create development plans for their jurisdiction. Because these development plans are previously agreed upon by stakeholders, they will increase legitimacy of the initiatives.

³⁶ Afro-Colombian Commission workshops, conducted by the Vice-President's Office and the Universidad Santiago de Cali with financial support from USAID, will be used to determine the challenges faced by Afro-Colombian communities. These workshops are being held in 14 cities throughout the country with significant Afro-Colombian populations and will reach approximately 3,500 people.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

Annex 1: USAID ASSISTANCE TO AFRO-COLOMBIANS

Since the inception of Plan Colombia in 2000, USAID has worked extensively with Afro-Colombian populations through its alternative development, democratic governance, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable groups, and demobilization and reintegration programs.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

In order to foster viable alternatives to illegal drug production, USAID has conducted social and economic development projects with Afro-Colombian families, community councils and municipalities. Activities include agricultural and managerial training, forestry activities and reforestation, entrepreneurial training, marketing, social infrastructure and local governance strengthening. Details are given below.

Forestry: USAID supports forest harvesting projects with several community councils. Through these projects, Afro-Colombian families are able to establish natural forestry community enterprises, develop sustainable forestry management plans and provide technical assistance in wood processing and marketing.

Entrepreneurial Strengthening: USAID offers technical assistance in the form of business plan evaluations for productive associations, marketing, entrepreneurial and productive strengthening for Afro-Colombian organizations, and capacity-building for small and medium enterprises, enabling them to respond to growing market challenges.

Local Governance: USAID has supported the National Association of Mayors of Municipalities with Afro-Descendent Populations (AMUNAFRO) for over four years. With USAID assistance, the Association is now providing technical assistance to its member municipalities. In addition, USAID programs support the economic, political and organizational strengthening of community councils and foster stronger relations between the councils and municipal governments.

LESSONS LEARNED

Through its alternative development programs, USAID has identified the need to develop durable and legitimate partnerships with Afro-Colombian communities. Activities must be developed with the active and informed participation of communities in collaboration with local government. It is also critical to foster the institutional and organizational strengthening of community and productive organizations, so they are able to continue servicing their communities once USAID assistance has ceased.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

USAID has provided direct assistance to Afro-Colombian community councils, municipalities, and grassroots organizations through programs that build the capacity of political parties, political institutions and civil society organizations and improve the quality of and access to justice and human rights. Details are given below.

Political Party Strengthening: USAID is supporting the development of a more transparent, inclusive, and representative political party system, by strengthening the effective presence of national organizations of political parties in marginalized regions of Colombia. Part of this effort involves assistance for the Afro-Colombian Congressional Caucus, which was launched in September 2006.

Regional Governance Consolidation Program (RGCP): Through RGCP, USAID works with the GOC and civil society to expand state presence and enhance citizen participation, governmental accountability, and transparency in areas that have been particularly hard hit by violence.

Justice Strengthening: USAID supports Justice Houses to inform community residents about their rights, prevent crime, fight against impunity, and provide conflict management and dispute resolution

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

services. In addition, USAID supports Afro-Colombian organizations to strengthen ancestral and communal justice alternatives in Afro-Colombian territories.

Human Rights: USAID has assisted Afro-Colombian organizations to formulate plans for a development agenda; supported organizations dedicated to the promotion and protection of Afro-Colombian rights and interests; analyzed the Colombian government's compliance with Law 70 which guarantees Afro-Colombian rights; and fostered the development of Afro-Colombian women's organization networks.

USAID has also supported projects that strengthen the ability of social organizations to prevent and respond to human rights violations.

LESSONS LEARNED

Under-representation and poor governance is a significant impediment for the well-being of Afro-Colombian communities. As such, USAID must work towards strengthening the dialogue between communities and their representatives at the local, regional, and national levels and ensure that public policies are designed and executed to respond to the specific needs of the communities.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Economic Development and Provision of Social Services: USAID provides integrated assistance for internally displaced persons and vulnerable groups, including Afro-Colombians. It is focused on: vocational training and job placement, development of small businesses, strengthening community infrastructure, provision of housing, education and health services and humanitarian assistance. USAID has also provided institutional strengthening for community councils and the GOC, thereby linking local, regional, and national institutions.

Scholarships and English Language Training: USAID has supported the Martin Luther King English Fellows Program, which provides English language training for accomplished, Afro-Colombian university students from low-income backgrounds. In addition, USAID co-funds the Afro-Colombian Leadership and Scholarship Program with the GOC, enabling emerging Afro-Colombian leaders to attend graduate school in the United States.

LESSONS LEARNED

The utilization of a differentiated approach to project design and implementation is essential when working with Afro-Colombian communities. Respect for their traditions, culture and perspectives, permits USAID assistance be responsive to the specific needs of the communities and thus generate sustainable, positive results.

DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

USAID conducted a peace and reconciliation project benefitting Afro-Colombian communities in Buenaventura. The project was successful in integrating Afro-Colombian cultural identity into conflict resolution and community development. In addition, USAID is providing education services and technical assistance to increase citizen participation and help reintegrate child soldiers into their host communities.

LESSONS LEARNED

Community involvement and active participation is crucial at all stages of the project development cycle. This will not only assure legitimacy of USAID-supported initiatives, but will also empower them to have a stronger and more unified voice with their representatives.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

Annex 2: PRODUCTIVE ETHNIC TERRITORIES – TEP (Progress Report - February 2009)

A congressional soft earmark was listed in FY08 legislation directing USAID/Colombia to implement economic development activities in Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities. After extensive consultations with the GOC, USAID decided that a regionally-focused strategy would have a lasting economic impact in targeted communities.

TEP Criteria

Economic development does not come in a vacuum; it depends upon a number of factors unique to each community. Therefore, all activities carried under the earmark are composed of three pillars – (i) organizational strengthening, (ii) food security, and (iii) income generation activities. All activities are tailored to the specific needs of the partner community which are jointly identified with the communities and local authorities.

In addition to complying with the three pillars mentioned above, all activities must meet the following criteria:

1. Existence of the planned activity within the local or departmental development plan, ethno-development plan (for Afro-Colombian communities) or life plan (for indigenous communities).
2. Prior consultations with partner communities.
3. Geographic location in priority TEP zones.

Working Model

Due to the limitations of a 1½ year work plan and the need to rapidly initiate activities, the Mission decided to launch new Afro-Colombian and indigenous activities under ongoing programs. Four different implementing partners – ADAM, MIDAS, PADF and IOM – are responsible for carrying out earmark activities. A special taskforce has been created, composed of representatives from USAID, the GOC, and the implementing partners, to coordinate all earmark efforts, nationally and regionally.

Geographic Focus

USAID and the GOC's Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation (Acción Social), identified the target earmark regions based on geographic locations of Afro-Colombian and/or indigenous communities, socio-economic conditions, presence of illegal armed groups and/or illicit crops, and an overall presence of illegality. Based on this analysis, programs will initially focus on the departments of Nariño and Cauca, and the municipality of Buenaventura.

Consultation Process

In order to guarantee transparency, legitimacy, and ownership by the communities as well as sustainability of programs and activities carried out under the earmark, USAID conducted an inclusive consultation process with all relevant stakeholders. The process included Acción Social, the Governors of Nariño and Cauca, Mayors of the target regions, the Association of Municipalities with Afro-Colombian Population - AMUNAFRO, as well as regional mayors' associations, community councils, indigenous authorities, and producer associations.

Planned Activities

Between July and December of 2008, 128 participatory processes were conducted with communities, local, regional and national government representatives and the private sector. A total of 31 activities were identified according to the earmark criteria, covering 99 community councils and 29 indigenous reserves located in 32 municipalities. The products supported through these activities include coconut, cacao, panela, sugar cane, and other local crops to guarantee food security. Over 13,000 families will benefit from this initiative.

AFRO-COLOMBIAN STRATEGY

USAID/COLOMBIA

Annex 3 – Overview of Afro-Colombian Communities by Geographic Location

Caribbean:

In this region, there are two different types of Afro-Colombian communities:

- Palenqueras: Originally from Palenque San Basilio, Bolivar, these communities migrated to Cartagena, Barranquilla and other Caribbean urban areas and are very politically and culturally active.
- Raizales: Originally from the San Andres, Old Providence and Santa Catalina islands, these communities historically spoke English and have had very little economic and political power due to differences in their culture and language.

Pacific:

In this region, there are two sub-regions:

- Chocó: Within this region, there are cultural differences and tensions between communities living along the Atrato River and the San Juan River.
- Sub-region of the South: This includes Afro-Colombian communities from Valle de Cauca, Cauca and Nariño. Within this region, there are cultural differences between coastal communities and communities along the river basin.

Andean:

The majority of Afro-Colombians in this region are internally displaced persons (IDPs) and many are victims of forced migration. Most are in the urban areas of Bogota, Medellín, and the coffee-growing regions of Risaralda, Caldas and Quindío.

Flatlands:

This growing community is composed of Afro-Colombians who are descendants from slaves that fought during independence and teachers that migrated from Chocó in the 1970's and 1980's due to job opportunities in the education sector.