

**OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**



**ACTION PLAN FOR
INTEGRATING
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

MAY, 2003

DRAFT

Environmental Justice in the Office of International Affairs

I. Executive Summary and Overview

The overall mission of the Office of International Affairs is to protect U.S. human health and the environment, and to advance U.S. environmental interests through international engagement. Within this mission, OIA promotes environmental justice by informing our counterparts of EPA's commitment to be fair and inclusive in all of our work, and by suggesting environmental justice concepts that lead to equal environmental protection for all people.

Our international programs are designed to focus on four environmental ends that will improve quality of life in the global community. These important environmental ends are: clean air, clean water, sound management of toxics, and marine protection. OIA could not successfully implement EPA's international programs without working collaboratively with other EPA program and regional offices, and other U.S. government agencies. Since these partners are also environmental justice advocates, environmental justice principles which inform EPA's domestic programs, also inform the development and implementation of EPA's international programs.

In order to better understand the needs, experiences, preferences and views of civil society in EPA counterpart countries, OIA relies on its association with national and international advisory boards inclusive of affected community representatives. The International Subcommittee of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council(NEJAC), and other environmental justice proponents, have been valuable in representing both site-specific and historical environmental justice implications.

As boundaries between domestic and global environmental issues erode, environmental challenges facing the United States have become more complex. In an increasingly interconnected world, domestic environmental quality and public health often require global action which in turn have economic, political, cultural, and humanitarian implications. As in the United States, the burden of a degraded environment in developing countries has been even greater to minority and low income communities – often with little or no inclusion in the decision-making

processes.

The fair treatment of all people and their right to meaningful involvement in the environmental decision making process does not exist in many countries. OIA has the challenge of respecting the traditions, laws and protocols in the countries where we work, while encouraging environmental justice for all people.

Administrator Whitman's memorandum of August 9, 2001, committing the Environmental Protection Agency to integrate environmental justice into all programs, policies, and activities, consistent with existing environmental laws and their implementing regulations, has certainly fortified our influence to consider environmental justice when international collaborative efforts with EPA occur. While other countries are not bound to existing U.S. environmental laws and regulations, a growing number of global societies are recognizing the value of protecting one another, as we all move to achieve a sustainable world.

Global Evolution

Thirty years ago in Stockholm, global representatives agreed to respond to the urgent need to address environmental deterioration. Ten years ago, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, participants agreed that the protection of the environment and social and economic development are fundamental to sustainable development, and Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development were adopted to assist in achieving such development.

In August/September 2002, government representatives from around the world gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, to participate in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The WSSD marked the 10 year anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit, and focused on clear and practical measures to implement sustainable development. In this collective effort to move from "commitments to action", more than 100 world leaders and 22,000 world representatives reaffirmed the Rio principles and the full implementation of Agenda 21. In addition, they assumed a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection– at the local, national, regional and global levels, and also committed to

building a human, equitable and caring global society, cognizant of the need for human dignity for all. Implementation of these commitments through the use of voluntary “partnerships” formed at and since the WSSD, will go far in providing environmental justice for all.

Commitment, Tools, Money, Workforce, and Morality

OIA senior managers have been proponents of environmental justice for many years and are committed to ensure that directors and staff have the necessary tools to integrate environmental justice into all of our work. While financially constrained, OIA will continue to support avenues to provide more information, in more languages, to more people, and support forums for more stakeholder input and inclusion. In addition, OIA will maintain a diverse workforce at all levels, and work to ensure that policies are developed with broad sensitivity and understanding. Finally, OIA management has charged the staff to continue to lead by example. It is a privilege to represent the United States in international work, and our concepts will only be reproduced if we adamantly apply them ourselves, and if they lead to fair and inclusive outcomes.

Purpose of Plan

This Plan will identify OIA’s current strategies and activities to support environmental justice and set new goals and objectives to make our environmental justice program more effective and far reaching.

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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PLAN OF ACTION
2003 and BEYOND**

Staff are encouraged to make every attempt to ensure that all EPA international programs are implemented promoting the fair treatment and early meaningful involvement in the decision making process of all affected people. To help accomplish this, OIA will:

- Ensure that staff representing EPA in international work have basic knowledge of environmental justice concepts and how these concepts might be incorporated in day to day work.
- Consult with the Office of Environmental Justice to develop training that will aid in integrating environmental justice into international work.
- Require that OIA office directors consider the inclusion of environmental justice in the program development processes.
- Require that staff inform country counterparts early in the process of international collaborative work, of EPA's commitment to environmental justice and the expectation that it be considered in the implementation of collaborative programs.
- Make information available in multi-media approaches, and attempt to make more documents available in multiple languages. In general our priorities are Spanish, French, and Chinese.
- Ensure that free trade agreements are developed to enact, enforce or maintain environmental laws and regulations that protect human health and the environment.
- Continue OIA's partnership with NEJAC's International Subcommittee, and other stakeholder groups and representatives, to gain perspectives of global environmental justice issues.
- Include environmental justice implementation concepts in all OIA program strategy papers, trade agreements and strategic plans for international partnerships.

II Organizational Infrastructure

OIA consists of four Offices: the Office of International Environmental Policy, the Office of Western Hemisphere and Bilateral Affairs, the Office of Management Operations, and the Office of Technology Cooperation and Assistance. The Environmental Justice Program is housed in the Office of Technology Cooperation and Assistance, along with other media specific programs, (air, water, and toxics), that assist in the protection of human health and the environment.

OIA places a priority on cross-office coordination. Representatives from all or some of the four offices share their specific knowledge and expertise to work together toward a common goal. Environmental justice concepts are integrated in this process to ensure its that all affected people are treated fairly.

III. Management Support

OIA management has endorsed environmental justice for many years and attests to successful programs when environmental justice tools are applied. This strong commitment to invoke environmental justice into all OIA programs is reinforced frequently. Office directors are expected to consider environmental justice concerns in the development of program processes. As OIA moves to refocus much of its work, consideration of environmental justice continues to be included in every program strategy as a “measure of success”.

IV. Operational Resources

The Office of International Affairs is staffed with eighty full time employees, the smallest Assistant Administratorship in EPA. All of OIA’s program managers devote a significant amount of time developing environmental justice concepts that will help ensure the success and fairness of their programs. Along with management, one half-time FTE specifically focuses on developing the environmental justice program for and promotes consideration of environmental justice in OIA’s day to day work. To accomplish this, the coordinator:

- develops coordinated strategies to ensure the integration of environmental justice;
- serves as the Designated Federal Officer of the International Subcommittee

- of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC);
- assembles multi-disciplinary teams to address specific environmental justice implications as they are presented to OIA;
- develops an environmental justice program which focuses on: (1) training staff; (2) communicates EJ issues to management and staff; (3) communicates with internal and external stakeholders; (4) provides support to other offices; (5) participates in consultation, advocacy, and problem-solving activities; (6) coordinates the activities of the Environmental Justice Program with other offices to provide the most effective program feasible.
- Develops and recommends to senior management budgets and staffing plans to meet the resource needs of the Environmental Justice Program.

V. **Program Support**

OIA staff work daily with internal and external, domestic and international partners to address the environmental justice related issues our programs are designed to eradicate. All of OIA's programs and activities are tied together by the shared goal to protect human health, and safeguard and improve the environment. Workgroups are temporary and developed based on specific EJ issues, (policy+country+technical assistance+EJ Program Coordinator).

OIA has ongoing consultations with the International Subcommittee of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, (NEJAC). In addition, there are ongoing telephone conference calls with various tribal groups to dialogue on various international issues. *(These are discussed in detail below.)*

Multilateral Organizations

Management and staff work with multilateral organizations which have teams, workgroups, and partnerships that focus on environmental justice related issues which ultimately tie to our programs. Examples of these organizations are:

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - Environment work at the OECD deals with a broad range of national and international environmental challenges. It is a forum for member governments to address common problems, encourage cooperation on new approaches to environmental policy, promote integration of environmental and economic policies, share data, information and experience, strengthen international agreements, promote

accountability among member nations, and assess environmental performance and results. Recently, the OECD has addressed the issue of “social cohesion” and has formulated guidelines on “corporate responsibility”. Not only do these issues tie to OIA’s environmental justice work, but they are addressed in the International Subcommittee’s Strategic Plan.

North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) - The CEC fosters protection and improvement of the environment in North America for the well-being of present and future generations, promotes sustainable development based on cooperation and mutually supportive environmental and economic policies, supports the environmental goals of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), enhances compliance with and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; and, promotes transparency and public participation in the development and application of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

The North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), of which the U.S. is a Party, and for which EPA is the US lead federal agency, is a precedential instrument in international law, allowing citizens direct access to an international process. Articles 14 and 15 of NAAEC allows citizens and NGOs with a forum to directly petition the Secretariat to undertake a factual record to examine whether any of the three governments have effectively enforced its environmental laws. It is US policy, and therefore EPA practice under Executive Order 12915 to permit the development of factual records to the fullest extent possible.

The CEC has also institutionalized the input of stakeholders through the Joint Public Advisory Committee(JPAC), National Advisory Committee(NAC), and Government Advisory Committee(GAC) which encourages and therefore often includes the participation of outside stakeholders such as NGOs, indigenous peoples, environmental justice advocates, and tribal government representatives.

OIA also works with the CEC to bolster the representation of indigenous peoples and tribal government leaders in its CEC work.

World Health Organization (WHO) - OIA and the World Health Organization collaborate to develop programs to protect children from environmental threats. These programs recognize that poverty exacerbates the special health

vulnerabilities of children to some environmental risks and also that children in some cultures and communities face unique or heightened risks. EPA is a partner with the World Health Organization and many other groups in developing a *Healthy Environments for Children Alliance*.

Environment and Trade

In developing and negotiating free trade agreements, OIA works to ensure effective enforcement of environmental laws, high levels of environmental protection, and that environmental laws are not weakened to encourage trade or investment.

Children's Environmental Health

The children's environmental health program at OIA supports work with indigenous communities in the Arctic with subsistence diets. The goal is to ensure that the communities and policy makers better understand exposure levels to metals and persistent organic toxics and better understand any related health effects in infants and children. OIA is also managing a grant with UNICEF to support children's environmental health work in Kenya schools. OIA collaborates with partners to reduce indoor air pollution from environmental tobacco smoke and cook stoves; exposures from these sources increase or exacerbate respiratory illnesses, now the leading cause of mortality for young children in developing countries. The drinking water program in Central America was also conceived to protect children and has been particularly concerned with supporting environmental justice communities.

International Visitor's Program

In addition, OIA's International Visitor's Program provides a forum to learn of challenges faced in other countries and to share solution-oriented tools when possible. These collective collaborations have highlighted the global synonymies of environmental justice involvement.

VI. Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) alignment (link to mission and priorities)

OIA's environmental justice program is a major tool in the implementation of all OIA programs and therefore is linked to our GPRA priorities. OIA's strategy is to inform international counterparts of EPA's commitment to environmental justice activities and of EPA's expectation that environmental justice concepts be applied to the fullest extent. In addition, OIA programs are developed to address specific components of environmental justice.

An ongoing example is a pilot project on environmental education of African Women and Girls in Ghana and Benin, in Sub Saharan Africa. The goal of this project is to educate women and girls in urban and peri-urban areas on priority environmental issues facing their communities and empower them to address these issues. OIA is working with two African middle schools, one in Ghana (English speaking) and one in Benin (French speaking) to: 1) provide computers, basic internet web-search training and identify key environment-related websites, (2) work with teachers to develop environmental courses on safe drinking water, clean air, solid waste management and environmental health, and (3) establish a sister school relationship with two schools in the United States, one urban, one tribal, which will include a two week exchange visit for selected participants.

VII. Internal Organizational Engagement

OIA's programs are interrelated and environmental justice is considered a mandatory tool used across offices and programs daily. Also, OIA staff communicates with staff of the Office of Environmental Justice, and other program and regional offices to develop strategies to best focus programs that consider environmental justice.

Presently, there is no guidance regarding the integration of environmental justice but OIA management will regularly assess the need to develop such guidance.

VII. External Stakeholder Engagement

Since 1995, OIA has sponsored the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council's International Subcommittee to advise EPA on various stakeholder views regarding international environmental justice issues affecting human health and the environment. This association has been a great investment for OIA since our international counterparts are government officials and we don't

always know the experiences of affected communities. OIA has found the Subcommittee's advice to be reliable, representative, and sound, and has resulted in successful areas of work that we might not have known to explore. This interaction has resulted in major steps forward toward our environmental justice goals.

OIA administers EPA's International Visitors Program, and hosts 2,000-2,500 international visitors each year who come to the U.S. to discuss various environmental justice related issues. All segments of foreign countries are represented in interactive dialogues with EPA specialists working on pre-determined issues of interest to the visitors. These meetings provide opportunities for dialogue and solution-oriented tool sharing. In 2002, representatives from over fifty countries visited OIA and shared environmental justice issues common to those in other countries. Studying these common issues has helped reaffirm OIA's commitment to our four main environmental ends: clean air, clean water, sound management of toxics, and marine protection. Success of our programs will offer relief to multitudes, and greatly advance global protection of human health and the environment.

Specific to our work on the U.S.-Mexico border, OIA receives input from both the Good Neighbor Environment Board, and the National Advisory Committee. Numerous public participation processes and advisory boards, managed through the CEC Secretariat, provide valuable input to OIA.

OIA has periodic teleconference calls with representatives from Indigenous Peoples to discuss specific environmental justice related issues of great interest to their communities. These collaborative discussions on mercury and persistent organic pollutants (POPs), have been extremely helpful to OIA and have helped us design toxic programs with more sensitivity and better understanding.

In addition, tribal outreach was also accomplished within the context of the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment, with DOS as lead for communicating to all stakeholders prior to both the September 2002 UNEP Mercury Workgroup Meeting as well as the February 2003 Governing Council Meeting. Mercury is important, in particular, to the developing fetus and to young children on a global basis. OIA hopes to engage in international communication about the risks and also ways to prevent or curtail mercury emissions to developing countries and countries in transition, as an important component of a new UNEP Program on

Mercury, which OIA helped to spearhead.

VIII. Information Outreach

Because access to information is imperative, OIA has an International Environmental Information Program: an ongoing process to share information to external groups regarding environmental justice related issues. In cooperation with the EPA Office of Environmental Information, this program coordinates the Agency's collection, use and distribution of international environmental data.

OIA receives over 600 e-mail questions per year on specific international environmental issues and attempts to respond to each one within two days of receipt. In addition, there is an abundance of printed outreach material that is distributed to various stakeholder groups and upon request.

OIA sponsored a full page of a recent EPA insert in La Opinion and its associated newspapers throughout the U.S. This Spanish-language insert highlighted some of EPA's most significant initiatives. OIA's contribution focused on the new Border 2012 Plan for improving environment and human health on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border.

IX. Identifying Stakeholders

Where environmental processes do not appear to consider all stakeholders, OIA attempts to create an awareness, at all levels, of the benefits of collaborative problem solving. This is a good example: Acting on a recommendation of the International Subcommittee to link international environmental justice groups with U.S. environmental justice groups with similar issues, on two occasions, OIA has invited delegations from South Africa and Thailand to the United States to learn how environmental justice could be applied to collaboratively tackle issues. The second week the groups were hosted by the International Subcommittee and participated in the meeting of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, where they witnessed how collaborative decision-making can be accomplished. As funds permit, OIA would like to create more opportunities for international representatives to witness the environmental justice process in the U.S.

OIA funds the publication of documents in different languages or provides funds to other organizations to translate materials. In addition, many of EPA's

program offices produce their materials in multiple languages and OIA works to share these materials with our many domestic and international partners.

X. Language Communication Outreach

OIA initiated the “Spanish Language Resources” web site which links all EPA documents, databases, etc. which are available in Spanish. The site benefits both the Spanish-speaking community in the U.S. and in other countries. EPA information has been translated into many languages, however, OIA would like to translate more documents into, French (which would cover much of Africa), and Chinese (which would cover much of Asia). Staff of OIA speak many languages and are able to communicate with many customers.

XI. Data Collection

While OIA does not collect data, it links data from the various data collecting program and regional offices with international customers who need it. In our international collaborative efforts, this data is imperative in developing environmental justice related programs.

XII. Professional and Organization Development

All staff will be encouraged to complete the, “ Environmental Justice Fundamentals Workshop”, and training specific to international work will be developed and offered. In addition, training will be offered to impart a baseline knowledge of how to address tribes and the environmental problems distinct to their communities.

OIA plans to continue to meet with environmental justice advocates who can help us determine what EPA programs worked well for affected communities and how others could be improved. OIA staff forums will be developed to exchange ideas on how best to promote environmental justice, examples of best practices and lessons learned.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES MATRIX

GOAL # 1: *Ensure the importance of environmental justice is understood by all OIA managers and staff, considered in the development of OIA programs and activities, and integrated in day-to-day work.*

Strategies	Activities	Duration/ Due Date	Performance Measures	Resources FTE/\$	Lead Contact
1. Inform managers and staff of EPA/OIA's commitment to environmental justice.	1a. Distribute draft Integrating Plan to OIA managers and staff for input and comment. 1b. Distribute final Plan with commitment memo from AA.	1a. April 03 1b. May 03	1a. Plan and policy issues for comment. 1b. Plan and policy distributed to OIA staff		Wendy Graham 202-564-6602
2. Develop OIA staff knowledge of environmental justice.	2a. Encourage staff to complete "Fundamentals of EJ" training. 2b. Promote training that focuses on international work.	2a. Ongoing 2b. Ongoing	2a. Increased knowledge of staff on EJ concepts 2b. Identify courses and promote to OIA staff.		Wendy Graham
3. Consider EJ in the development and day to day processes of all programs and activities	3a. Inform international counterparts of EPA's commitment to EJ.	3a. Early in process	3a. Commitment expectation relayed.		

GOAL 2: Enhance Outreach Through Public Participation, Access To Information, and Language Outreach

Strategies	Activities	Duration/ Due Date	Performance Measures	Resources FTE/\$	Lead Contact
1. Enhance public participation	1a. Identify stakeholders early and established avenues for information access and public participation. 1b. Make information documents available to affected communities for comment.	1a. Early in process. 1b. Ongoing	1a. Secure avenues for information sharing and public involvement. Provide access to information with appropriate avenue for input and comment		

Strategies	Activities	Duration/ Due Date	Performance Measures	Resources FTE/\$	Lead Contact
2. Dialogue with Internal Stakeholders	2a. Continue International Visitors Program where /EJ related discussions are held w/international counterparts.. 2b. Continue collaborative efforts with other EPA and Federal Government offices to focus work around EJ implicated issues.	2a. Ongoing 2b. Ongoing	2a. Program continued. 2b. Collaborative program efforts that address EJ related issues.		

Strategies	Activities	Duration/ Due Date	Performance Measures	Resources FTE/\$	Lead Contact
3. Dialogue	<p>2c. Continue support of and collaborations with NEJAC's International Subcommittee for help in identifying issues raised by affected communities.</p> <p>2d. Build outreach to tribal communities</p>	<p>2c. Ongoing</p> <p>2d. Ongoing</p>	<p>2c. Conduct face to face and conference call meetings to keep informed of needs and opinions of various stakeholders.</p> <p>2d.1. Continue conference calls on specific subjects of interest to tribes.</p> <p>2d.2. Especially in CEC work, build capacity for indigenous peoples access to information</p>		<p>Wendy Graham (202) 564-6602</p> <p>2d.2 OIA Policy Ofc. (202) 564-6455</p> <p>2d.2 OIA Policy Ofc.. (202) 564-6455</p>