

**Transcript of "Grievance Redress Service in
World Bank-Financed Operations"**

ESF Dialogue Series

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Thank you very much for taking the time to join us this morning, afternoon or evening, depending on where you are in the world for what is the second discussion in the ESF Dialogue Series and this one will focus on the Grievance Redress Service (GRS) in World Bank operations. The ESF Dialogue Series is intended as a convening platform to bring together key partners and stakeholders and have a discussion on the most pressing and pertinent ESF-related issues. Our first discussion, which you may have participated in, covered disability inclusion a few months ago. I am Maninder Gill, I am Chief Environmental and Social Standards Officer here in OPCS of the World Bank, and I will tell you in a minute what OPCS is about. I'll be moderating today's session and managing the platform.

So, just a couple of reminders before we get started, please remain on mute unless you are speaking, or you've been called to speak. While speakers will obviously keep and should keep their videos on, I request others to turn their videos off because of any bandwidth issues that may be there, unless you're asking a question. And then, towards the end, we will have, after the initial presentation, 30 to 35 minutes for Q&A, and you can ask questions by raising your hand and I can call on you or you can simply post them in the chat box. The session is being recorded and will be shared internally with Bank staff and then also posted on our external website.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our speakers. We are honored to have Ed Mountfield, who is Vice President for the Operations Policy and Country Services Vice Presidency of the World Bank, or OPCS. OPCS is at the center of the Bank's work. Through sound operations policy and strong country support it helps the World Bank remain a credible, reliable source of development solutions. OPCS provides the framework and policies for frontline staff in the Bank to better deliver for the Bank's clients and provide strategic advice to support Bank operations in a range of countries, including those affected by fragility, conflict and violence, and has always been a strong advocate for the Bank's overall accountability agenda. And therefore, we are really delighted that he is here today to provide his opening remarks and participate in the discussion. We're also really fortunate to have John Kellenberg, who is the manager of the GRS team, and who is going

to give us a more detailed overview of the work the GRS has been doing and also will be happy to answer any questions.

So, Ed, thank you for taking the time off your super busy schedule at this time of the year especially, for this important conversation. So, without further ado, let me please turn over to you for your opening remarks. Thanks.

Ed Mountfield

Thanks very much Maninder and good morning, good afternoon and good evening, everyone, and thanks for joining us. I am very pleased to be here today to kick off the second session of the ESF Dialogue Series, with a very important topic for discussion, which is about the World Bank's Grievance Redress Service, the GRS, which is an important part of our overall accountability framework here at the World Bank, which provides a direct avenue for stakeholders to provide feedback and potential complaints related to Bank-financed projects and programs.

The engagement with civil society has been crucially important in helping make the development process more effective—whether via discussions related to issues addressed by our Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), or in the broader context of our operational work. I really value and welcome your ideas, your suggestions, and your insights. You have always given us an early 'heads-up' when things may not be going as planned in the projects we support, or if there was something you wanted to draw our attention to, and for that we are really grateful.

The World Bank is strongly committed to transparency and robust accountability in Bank-supported operations. It is a core element of the World Bank's value proposition as a multilateral financial institution. This fundamental commitment has been instrumental in enhancing the Bank's credibility as a reliable development partner with Borrowers, with project stakeholders including project-affected people, and with the broader development community. This commitment to accountability and transparency plays out at multiple levels across the entire project cycle. The Bank remains strongly committed to ensure stakeholder consultations as part of the ESF in Bank-supported projects, both during design and implementation phases of the project, to help ensure that the voices of all key stakeholders, and especially the most vulnerable, are heard and taken into account.

We are in constant dialogue with ministries and their project implementation units to support them in promoting different avenues to engage stakeholders using multiple channels, including those that leverage technology to help maximize engagement. We also try very hard to be in regular contact with civil society representatives to hear their views on stakeholder engagement and how that can be further

strengthened in the projects that we support. World Bank staff regularly supervise Bank-supported projects to ensure that these projects achieve their development objectives in a sustainable manner, and that the loan proceeds assigned to a Bank-financed project are used solely for the purposes for which the loan was granted, with due regard to economy and efficiency. Even with all these efforts by clients and World Bank staff, challenges and problems will still arise during implementation. Project-level grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) are established in every World Bank-supported project to help flag any such challenges and problems, so that they can be promptly addressed as part of the project.

The Grievance Redress Service that was established in 2015 as part of the Bank's broader accountability structure, complements and adds to the project-level grievance redress mechanisms established by Borrowers, and also stands alongside the Inspection Panel, and more recently, the new Dispute Resolution Service established in 2020, as part of the Bank's accountability architecture with respect to environmental and social issues. The GRS works across the World Bank's seven regions to ensure proactive and timely response to and redress for potential complaints, and to promote durable solutions that maximize the development impact of Bank-financed projects.

During these seven years of its existence, the GRS has proven its value as an accountability mechanism with a clear entry point and process for people and communities to raise concerns, and with the ability to deliver timely, effective solutions. It has worked to understand community-level concerns, identify solutions in collaboration with them, and monitor implementation of agreed specific actions to resolve issues. It has worked with Bank task teams and Borrowers to ensure, for example that (i) compensation paid for land acquisition is adequate and paid in a timely fashion, (ii) community health and safety measures are taken into account, including the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on worksites, (iii) road safety considerations of local rural communities living along a newly constructed highway are addressed promptly and in a satisfactory manner, or (iv) project-level grievance redress mechanisms and labor management plans are in place and properly functioning.

The GRS has continued to improve its services to respond to the needs of complainants affected by World Bank-financed projects, thereby mitigating potential risks. Over the past two years, the World Bank has taken significant steps to strengthen the GRS, as well as to expand outreach to Bank staff and stakeholders—through events like the one today. Its effectiveness in addressing concerns related to environmental and social issues in World Bank-financed projects has grown as a result. This has helped more people access the service with increasing number of admissible cases being identified and handled by the GRS. In its FY21 Annual Report, the Grievance Redress Service

illustrates the efforts and collaborative approaches taken by Bank staff to help resolve complaints related to environmental and social issues. In FY21, the GRS received 299 complaints, up from 225 cases received in the previous fiscal year; and of those 299 complaints, 167 were deemed to be admissible compared to 90 in FY20. The GRS serves as a centralized World Bank system for tracking and addressing complaints raising environmental and social issues. An equally important contribution of the GRS is the invaluable data that it gathers and allows us to analyze, which serves as an effective tool for the early identification, assessment and resolution of project-related issues and risks.

So, I am delighted to be here with Maninder and with John. John Kellenberg, our manager for the Grievance Redress Service team will speak further on the GRS and tell us about the types of complaints the team handles and how disputes are resolved. He will also share some emerging trends, some of the latest data and some examples that had been brought to the GRS. So let me close by reiterating that the World Bank is fundamentally committed to making the institution accessible to project-affected people and to help ensure faster and effective resolution of project-related complaints. To that end, the GRS has made great strides in becoming an effective instrument of accountability, fostering institutional learning and becoming a tool for identification of potential issues that may arise at the project level. We are very much open to your further ideas and suggestions you may have to help make the GRS an even more effective platform for resolving potential complaints from project stakeholders. So I'm looking forward to the discussion today. Let's have a candid and open discussion and thanks for joining us and looking forward to it. Back to you, Maninder.

Maninder S. Gill

Thanks so much, Ed. Thanks for your very clear, very detailed opening, laying out how the GRS is an expression of the Bank's deep commitment to voice accountability, participation and the efforts to make sure that all project-affected people and stakeholders, they receive the benefits, and they participate in the decision-making process that determines what the project does and how it's implemented and that there are no problems along the way. And the fact that it starts with consultation and participation upstream and project design, and then those are reflected in stakeholder engagement plans, which continue during implementation. GRMs are project-level grievance redress mechanisms, being a very important part of that effort to capture any issues and problems and challenges. If that doesn't work, then the GRS offers a very effective mechanism. Hopefully, it has shown its effectiveness over the past seven years. And then, if things still

don't work, we do have the Inspection Panel and the Dispute Resolution Service. So, it looks like a great architecture, and, as you emphasize, Ed, we are really open to how we can further improve that commitment to strengthen the expression of that commitment to voice accountability. So, with this, a big thanks again, Ed. John, turning to you for some more, telling us more about the GRS and how it functions and what your plans are going forward. Over to you.

John Kellenberg

Great, thanks, Maninder and Ed. So, the GRS is an avenue for individuals and communities to come to the World Bank and indeed come directly to Senior Management, if they believe that a World Bank-supported project has had an adverse impact on them, or likely to have an adverse impact on them, on their community, or on their environment. It's a direct communication platform, whereby they can come to us and indicate what the issues are with respect to a World Bank-financed project. What we aim to do is to facilitate communication between project-affected people and the World Bank to address grievances in a very timely and sustainable manner, such that their concerns and issues, which they indicate are affecting them, be a World Bank-financed project, are addressed in a timely manner.

So, as Ed had mentioned, the Grievance Redress Service is part of the World Bank accountability system. On the right-hand side in green, you see where the Grievance Redress Service sits with Ed Mountfield's Vice Presidency of Operations Policy and Country Services, which reports directly up to the Managing Directors and up to the President, then the Board. On the left-hand side in yellow, you see the Accountability Mechanism, including the Dispute Resolution Service and the Inspection Panel, which Maninder had mentioned, and then in blue, you see project-level grievance redress mechanisms. So, each one of these three serves a role within the World Bank accountability system. And none of them is exclusive. If one goes to a project-level grievance redress mechanism, it does not preclude them from also coming to the Grievance Redress Service, if they don't feel as if the issues that they are concerned about are being addressed. Similarly, there may be a case where a project goes to the Grievance Redress Service, and also goes to the Inspection Panel where complainants are reaching out to various avenues to get their concerns met.

What we aim to do in the Grievance Redress Service in terms of handling complaints that come in is to engage directly with the project-affected communities and individuals, to really come to an understanding of what are the issues of concern to them, and then work with World Bank task teams and work with project implementation units that sit within ministries that are implementing projects to get these issues addressed in a timely fashion. The other thing that we do is we

reach out to project task teams to really help them understand the types of cases that we are seeing across the globe. And that actually accelerates the process, and the ability of the World Bank to respond to complaints, because we have experience in seven different regions. We are able to utilize the experience that we have been gaining over time to bring responses and bring solutions to project-affected people. At any particular time, there might be between 100 and 120 cases that the Grievance Redress Service is handling. We do meet regularly on a weekly basis to review new complaints that come in. And what we find is about 50% of the complaints over time are admissible. I'll talk a little bit about complaints that are admissible versus complaints that we consider to be inadmissible over every time.

There are several avenues for complaints to come into the Grievance Redress Service. There are direct complaints that come in through a dedicated website and email address that we maintain. It allows individuals to reach out to the World Bank in confidence with respect to the complaints that they have, the issues and concerns that they have with respect to the projects that are affecting them, whether they are an individual, whether they are representatives of a community, whether they are even project staff themselves.

Equally, there are other complaints, again about half, 47%, that we found over time, they come in through Bank task teams. If a complaint comes to a World Bank task team when that that task team is in the field, or a complaint comes in through a country office, the Bank staff are required to forward those complaints to the Grievance Redress Service, such that we're able to ensure that there is a timely and appropriate follow-up on those particular complaints. As I had mentioned in the case of communities, it may be that various people have a complaint, and they indicate an individual with service they're representative for communication with the Bank. And so that is something where it's not just one individual or the Bank trying to speak to 25 or 50 people at a time but to deal with that particular designated representative. Equally, we've got a protocol in place for ensuring confidentiality. We do get cases where a complainant indicates that they are concerned about retaliation. And so, we handle those complaints and work with the task team to let them know that the individual is concerned about potential retaliation. And so, their identity is maintained in confidence by the World Bank.

So, there we have a criterion for reviewing the complaints that come in, as I had mentioned about 50% of the complaints that come in are admissible. The complaints need to respond to a World Bank-supported project. It's either under preparation, is active, or it's been closed for less than 15 months. This mirrors the criteria that the Inspection Panel uses as well, so we are operating in the same context with respect to projects that are again under preparation, under implementation, or recently closed. We've had in a case, a complaint

that may have come in for a project that closed 8, 10, 12 years ago. In those particular cases, we really don't have an ability to deal with those. But we do follow up with task teams, indeed where the GRS does not have an ability to follow up based on our own directive within the World Bank for operating, we do work with the task team to see what can be done on cases, indeed which we deem to be inadmissible. I mentioned that a complaint can be submitted either by an individual or by a community. And the complaint needs to indicate that the individual or individuals have been or will be affected by a World Bank-supported project.

On the right-hand side, you see the various types of complaints that come in, which the GRS does not handle. But in these particular cases, the GRS follows up with another office, within the World Bank Group, if possible if it is related to a World Bank project, or we pass the complaints on to others to follow up on, for example, in the case of an IFC project. So, for example, if we receive a complaint that alleges fraud and/or corruption, and the GRS doesn't handle those types of complaints. But what we do is, we work with INT, the World Bank's vice presidency dealing with integrity. And we pass those complaints over to them to follow up. Indeed. We received quite a few complaints that are inadvertently sent to the Integrity Office and so the Integrity Office, and the Grievance Redress Service work pretty closely, because we are passing complaints back and forth depending on what is alleged in the particular complaint. Similarly, in the second bullet there, we received quite a few complaints that deal with procurement issues.

And in fact, when I show the next slide, which shows the number of cases that we've received this year, we happen to have received a large number of complaints dealing with procurement-related matters and so, in those particular cases, we refer those complaints that are related to World Bank-financed projects, we refer them over to procurement staff in the Bank to follow up on. If it deals with a contract, if it deals with the selection process of a firm where a firm is unhappy that they were not selected, if it deals with a firm that has not received a payment based on a contract that they had on a World Bank-financed project, etc. Those are the types of procurement-related cases that we received. We receive, every once in a while, a complaint pertaining to IFC projects, and we send those over to, IFC has a service, which they have recently established, and we helped them put together, which handles complaints similar to the Grievance Redress Service. I've passed this over to them. We have in the two years that I've been with the GRS received one complaint about someone who would apply for a position in the World Bank and had not been selected for that position. They came to the GRS and filed the complaint, that indicated that was not the type of thing that the GRS handles. In short, with the GRS handling our environmental and social issues on projects and focusing on those.

Finally, in the last two bullets, we don't handle anonymous complaints. So, if we don't know who we are engaging with, we will follow up with that particular email address that we receive. And if they say what their name is, and what their link is to a particular project, we can follow up but if they remain strictly anonymous, we really can't follow up because we don't know, what the real impact is or who that individual is that we are dealing with. Finally, if there are cases that the GRS has closed, we can reopen cases if there are new issues of complaint. But in certain cases, if we've had complaints, come back on the same complaint, and we, either were able to resolve the complaint, or ultimately, we're not able to get a satisfactory response on a case, we do not reopen a case if that matter, that particular matter has been handled. But if that same individual has a different complaint that we do reopen it, or we open a new case with respect to that particular individual.

As you see here, the number of complaints that's grown over time, from FY15 which is basically July 2014 to June 2015 when the GRS was first established up until the current year. And what you'll see is essentially, we are receiving about two admissible complaints every week. And what we are doing is continue working, getting solutions on projects, getting projects closed in any particular time. So, we are closing about as many cases per year as are coming in. There are certain cases that take a longer period of time, particularly when it comes to compensation, it may take a bit of time to get things closed, but in FY22 you'll see that spike with respect to inadmissible. It just happens to be a lot of a lot of procurement cases that have come in, which we then passed over to our procurement colleagues.

Here you can see, several points of contact where you can get more information on the Grievance Redress Service. We have a dedicated website www.worldbank.org/grs. We've got an email contact where complaints can be sent in and indeed, our website is available in multiple languages, and so complaints can be submitted to us in multiple languages. And within the GRS team, we've got staff who speak Arabic, French, Russian, and English. I'm trying to remember what else. But we've got various languages of this staff itself. We also have a video on how the GRS works as well, so feel free to go to any of those particular places where you can get further information on the GRS.

And with that, I'm going to pass the microphone back to Maninder, and I will go back on mute and happy to answer any questions that may come up. Thanks, Maninder.

Maninder S. Gill

Thanks a lot, John, for laying out very clearly how the GRS functions and as participants can appreciate it, it's really a matter of great satisfaction that you do have a steady stream of cases coming in, and also a steady stream of cases that get resolved and fairly in a timely fashion. So that's what we want to see in a well-functioning system. We do want to see issues coming to such a mechanism, and then we also want to see progress, which is exactly what you and the team have been doing. So, a big thanks to you for the presentation, and also for the great work that the GRS is doing. So, let's open it up for any questions, comments, suggestions. Please, the floor is open. We do have all the critical stakeholders of the GRS on this call. So, I'm sure they are just formulating their questions.

Jolie, please.

Jolie Schwarz

Maninder, thanks so much for taking my question. Hopefully you can hear me Okay. I was just curious, you know, going through the recent Annual Reports and, as you noted, a lot of complaints are getting resolved. Just curious if there's a plan to put more information out into the public space about how these issues are getting resolved, you mentioned at the top, you know, the importance of the GRS for institutional learning and things like that, but the amount of information that's coming out about the individual cases is a little thin from the outside. So, I'm not sure if there's more internal sharing that's going on. But I think in terms of sort of more public accountability, it would be helpful to have a little bit more information about how complaints are getting resolved, what the monitoring reports are showing, are these solutions that are being adopted sort of lasting solutions, are they sustainable? I think that type of information could be helpful for those of us on the outside to understand a little bit better how things are working, and then one other question I had is on sort of the problem-solving side. You know, what capacity is the staff have at the GRS that are handling these complaints we've seen, you know, a lot in dispute resolution spaces you know, the importance of really having strong backgrounds in the ins and outs of dispute resolution mediation, having professionals that have that experience and backgrounds and really making sure they're dealing with the power dynamics that are kind of inherent in these situations and processes. Just curious what the sort of the capacities are of the folks, especially responsible for the problem-solving elements. Thanks.

Maninder S. Gill

Thanks a lot, Jolie, very good suggestions and questions. John, would you like to answer? I don't see any other hands, so perhaps you could answer.

John Kellenberg

Sure, happy to do that and I'm happy to go into a bit more of the types of cases that we receive here, if that would be useful. We do have for Bank staff a much longer presentation and I was instructed by my friends in the Bank not to have 40 slides, but we do have actually a much longer set of cases that we talk through in trainings with Bank staff. We work closely with the social development specialists, senior social development specialists, and their managers in the resolution of cases, and so, in many instances, particularly in instances where cases come in through task teams, it is those staff who are on the ground and many of our social development specialists and senior specialists are based in country offices and these people, these Bank staff have years of experience dealing with the issues, particularly within the countries where they are living and working, and the GRS works very, very closely with them.

The GRS staff is comprised of three senior social development specialists and two social development specialists as well as several other staff, and what we do is we work very, very closely through the Bank task teams. We don't engage, in particular we don't engage with projects directly, but rather that it's all done through the task teams themselves that have their relationships with those particular projects. And so, it tends to be an instance on any particular project, or what we are doing is crowdsourcing advice into the task teams both through our own Grievance Redress Service staff, through the Bank's Legal Department, particularly the Environment and Social Department within Legal, through the Regional Standards Advisors (RSAs). So, between those various groups, we sit down with the task teams and help them to identify means of reaching a solution.

A good share of the cases that we receive in the GRS deal with compensation. And so, in those particular cases, what we are doing is taking a look, for example, at resettlement action plans on projects, and making sure that the individuals who have been identified, particularly in baseline surveys that are carried out when there is going to be resettlement on a project that those individuals are compensated that they are compensated in accordance with the resettlement action plans, and that they are compensated on a timely basis. And in that particular case, what we are trying to do is looking to see that the compensation goes through the proper mechanisms, and they receive those to be able to meet their concerns.

Other types of complaints we're receiving, for example, we had a case where there was a waste management site, and, in fact, a community was indicating that they were concerned about the siting of a waste management plant right, very close to their community. And this is a typical thing, whether be in my own country here in the United States, or any place around the world where there can be concerns about the siting of waste management plants or landfills with respect to owners, with respect to a variety of concerns. And those types of issues are looked into, other types of issues that come up deal with road safety. It might be that a road is built and the shoulder is insufficiently wide in a particular place to allow individuals to walk alongside particular roads. And so, what we do is we'll work with the task team to go back and take a look to ensure that roads are built up to the standards at the World Bank had originally considered when it was taking a look at those plans, again, making sure that those issues are dealt with. In other cases, we've had complaints come in where an individual or community is indicating that they've received insufficient information on a project, or that they have not been engaged with respect to project-related issues and so again, we will go back to the project task team in the Bank, particularly the social development specialists, work with them and make sure that information is flowing to the local community with respect to that particular case.

In the context of COVID, we received complaints early on in COVID with respect to inadequate PPE provided to project workers and concerns within communities that workers were not wearing PPE, did not have proper PPE. We also had complaints coming in from project workers themselves who were concerned that they were not supplied with PPE. Other types of complaints, and again, where sustainable solutions can be met, had to deal with the issue with respect to vaccine access. We had cases where people were concerned that they did not have access to vaccines, in particular immigrants into countries or refugees in countries who were new in a particular country. There were national vaccination complex campaigns. But they were concerned that, as they were not nationals of that particular country, they would not be eligible for vaccines. And so, again, we worked with the Bank task teams, worked with the projects and indeed it made ultimate sense for everyone within those particular national boundaries to receive vaccinations, since we were able to ensure that occurred.

Finally, last type of a case that we received, I recall, one dealing with access to water, that a number of community members felt that with the infrastructure works that had been carried out, they no longer had access to the community water source and so indeed the project went in and ensured that those individuals who otherwise it may have been, had more difficulty accessing the water site would then have access to a new water source going forward. So, those are the types of cases that we've received and how we've worked through the

Bank task teams who have a direct engagement with the project implementation units (PIU). So, as I mentioned, the GRS staff don't engage directly with the project, the PIU within the ministries, rather that is done through the World Bank project staff who already have that working relationship with the project implementation unit. We find that it's much more effective than the GRS trying to go in and negotiate something where PIU may not actually know who the GRS is, and what the GRS is seeking. Back to you, Maninder.

Ed Mountfield

Maybe just quickly to add on the issue about staff capacity in the GRS. I meet regularly with the GRS team. They are a super capable bunch with great experience, but I think, as John says, we also leverage the entire ESF expertise of the Bank in the regions, and in our Legal Department, but John is too modest to mention, but he and Maninder between them are two of our most experienced environmental and social staff. And they themselves spend very considerable amounts of time looking case by case, and really playing a key role in making sure that we get satisfactory outcomes. So, this I think is one of the key parts of the success of the GRS.

John Kellenberg

Thanks Ed, if I could just add one thing to what Ed added, not to pat myself on the back or pat Maninder on the back. But actually, with respect to the OPCS Vice President, when I stepped into the role by taking over the GRS about two and a half years ago, there was only one full-time staff and two short-term consultants working in the GRS at that particular moment. At this time, we now have three senior-level staff, two junior-level staff together with several analysts working on GRS cases. So, we've been able to turn it into a process where we were able to sit down, talk through cases each week, and figure out a resolution with a much stronger team and that's thanks to Bank Senior Management who agreed to that.

Maninder S. Gill

Thanks a lot, John and Ed. I think, also, the role of many of the colleagues on this call, who have brought up cases in the past, very specific cases to us for a resolution and brainstorm with us on many of the solutions that we found, they have also contributed to our own internal learning and capacity. So, thanks to many of the people on this call as well. And Ed, your own interest in and support to the GRS and sitting down with everyone with the staff and taking stock, that

helps us kind of make the system stronger and that level of interest and support also matters a lot, too, and inspire the team to do better. So, let's open to more questions. Many friends on the call, you don't want me to start calling on you, please.

John Kellenberg

Maninder, while people are picking up questions, one final point that I did not point out in the presentation, but it's worth noting. Right now, in the Bank's portfolio under implementation, two thirds of the Bank's portfolio under implementation fall under the safeguard policies and one third of projects under implementation fall under the ESF. By contrast, when we take a look at cases that are coming in to the GRS, more than 80 percent of the complaints that are coming in are on projects under the safeguard policies. I tend to think that this is because there is better stakeholder engagement being carried out, and under projects under the ESF, equally projects under the ESF are required to have grievance redress mechanisms in place whereas projects under the safeguards did not necessarily have this in place. But as a result, we're seeing far more complaints that come in on projects under the safeguards than under the ESF.

Maninder S. Gill

Thanks, John. That's a very helpful addition as well. The floor is open. Yes, please. You still have a good 15 minutes. Christian? Mariel? Yes, please, Dr. Dey. Please go ahead.

Dr. Monideep Dey

Thank you, I'm relatively a newcomer following the Bank's efforts in this area, and as been mentioned and I think you presented at the Spring Meetings that you have a program on the ESF, the Environmental and Social Framework, and setting up goals that the Bank monitors to measure the success of its programs. The question is, what connection do you see between the data being developed in the GRS program and the overall E&S framework the Bank is developing. Presumably if a legitimate complaint comes in, in the GRS that's sort of something that's not working in the framework or something broke down. So, question is what does the Bank see as a connection. You know, informally or formally between the two programs, thank you.

Maninder S. Gill

Very good. Thanks, Monideep. John, would you like to? Yeah, I could also chip in later, but please go ahead.

John Kellenberg

Sure, happy to and then happy to hear from you, Maninder. Actually, it's an interesting question and I think, if I can respond, because I was deeply involved in the ESF rollout as well. So, I understand the ESF quite well. I don't think that the complaints coming in are necessarily a failure of the framework, but actually are due to the framework itself and the legitimacy of issues that were identified and the development of the ESF that are now pertinent in cases. So, for example, and I'm happy to pitch various ESF e-learnings that you can find online to learn much more about the ESF. But, for example, ESS2 deals with labor and working conditions and we receive complaints to the GRS about labor and working conditions, and actually we can handle such complaints on projects that are under the ESF, because we have something to it. We have a policy basis for following up on those types of complaints that didn't exist under the safeguard policies. We really didn't have under the safeguard policies issues dealing with workplace, harassment, workplace issues, etc., and so the ESF gives us that space to be able to follow up on those types of issues that are absolutely key in terms of development and not necessarily a breakdown of the ESF, it's actually the ESF allows us to engage on issues that we could not previously.

Similarly, many of our complaints deal with stakeholder engagement. And again, under the safeguard policies, the safeguard policies indicate the need to do a social assessment to map out stakeholders, but actually under the ESF, the requirement to have a stakeholder engagement plan and then follow up to see is that stakeholder engagement plan is actually a very good monitoring device to see what is working on a particular project. Again, we didn't have that prior to the ESF being approved and being launched and so it's actually the strength of the ESF that there are mechanisms in place that provide increased voice and require increased accountability on things that we didn't have in the prior instance. So those are just two particular instances if I can say, and Maninder is actually one of our gurus on resettlement. Things didn't change as much from the Bank's policies on resettlement, from the safeguard policies to now, there were some changes relative to say labor and working conditions. On labor and working conditions, it was a big change, and really allowed us to work on things. On resettlement, compensation, etc., we are continuing to follow up on issues. There are some nuances with respect to the policy and so that provides an increased avenue to be following up to protect the rights of project-affected people in a manner that perhaps we

could not previously. But Maninder, I'm sure you can add far, far more as you know this better than I.

Maninder S. Gill

No, not at all, John. I think you really covered it nicely. I will not. Just to emphasize that, as you say, the ESF, it is because of the ESF that we have these avenues now and this emphasis on, for example, grievance redress mechanism, stakeholder engagement, which is raising awareness and which is making this, more issues to come forward, more complaints and challenges to be raised. In fact, at the Spring Meetings, a session that we had on the ESF, we had implementing partners speaking and they did say that they see an uptick of issues being raised and even complaints because the process of stakeholder engagement is so comprehensive as John emphasized. So, it's more of a guide to how we can get better at implementing the ESF, that's where the GRS kind of provides us with ideas and suggestions on how we can strengthen implementation.

Policy gaps, or gaps in the framework are, we haven't had any flags since the ESF was introduced, but we did have 6, 7 years ago, the issue of sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment was flagged to us for the first time through grievance channels. And that's what made us then reflect on that gap. And then we addressed that by having very, very clear specific guidelines on how to address issues of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in our projects. But we haven't had any since the ESF has been introduced. But let's say tomorrow hypothetically another issue were to come forth, and then we will certainly, you know, that will influence the ESF, and we will incorporate in the ESF, but that's not been the case because it was a 5-year process fairly comprehensive. So, so far it has really, it has met the test of time, but we are very open to making changes in the future. Christian? Elaine?

Christian Donaldson

Thank you, Maninder, thank you, John. Thanks for explaining at the beginning how the GRS fits within the whole accountability framework and comparison with the Inspection Panel, and it seemed like there is a quite large load of cases that come to the GRS every year, as you mentioned, they are solved at the same time, too. So, my question is, have you, or there are any cases that, in your criteria or your team, you thought that would be better handled or addressed by the Inspection Panel, in that case, had those cases been referred to the Panel, and how would they function if that happens? If that happens, I mean, any number of percentages per year that happens? I don't know if I was clear on that, but just trying to understand from the big load

cases of the GRS if that any of those cases would be better handled by the Inspection Panel and if that's the case, thank you.

Maninder S. Gill

Should we take Elaine as well, John? Perhaps, because I think...

John Kellenberg

Yeah.

Maninder S. Gill

Elaine, could you please also come in?

Elaine Zuckerman

Thanks, Maninder and everybody. Valuable introduction to the, or update on the GRS. I was wondering if you could give any examples of complaints that have come to the GRS where there are harmful climate change impacts related to fossil fuels for example, since the Bank hasn't been fully gotten out of them, and gender impacts as well, or GBV, thanks.

Maninder S. Gill

Thanks, Elaine, over to you, John.

John Kellenberg

Sure, I'm happy to touch on those. With respect to Christian's question, frankly I'm proud of the GRS in the timeliness in which we are able to address cases. I've been in the World Bank for about 30 years. I have been intimately involved in for Inspection Panel cases, and they tend to take quite a long time to resolve. In the case of the GRS, we're able to resolve certain cases in a matter of weeks and so we're able to dig in, we do an evaluation of the issues, we work with the task team and aim to get things resolved rather quickly. And so, in most of the cases that we have in the GRS, we are churning through and getting results rather quickly and so I think in that particular case, the fact is the individuals who are reaching out to us, the project-affected people are getting responses very quickly, get whether be dealing with compensation, whether be dealing with

infrastructure, whether be with you know, damage caused by construction in their community and I think that at least for me is what's key and so we've not been referring cases to the Inspection Panel but rather what we do is we follow up with Bank staff and Bank staff management to make sure that issues get resolved and they tend to, through the escalation processes that we have inside the GRS, or I'm sorry within the World Bank to get problems solved. So, we've not had to refer cases over.

With respect to Elaine's question. We've not had anything with respect to climate impacts, with respect to fossil fuels. We have had complaints that have come in with respect to climate impacts, particularly in terms of adaptation issues, concerns about project, project work that might be done that might have an impact on coastlines and so a community has reached out or an individual has reached because they're concerned that buffer areas may be affected by work that is being done on a particular project. So, in that particular case, it's more an issue dealing with resilience, rather than dealing with mitigation per se.

On the gender side, the gender-related complaints that we've received and we received a number probably in the last two years. I see every single complaint that comes in, and probably 10 to 15 complaints that have come in, but it tends to be within the workplace. It tends to be a concern of whether be sexual harassment, or within the particular workplace where an individual indicates that a project official is treating someone in a particular fashion because of their gender. And not so much a broader related set of concerns that have been, as Maninder can surely point out, cases of GBV in the Bank, we call it SEASH (sexual exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment) that have been going on but the cases that come to the GRS that pertain to gender tend to be within the workplace. Just in terms of workplace dynamics, playing out and a need, then what we do in the Bank is work to promote more respectful workplace. Just like within the World Bank, we have processes to ensure respectful workplace. At times, we are working through the task teams to promote respectful workplace in those particular project implementations. Back to you, Maninder.

Maninder S. Gill

Thanks, John. Just to very briefly add on Christian's question. When an issue comes to the GRS, that's an opportunity for us to proactively resolve the issue, so that even if it's a compliance issue, that gives us an opportunity to address that compliance issue and address the problem at the same time. So that there is no outstanding or remaining grievance, which requires going to the Inspection Panel. Often, these cases involved, just implementing instruments that have been agreed, as I mentioned earlier, but they could also be a gap, a compliance

gap. Let's say a category of affected people are not covered in the resettlement plan, then the team would proactively work with the client to address that. So that that compliance gap potentially gets addressed. Though those cases are extremely rare, it's more implementation, but even if compliance gaps were to come, this is a great opportunity to proactively and quickly address that, so that the issue is addressed promptly. But, of course, if it doesn't happen, then that avenue of going to the Panel is always available. And we encourage people to use that if they don't get a suitable resolution. Thanks. So, with this, things are warming up, but we have run out of time. So I'm going to turn to Ed to help us close. Over to you, Ed. Thank you.

Ed Mountfield

Well, thanks, Maninder and John and thanks to everyone for the very helpful questions and insights and frank discussion. Exchanges like these really help us to better understand each other's views and to learn more about some of the issues we're dealing in our projects and to find out more and better ways to work together. I think what we've heard today is that the GRS is not only a platform for reporting adverse effects of World Bank-assisted projects, to people in the community, more importantly, it's a way of ensuring that people participate in the development process, so they benefit from the gains of development, and we hope you'll carry this message forward and share it with your counterparts.

Just to underscore that, you know, we see the role of the Inspection Panel as being really a check on us when we fail to implement our policies properly, the remit of the panelists to look at situations where project-affected people have been harmed as a result of the Bank's failure to comply with its policies. So, obviously, when we get something coming to us at the GRS, we'll always try to comply with our policies and rather than report it to the Panel. But at the same time, it's not a requirement to go through the GRS first, to go to the Inspection Panel, and all of our project documents make clear that communities and individuals who believe they've been adversely affected, have recourse both to the GRS, but also to the Inspection Panel. And now, of course, also to the Dispute Resolution Service, as part of the wider Accountability Mechanism that was established as part of the Inspection Panel Toolkit Reforms. So, we see these as really multiple channels that people can come to us with.

But we certainly, I think, are proud that we've been able to resolve a lot of complaints in a very swift and effective way and of course, early intervention is always the best for everyone concerned for us. But also, for the project-affected people themselves. They don't want to hang around, going through some very long, drawn-out process of

investigation, if they can get it solved much more quickly and that's obviously better development in every way. So, that's our goal towards just moving fast and fix the problem and learn lessons as we go. And I think the GRS has been successful in that regard, but we're constantly looking to improve, and your feedback is very important to us.

Civil society is an important partner in the movement to end extreme poverty, both as advocates for development issues and as effective practitioners on the ground, and you're also the ones who help us shine a spotlight on emerging issues on the GRS as well as the Environmental and Social Framework, and you help us by holding us accountable, of course, supporting us, whenever you can, but also helping us get better as we learn from mistakes and as we work together to address the complex development challenges of our time. So thanks a lot for joining us all today. We'll do more of these ESF Dialogue sessions and look forward to seeing you all soon. Thanks. Back to you, Maninder, if you've got any last thoughts.

Maninder S. Gill

Thanks a lot, Ed, and big thanks to everyone, thanks to John and to participants for very thoughtful questions and suggestions, look forward to continuing the dialogue. And also, we really would want your help in spreading the word. So, do through your local partners to make people aware of the will of, the presence of, and the existence of the GRS. We do want to see more avenues for resolving problems and issues, so please do help us disseminate the existence of the GRS as far and wide as possible. And thanks for all the work you have done in the past in collaborating with us, bringing cases to us and brainstorming with us on what some of the best, most durable solutions for stakeholders and affected people might be. And that has really contributed to our learning and becoming better at addressing future issues and problems. So, a big thanks to everyone and look forward to the next in the series, which we will be hosting in September or early October, that's the plan. Thank you.

Ed Mountfield

Thanks, bye.