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DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT OF MADAGASCAR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (PUBLIC VERSION)

OCTOBER 2015

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
BIANCO	Independent Anti-Corruption Office (<i>Bureau indépendant anti-corruption</i>)
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organization
D/G	Democracy and Governance
DO	Development Objective
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
EU	European Union
GOM	Government of Madagascar
HAT	High Transitional Authority (<i>Haute autorité de la transition</i>)
HCC	High Constitutional Court
HCJ	High Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NA	National Assembly
NDI	National Democratic Institute
PM	Prime Minister
ROL	Rule of Law
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAF	Strategic Assessment Framework
SC	Supreme Court
SeFaFi	Public Life Observatory in Antananarivo (<i>Observatoire de la vie publique à</i>
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Since the January 2014 inauguration of President Hery Rajaonarimampianina, Madagascar has struggled to recover from a debilitating, five-year-long political crisis (2009–2013) that has had a devastating economic, social, and humanitarian impact on a country already among the world’s poorest. In early 2009, following weeks of mass protests against the democratically elected government of then-President Marc Ravalomanana, a segment of the military provided backing for then-Mayor of Antananarivo Andry Rajoelina, who had rallied much of the country’s opposition behind him. Military intervention forced Ravalomanana to resign from office following one month of violent demonstrations that resulted in the death of 28 protesters. Having ousted Ravalomanana, a military directorate in March 2009 transferred power to Rajoelina, who became president of a so-called High Authority of the Transition (HAT). The HAT officially was tasked with overseeing a transitional regime that would organize elections ostensibly to pave the way to a new political order.

The unconstitutional transfer of power resulted in the international isolation of Madagascar. The United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) all suspended Madagascar’s membership in their respective organizations and refused to recognize the new military-backed government. Western governments, including the United States, cut aid, as did multilateral institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It took Madagascar five years to extricate itself from the protracted political crisis that began in 2009. The ultimate breakthrough, in the form of presidential and legislative elections held concurrently on December 20, 2013, required sustained and repeated mediation efforts by the international community, especially SADC. Elections generally viewed as free, fair, and credible paved the way for a lifting of international sanctions and for Madagascar’s reintegration into the international community.

In the 15 months following the election, Madagascar has taken tentative steps toward reconciliation and the normalization of political life. Yet progress has been slow and social and economic conditions remain very precarious. Following his appointment as prime minister (PM) in April 2014, Kolo Roger formed an inclusive government that featured figures from across the political spectrum. Ultimately, he was widely viewed as ineffective; he and his entire government were forced to resign in January 2015 amid growing public anger at the lack of tangible improvements in social and economic conditions, chronic power shortages, and growing insecurity. To replace Kolo Roger, President Rajaonarimampianina appointed retired Air Force General Jean Ravelonarivo as the new head of a government that is now under great pressure to deliver concrete progress in the next few months. Indeed, the vast majority of those interviewed by the team felt that to survive politically the president has to score one or more significant political successes in the coming year, and many felt that he may not even have that much time.

This seemingly repeating cycle brings up the persistent patterns of dysfunction that are the result of a lack of political accountability. The larger issue is the need for significant changes in Madagascar’s political dynamics if the country is to meet its major developmental challenges and overcome the dysfunctions that brought about the 2009 crisis, which will inevitably trigger another such calamity unless they are addressed. This document’s central claim is that the lack of political accountability represents the most significant political problem facing the island. Unless that problem is addressed directly, none of the promising steps that have taken place in the past 15 months (including Madagascar’s reintegration into the international fold and the resumption of development assistance) will lead to sustainable progress. Developmental challenges in Madagascar cannot be tackled successfully unless the institutional decay

and the repeated political crises that are the root cause of underdevelopment are given proper attention; that, in turn, necessitates confronting the inadequacy of accountability mechanisms, which lies at the heart of the political and governmental systems' weaknesses.

UNPACKING MADAGASCAR'S DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE (DRG) CHALLENGES

THE CORE DRG PROBLEM: A DEFICIT OF POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The chronic political and economic challenges that have constrained Madagascar's development stem largely from *a systemic lack of political accountability*. To appreciate fully how this accountability deficit has sapped Madagascar's developmental potential, one must examine it against the backdrop created by three defining features of the country's political context:

1. *The massive concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a small group of elites.* Even by African standards, Madagascar stands out by the extent to which a handful of powerful individuals and families control the country's political and economic life. Though the island's various elite segments have long been at odds with each other, they nonetheless have been able to maintain a closed system that has proven remarkably resilient and adaptable, and geared almost exclusively to benefit those who preside over it.
2. *The enormous gap that separate the elites in question from the vast majority of the population.* The political, economic, social, and cultural chasm between Madagascar's elite and its citizenry is striking, even in the context of Africa. Also conspicuous is the paucity of intermediary bodies that can relay societal demands, bind elites to the population at large, and act as brokers between the top of the political system and grassroots communities (in a country in which three-quarters of the population still lives in rural areas).
3. *The zero-sum perspective of political elites.* Constantly fighting over the spoils of the system and engaged in never-ending efforts to outmaneuver each other, these elites have displayed a short-sighted approach to politics and have consistently refrained from even seeking to articulate a coherent vision for the country.

This situation summarized above continues to have thwarted Madagascar's potential for economic growth, social development, and democracy, and the preservation of its unique ecosystem. *Unless Madagascar's political accountability deficit is addressed, the country may find itself repeating history by becoming caught in a downward spiral.* Madagascar's core democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) problem—the lack of accountability of governmental and political elites—largely accounts for the paradox presented by the sharp contrast between the country's many and significant natural assets and its economic underperformance and even decline over the past half-century. The explanation for this apparent contradiction lies in the absence of effective mechanisms of restraint on elites chronically indifferent to the common good.

The self-serving behavior by elites is the key dynamic that needs to be changed if Madagascar is to overcome the daunting political, economic, and environmental challenges it faces. The only way to do so is to increase markedly political accountability—which entails disciplining elites and government, creating limits on what they can and cannot do, and making them more responsive to public needs. It is the *weakness of the demand for accountability* by the population at large, and the *absence within the political system of effective mechanisms for ensuring accountability*, that has enabled elites to get away with the type of behavior described above.

The *weakness of the demand for accountability* has longstanding and mutually reinforcing historical and cultural roots. A prominent one consists of the resilience—especially in rural areas where the large

majority of the population still lives—of traditional values that emphasize respect for authority and hierarchies. Another related factor is the physical dispersion across the national territory of an overwhelmingly impoverished and illiterate or poorly educated population. Rights awareness within the population, that population’s readiness to articulate demands—whether demands for public services or for accountability—and its broader capacity for social and political mobilization also remain hindered by the paucity and weaknesses of intermediary bodies capable of linking the capital to the country’s multiple and diverse peripheries. Making elites more accountable will necessitate enhancing the population’s awareness of its inherent and legal rights, strengthening its capacity to mobilize and advocate on behalf of those rights, and improving its ability to engage decision-makers constructively on issues of concern to grassroots communities.

THE KEY DRG ELEMENTS

Consensus. Consensus does not represent a critical problem area in Madagascar. The country features a strong sense of national identity, a single Malagasy language, common cultural beliefs, and shared attitudes toward power and authority. Unlike many other African countries, the island is not burdened by sharp identity divisions along ethnic and/or tribal lines. To be sure, Malagasy elites have been engaged in chronic political infighting that frequently has escalated into irreconcilable disagreements over who has a legitimate claim to power. The lack of elite cohesion in Madagascar, therefore, has been over who will govern more than it has been over the system of governance. It has not been over fundamental principles regarding how the polity ought to be organized and how power should be exercised.

Inclusion. Madagascar features an overarching inclusion deficit in that the vast majority of the population is de facto excluded from meaningful participation in political life and has no real say in decision-making processes controlled exclusively by a handful of elites. While the population takes part in elections that can be credible, as was the case in October–December 2013, these elections and other outward forms of competition do not provide mechanisms for the genuine integration of citizens in the polity. Institutions that could link Malagasy citizens to the political process are extremely weak: political parties are inchoate and serve as mere vehicles to advance the political ambitions and other personal interests of their leaders, while few genuine advocacy groups exist amidst a weak civil society, and those few that do struggle to gain traction.

Competition and Political Accountability. Politics in Madagascar remains an elite affair; existing political institutions and processes do not provide venues through which the population as a whole can take part in a contest over ideas and programs of government. Competition does take place, but nearly exclusively among a small group of elites. This competition, furthermore, is not about policy platforms, but over positions of influence in the political and governmental systems and the means of personal enrichment to which these positions give access. The political system does not provide a way of arbitrating effectively among competing factions—hence Madagascar’s demonstrated propensity for political impasses, military interventions, and international efforts to find a way out of elite standoffs. The state remains highly centralized. Despite several and largely conflicting decentralization reforms since the 2000s, actual devolution of power has yet to take place. Political power is heavily concentrated in the executive branch, and within it, in the office of the presidency—indeed, in the person of the president, since Madagascar’s political system retains strong patrimonial features. Neither the legislature nor the judiciary provide effective checks on the power of the presidency. Instead, both consistently have proven to be subject to executive influence and manipulation.

Rule of Law and Human Rights. Madagascar’s performance in the rule of law (ROL) area, never particularly strong in the first place, has deteriorated markedly since 2009. In critical respects, ROL shortcomings are a by-product of the overarching deficit of political accountability, which creates an environment conducive to the following dysfunctions: impunity by elites, excesses by the security forces, the blending of public and private interests, and a pattern of external interference in the affairs of the judiciary by both the executive branch and established political and economic interests.

Government Responsiveness and Effectiveness. One of the most consequential trends in Madagascar since the onset of the 2009 political crisis has been an inability to increase state capacity—indeed, the accelerated decay of the state itself. Government effectiveness is low in large part because the government is neither meant nor structured to be responsive to the population. As this report argues, unless and until those who control the state and the political system are made more accountable, it is unrealistic to expect significant and sustainable improvements in government responsiveness and effectiveness.

KEY ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS

Big Families and Key Private Sector Actors. A handful of families have long played a critical role in Malagasy politics. Competition among families has grown increasingly intense in recent decades. This competition—for access to resources, markets, and political influence—has been far more corrosive to political stability in Madagascar than other oft-cited factors, such as the *Merina-Côtier* divide.

The Security System. Madagascar’s security system comprises primarily the army and the national police (*gendarmerie*). The military—rather, particular segments within it—has played an important but largely indirect role in Malagasy politics. Whenever a standoff among elites has paralyzed the country’s political and governmental systems, the military often has performed the function of kingmaker by siding with one faction against the other. What the Malagasy military has not done is initiate coups on its own and preside over military regimes of the sort seen in many African countries. Even when the military has intervened in the political arena, it has done so in combination with other political forces and typically against a backdrop of generalized discontent. Today, the military remains dominated by a disproportionately large number of generals and other senior military commanders. It still seems incapable of acting as a single political force, either in support of the elected government or ready to throw its weight behind an opposition eager to oust it.

The Constitutional Arena. There have been nine constitutional revisions in Madagascar (1958, 1959, 1972, 1975, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2007, and 2010). While only four amounted to a new republic, each fundamentally altered the structure of the state and the distribution of power among its constituent parts.

The Executive. Madagascar formally features a semi-presidential system with executive power shared between an elected president and an appointed PM, but with the balance of power (both under the constitution and even more so in practice) heavily tilted toward the former. Presidential powers have been enhanced steadily in successive constitutions since 1995. The president can veto legislation, without the possibility of override by the legislature. He can propose referenda virtually without restrictions. He holds a partial (line item) veto. He can issue decrees unconstrained by the legislature and with only soft checks by the judiciary. He can dissolve the National Assembly (NA). He names the PM and the members of the cabinet. The president appoints and presides over the Council of Ministers (Article 55), which determines (ad hoc) by decree the number of members of the NA, the distribution of seats across the country, and the boundaries of electoral districts (Article 70).

The Legislature. Madagascar has a bicameral legislature composed of a directly elected lower chamber (the NA) and an upper chamber (the Senate). The Senate, however, has yet to be reconstituted by indirect election and Madagascar currently is operating as a de facto unicameral system, in contradiction with the framework provided for under the constitution. While constitutionally autonomous, the NA is seen as largely subservient to the executive. In most electoral cycles, elections to the NA have followed the presidential elections, a situation that has provided an opportunity for rent-seeking politicians to align with the president’s party, and, in turn, for the president to control the NA.

The Judiciary. Madagascar features a complex system of courts guided by the High Constitutional Court (HCC), the Supreme Court (SC), Court of Appeals, and High Court of Justice (*Haute cour de justice* [HCJ]). While the judicial framework is outwardly sound, in practice, the judiciary may well be the

weakest of the arenas examined in this section. Upper courts are viewed as subservient to the executive branch. Local courts lack funding and trained staff, and the judges who preside over them are roundly accused of accepting bribes when determining which cases go to trial and, subsequently, how these cases are adjudicated.

Political Parties. The political party system in Madagascar constitutes little more than a space for personalistic competition among key political actors, as well as a tool for executive capture of legislative and judicial authority. Parties on the island are inchoate, expendable, and often short-lived. They do not play in any meaningful way the key functions that parties are expected to perform in a democratic system, including presenting the electorate with a choice among competing policy platforms, recruiting and socializing political and governmental elites, educating the public about key public-policy issues, and contributing to a debate of ideas. The Political Parties Law heightens the cost of entry into politics; does not address the critical issue of campaign financing; and provides for no enforcement mechanisms, leaving those who violate even key provisions in the law to go unpunished.

Decentralization and Local Government. Successive decentralization efforts in Madagascar have created a confusing and unmanageable patchwork of overlapping structures. Repeated changes in relevant constitutional, legal, and administrative frameworks, often combined with a lack of implementation on the ground, have contributed to maintaining, as opposed to diluting, the dominance of the central government and the capital. The most consistent and significant impediment to actual decentralization has been the unwillingness of elites in Antananarivo to roll back high fiscal centralization: only three to five percent of government expenditures are carried out through capital transfer to local government entities.

OPERATIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENT

The United States does not have critical strategic interests in Madagascar but has been engaged with it since the island began to diversify its foreign relations during the 1990s. Ties between Washington and the government in Antananarivo were particularly close during the presidency of Marc Ravalomanana (May 2002–March 2009). Over the years, the U.S. Government has provided significant humanitarian assistance to Madagascar and has been committed to helping it protect its unique ecosystem.

The March 2009 coup and the HAT's undemocratic assumption of power brought an abrupt end to these promising trends. Consistent with the stance adopted by most other international actors, including the AU and the SADC, the Obama Administration refused to extend diplomatic recognition and financial support to a government that had come to power as a result of a coup, and it instead ratcheted up pressure on it. Following the successful presidential and parliamentary elections of October–December 2013, the U.S. Government took steps to normalize relations with the Government of Madagascar (GOM).

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been present in Madagascar since 1984 and celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in-country in December 2014. During the 1990s, USAID/Madagascar managed a small DRG (then known as Democracy and Governance [D/G]) program that revolved around strengthening citizens' engagement with local government. In 1998–1999, it delivered technical assistance to the National Assembly of Madagascar. In 2003–2004, it oversaw a program focused on local government and civil society that aimed at the following three inter-related objectives: building up the advocacy capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly their ability to engage local government; facilitating information flows between CSOs and local government; and making both local and central government more responsive to citizens' needs, especially in the area of service delivery. USAID subsequently largely disengaged from DRG work in Madagascar, and the DRG Officer position in the Mission was not renewed. Nonetheless, between 2006 and 2008, USAID funded a small anti-corruption program centered on providing targeted technical assistance to Madagascar's anti-corruption commission, the Independent Anti-Corruption Office (*Bureau indépendant anti-corruption* [BIANCO]), established in November 2004; supporting corruption-related, awareness-

raising campaigns; and improving transparency in the drafting and implementation of budgets by municipalities. USAID/Madagascar has not engaged in stand-alone DRG work since 2008. DRG is neither a crosscutting objective nor a priority in any of the three key sectors in which USAID/Madagascar currently intervenes, but the Mission’s senior staff is keenly aware of how critical DRG issues are to prospects for success in other sectors.

It will be imperative that USAID/Madagascar actively engage in donor coordination to ensure that the significant demand-side component of the strategy proposed in this assessment dovetails with other donors’ supply-side work. The team’s interviews also made it clear that other donors were anxious for greater U.S. Government engagement on DRG issues, and that they would value that input. This situation suggests that, through active engagement and leadership, USAID may derive an out-sized level of influence on other donors’ efforts, while also being able to both tap into and contribute to their supply-side programming through carefully targeted demand-side interventions aimed at addressing the political accountability deficits this document emphasizes.

DRG STRATEGIC AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Madagascar continues to be characterized by a massive concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few elites, by the enormous gap (political, social, economic, and cultural) that separates those elites from the population, and by the relative lack of incentives for these elites to prioritize the public good and the well-being of the population. Elites remain focused on a struggle for power that ignores the immense, unmet needs of the population, and are driven instead by individual politicians’ efforts to secure for themselves larger shares of the spoils of the system. They display a zero-sum approach to politics that entails fluid and constantly shifting alliances. They control a political system from which the vast majority of the population is de facto excluded, and within which disagreements are not about policy, competing platforms, or ideology, but about the capture of resources. This political logic encourages the mismanagement of the country’s rich natural resources and the endangerment of its unique ecosystem. It is incompatible with good governance, the ability of institutions to discharge their mandated functions, and the country’s capacity to sustain or build on any gains that may be achieved in social sectors and the protection of the environment.

In that context, the lack of mechanisms of political accountability, the flawed nature of those few such mechanisms that do exist, and the dearth of grassroots demands for accountability of elites and government officials have created a profound and generalized crisis of confidence in government institutions and the political system. This accountability deficit has been a major contributor to the further weakening of the ROL and to growing crime and insecurity. It has fostered institutional decay and continues to sap the already limited state’s capacity to provide even the most rudimentary services, thereby exacerbating the crisis of trust in governmental institutions.

At the top of the political system, opportunities to affect elite behavior and wage the battle for accountability are limited. Elites retain a tight grip on national-level institutions and decision-making processes. Past experience suggests that the ability of donors to effect meaningful political change at that level is extremely limited at best. To be sure, there is a significant role for diplomatic pressure to play in creating incentives for national elites to act differently. However, foreign assistance resources and programming by their very make-up are unlikely to incentivize national-level elite behavioral change, particularly in light of the deeply entrenched nature of the behavior in question. Moreover, as discussed earlier, existing and anticipated programming by other donors rely heavily on national-level supply-side interventions—so much so that some analysts expressed to the team their concern about the prospect of potential saturation in this area. In this context, it does not appear that support for further institutional strengthening activities represents a logical path for USAID. Yet at the local level, openings exist to foster

demands for more accountability, greater rights awareness, and better access to information, and to support the establishment of inclusive platforms to address local governance issues and socioeconomic tensions through participatory and accountability enhancing processes. For all the previously noted weaknesses of civil society, the experience in the past several years of several donors and implementers (including the WB, European Union [EU], Search for Common Ground [SFCG], Catholic Relief Services [CRS], and National Democratic Institute [NDI]), as well as creative, indigenous initiatives by Malagasy actors discussed further below, demonstrate that the energy and resourcefulness of some CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), local radios, and church-connected and private sector actors can be harnessed at the community level to generate substantive gains and momentum in the fight for greater accountability.

DRG OBJECTIVE

DRG Objective: Increase political accountability by fostering the readiness and capacity of the population to demand it and by strengthening the mechanisms and platforms through which it can be achieved, especially at the community level.

To make progress toward this objective, the team recommends a DRG program anchored around the promotion of political accountability, with both a strong stand-alone component and significant organic ties to the Mission's sectoral work.

To address effectively the problems discussed above, a stand-alone DRG program is necessary for several reasons. Merely “mainstreaming accountability objectives” in sectoral work, or making improved accountability a “crosscutting objective” for the Mission’s portfolio, would not do justice to the scope of Madagascar’s political accountability deficit; its centrality to the country’s political, economic, and social development; and its impact on all areas of interest to USAID. The proposed DRG program focuses heavily (though not exclusively) on the demand-side of the governance equation, while the team’s interviews underscored the predominantly supply-oriented nature of ongoing and anticipated DRG work by other donors. In addition to its stand-alone component, the proposed DRG program would be organically connected to the Mission’s sectoral work in critical ways. First, part of its *raison d’être* would be to ensure that accountability-promotion objectives are deliberately and saliently integrated into sectoral work, that such objectives receive the emphasis they require for durable success in each sector, and that accountability gains achieved under each sector contribute to larger systemic goals.

Under the proposed program, the “Political Accountability Increased” Development Objective (DO) would be pursued by following two main tracks: 1) fostering the readiness and capacity of the population to demand political accountability; and 2) supporting the mechanisms and venues through which political accountability can be achieved, especially at the community level. In practice, the approach might entail five overlapping and mutually reinforcing sub-objectives, as follows:

- **Sub-Objective 1:** Support community-based, accountability-enhancing practices and venues.
- **Sub-Objective 2:** Increase the population’s understanding of its rights (including the right to information) and its readiness and capacity to demand accountability and recognition of those rights.
- **Sub-Objective 3:** Improve communities’ access to information regarding matters of public interest.
- **Sub-Objective 4:** Support local-level platforms that can help identify and address critical needs of the community and that can mitigate socioeconomic tensions within it, while fostering participatory and accountability-enhancing processes.
- **Sub-Objective 5:** Lay the groundwork to enable the (2018) election to serve as a lever for greater accountability of public officials and for more meaningful linkages between citizens and the political process.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ASSUMPTIONS

1. *The proposed DRG program entails a largely—but not exclusively—demand-driven approach that will revolve primarily around civic education, civil-society, and media-related interventions at the local level.*
2. *The proposed program—specifically, its bottom-up logic for bringing about change and its local-level focus—is predicated in part on the assumption that while elites have a solid grip on national politics, more opportunities for bringing about greater levels of transparency exist at the local level.*
3. *In its design and implementation, initial programming should provide the level of diversity and flexibility that will facilitate any adjustment or reorientation that subsequently may be called for, especially in a country where the political environment remains extremely volatile.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *Support and expand participatory budgeting and planning.*

Recommendation 2: *Support enhanced public access to information regarding: decisions by, and the budget of, communes and municipalities; decisions by other government entities (e.g., at the district, regional, or national levels), especially those that have a particular impact on the community; and other matters of public interest.*

- A. Strengthen relevant aspects of the capacity of CSOs and CBOs.
- B. Vigorously engage local officials (including through the leveraging of aid) to enhance their readiness to publicize their decisions via posting on public buildings and in busy public spaces, such as town squares, marketplaces, and post offices.
- C. Promote messages conveyed through local radio stations, town hall meetings, and flyers.

Recommendation 3: *Strengthen the capacity of CSOs and grassroots groups that are not formally constituted as CSO to contribute to Sub-Objectives 1 through 5.*

- A. Broaden public knowledge of the merits of participatory budgeting and participatory planning.
- B. Institutionalize such practices and reliance on score cards to evaluate the quality of service delivery by government institutions.
- C. Enhance communities' understanding of their political and socioeconomic rights and of the role of government institutions and elected officials in ensuring that those rights are respected.
- D. Improve populations' ability to engage in effective rights-based advocacy.
- E. Identify priority issues for communities, disseminate relevant findings, and engage local officials on them.
- F. Enhance the readiness of local officials (and other potential stakeholders, such as mining company representatives) to address community-based needs and concerns.
- G. Organize public fora that provide opportunities for citizens to interact with local officials (and other key stakeholders) on issues of concern to the community.
- H. Disseminate information regarding local-, regional-, or national-level government decisions that have a particular impact on the community.

Recommendation 4: *Support participatory platforms for more effective management at the municipal level of the substantial socioeconomic impacts of significant private sector investment, especially by mining companies.*

Regular dialogue among private sector operators, local officials, and civil society (including church officials and church-based associations) should be encouraged, and efforts should be made to institutionalize them to:

- A. Provide a regular venue through which the community can air its grievances on ways in which it is impacted by private sector investment.
- B. Make it possible for key stakeholders—private sector operators, local government, CSOs, and the population at large—to reach agreements on the validity and relative salience of these grievances.
- C. Enable all parties involved to agree on an action plan to address these grievances to defuse the social tensions associated with them.

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