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Afro-Latinos in Latin America and Considerations for U.S. Policy

Abstract
[Excerpt] During its second session, the 110th Congress is likely to maintain an interest in the situation of Afro-Latinos in Latin America, particularly the plight of Afro-Colombians affected by the armed conflict in Colombia. In recent years, people of African descent in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations of Latin America — also known as "Afro-Latinos" — have been pushing for increased rights and representation. Afro-Latinos comprise some 150 million of the region's 540 million total population, and, along with women and indigenous populations, are among the poorest, most marginalized groups in the region. Afro- Latinos have formed groups that, with the help of international organizations, are seeking political representation, human rights protection, land rights, and greater social and economic rights and benefits. Improvement in the status of Afro-Latinos could be difficult and contentious, however, depending on the circumstances of the Afro-descendant populations in each country.

Assisting Afro-Latinos has never been a primary U.S. foreign policy objective, although a number of foreign aid programs benefit Afro-Latino populations. While some foreign aid is specifically targeted towards Afro-Latinos, most is distributed broadly through programs aimed at helping all marginalized populations. Some Members may support increasing U.S. assistance to Afro-Latinos, while others may resist, particularly given the limited amount of development assistance available for Latin America.

In the 110th Congress, there are several bills with provisions related to Afro-Latinos. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY2008 (H.R. 2764/P.L. 110-161), requires the State Department to certify that the Colombian military is not violating the land and property rights of Afro-Colombians or the indigenous. It also prohibits the use of Andean Counterdrug funds for investment in oil palm development if it causes displacement or environmental damage (as it has in many Afro-Colombian communities). In the explanatory statement to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, the conferees stipulate that up to $15 million in alternative development assistance to Colombia may be provided to Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities. On July 11, 2007, the House passed H.Res 426 (McGovern), recognizing 2007 as the year of the rights of internally displaced persons (including Afro-Colombians) in Colombia and offering U.S. support to programs that seek to assist and protect them. Another resolution, H.Res. 618 (Payne), recognizing the importance of addressing the plight of Afro-Colombians, was introduced on August 3, 2007. In addition to considering this and other legislation with provisions related to Afro-Latinos, the 110th Congress may discuss the situation of Afro-Colombians during its consideration of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. This report will be updated as legislative action warrants.

Keywords
Congress, public policy, Latin America, Colombia, economic rights, economic growth, indigenous populations, foreign aid, economic development

Comments

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CRS Report for Congress

Afro-Latinos in Latin America and Considerations for U.S. Policy

Updated January 14, 2008

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Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress

Congressional Research Service

Afro-Latinos in Latin America and Considerations for U.S. Policy

Summary

During its second session, the 110th Congress is likely to maintain an interest in the situation of Afro-Latinos in Latin America, particularly the plight of Afro-Colombians affected by the armed conflict in Colombia. In recent years, people of African descent in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations of Latin America — also known as "Afro-Latinos" — have been pushing for increased rights and representation. Afro-Latinos comprise some 150 million of the region's 540 million total population, and, along with women and indigenous populations, are among the poorest, most marginalized groups in the region. Afro-Latinos have formed groups that, with the help of international organizations, are seeking political representation, human rights protection, land rights, and greater social and economic rights and benefits. Improvement in the status of Afro-Latinos could be difficult and contentious, however, depending on the circumstances of the Afro-descendant populations in each country.

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Afro-Latinos in Latin America and Considerations for U.S. Policy

Introduction

Persons of African descent, commonly referred to as "Afro-Latinos," along with women and indigenous populations, are among the poorest and most marginalized groups in Latin America. The term "Afro-Latinos," as used within the international development community and the U.S. government, generally refers to Afro-descendant populations in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations of Latin America. Following common usage, this paper uses the terms "Afro-descendant," "Afro-Latino," "Afro-Latin," and "black" interchangeably. This paper does not include a discussion of Haiti or English-speaking Caribbean nations that have governments composed largely of Afro-descendants.

Within the past decade, Afro-Latinos have begun to employ different strategies to align national movements with international organizations, including multilateral development banks to which the United States contributes, in order to improve their social status. Some countries — most notably Brazil and Colombia — have enacted legal reforms and government programs to address racial discrimination, land rights, and political and social exclusion. Improvement in the status of Afro-Latinos could be difficult and internally contentious, however, depending on the size and circumstances of the Afro-descendant populations in each country.

Some U.S. analysts and policymakers argue that the United States has a specific interest in assisting Afro-descendant peoples in Latin America. They assert that assisting vulnerable peoples fits into larger U.S. policy goals for the region: promoting democracy, encouraging economic growth and poverty reduction, and protecting human rights. Those proponents disagree, however, as to whether U.S. foreign aid should be specifically targeted towards Afro-Latinos (as it has been in the case of some indigenous peoples), or whether it should continue to be distributed broadly through programs aimed at helping all marginalized populations.

Other analysts question whether increasing assistance to Afro-Latinos is feasible at a time when limited development assistance is being allocated to Latin America. They point out that the country with the largest Afro-descendant population in the region, Brazil, is relatively developed and does not receive large amounts of U.S. foreign aid. They question whether funds directed towards Afro-Latinos will have to be taken from programs currently serving other needy groups. Still others caution that because race is a sensitive issue for many countries in Latin America, the United States should be cautious when pursuing policies that affect the issue.

This report reviews and analyzes the situation, concerns, and activities of Afro-descendants in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations of Latin America. It then discusses current U.S. foreign aid programs, as well as multilateral initiatives, that have directly or indirectly assisted Afro-Latinos. The report concludes with a discussion of potential policy options that have been proposed should the United States elect to provide further support for Afro-Latinos.

Panorama of Afro-Latinos in Latin America

Race and ethnicity are complex issues in Latin America. Most of Latin America's 540 million residents descend from three major racial/ethnic groups: Indian or indigenous peoples, of whom there are some 400 distinct groups; Europeans, largely of Spanish and Portuguese heritage; and Africans, descendants of slaves brought to the region during the colonial era.[1] *Mestizo* generally refers to people of mixed European and indigenous lineage, while *mulatto* refers to people of mixed African and European background. After centuries of racial mixing, there are numerous racial variations in Latin America, and many people of mixed African, European, and indigenous ancestry.

Since the colonial period, racial intermingling, also known as *mestizaje*, has been a source of national pride for many countries in Latin America. Countries with large Afro-descendant populations, especially Brazil, have, until recently, been heavily influenced by the notion of "racial democracy." Racial democracy attributes the different conditions under which blacks and whites or mestizos live to class differences, not racial discrimination. Adherents of this theory, which is also pervasive in Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela, argue that being black is a transitory state that can be altered by "whitening" through miscegenation or wealth accumulation.[2] The racial democracy theory has been challenged by recent data revealing a strong and persistent correlation between race and poverty in Latin America.[3] In both Brazil and Colombia, the countries with the largest Afro-Latino populations in South America, Afro-descendants are (and have always been) among the poorest, least educated, lowest paid citizens.

Despite the complexities surrounding racial identity in Latin America, and the limited data available on this topic, this section outlines the characteristics, history, and current status of Afro-descendant people in Latin America.

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[1] People of European descent will also be referred to as "whites."

[2] For a discussion of "racial democracy" and the differences between the prevailing conceptions of race in Brazil and the United States, see Sheila Walker, "Africanity vs. Blackness: Race, Class and Culture in Brazil," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, May/June 2002; Robert J. Cottrol, "The Long Lingering Shadow," *Tulane Law Review*, 2001.

[3] Haider Rivzi, "Development: Globalization Driving Inequality — UN Warns," *Inter Press Service*, August 26, 2005; Hoffman, Kelly and Miguel A. Centeno, "The Lopsided Continent: Inequality in Latin America," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2003.

Identity, Definition, and Geographic Distribution

Afro-descendants in Latin America have not been historically identified, as they have in the United States, as any individual with traceable African ancestry. People in Latin America have several different ways of classifying themselves. Lighter skinned mulattoes may identify themselves as white, while some blacks may identify themselves as mulattoes or mestizos. These classifications are influenced by class position, geographic location, societal associations of blackness, the existence (or lack) of collective identities among people of color, and state policies.

There is a range of state policies towards race in Latin America, from tacitly condoning racism against minority groups to promoting diversity. The Dominican Republic provides a striking example of how racial identity has been formed by official notions of national identity. The Dominican government mobilized a nationalist movement against an external threat (the mostly black republic of Haiti). Although some 84% of the population has African ancestry, Dominicans, in order to distinguish themselves from their poorer Haitian neighbors, tend to define themselves as mestizos descended from Indians and Europeans, and not as Afro-Dominicans.[4] A 2005 study on racial attitudes in the Dominican Republic finds that 83% of Dominicans believe their society is racist against blacks.[5]

For the purposes of this report, blacks and mulattoes are grouped together to yield the estimated number of Afro-descendants in Latin America.[6] Of the 540 million people living in Latin America, some 150 million were of African descent as of 1997, the latest data available.[7] **Figure 1** (at the end of this report) depicts Afro-descendants as a percentage of total population for the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America. Afro-Latinos tend to reside in coastal areas, although in many countries they have migrated to large cities in search of employment. Afro-Latinos constitute a majority of the population in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. In Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Nicaragua, they form a significant minority. In terms of absolute numbers, Brazil has the largest Afro-descendant population outside of Africa. In 2000, 45% of Brazilians

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[4] "'Illegal People': Haitians and Dominico-Haitians in the Dominican Republic," *Human Rights Watch*, April 2002, Vol. 14, No. 1.

[5] "Racism Rampant in the Dominican Republic, Study Finds," *EFE News Service*, May 3, 2005.

[6] Estimates vary as to the actual number of Afro-descendants in each of the countries in question. For example, the CIA World Fact Book estimates that while 38% of Brazil's population is "mixed white and black," only 6% is black. Some argue that racial discrimination and social exclusion affect blacks in Brazil far more than they affect the country's larger mulatto population.

[7] Estimates vary as to the actual number of Afro-descendants in Latin America. In order to arrive at the figure of 150 million, blacks and *mulattoes* (people of mixed African and European background) have been grouped together. See "The Region: Race: Latin America's Invisible Challenge," Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), January 1997.

identified themselves as black or mulatto, as compared to 13% of U.S. citizens who identified themselves as African-American.[8]

History. The vast majority of Afro-Latinos descend from the millions of slaves brought by European traders from the West African coast who survived the Middle Passage to the Americas. Some historians have stated that the first slaves in the hemisphere arrived in Virginia in 1619, and that the majority of African slaves ended up in the southern United States. However, historians now maintain that the first slaves arrived in Hispaniola, an island now divided between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, in the early 16th century. Some 12 million or so Africans arrived in the Americas over the 400-year history of the slave trade.[9] Some scholars estimate that more than 50% of those African slaves ended up in Brazil, while only 5% went to the United States.[10] Although many Africans perished due to harsh working conditions and disease, new slaves from West Africa continued to replace them until abolition. Slavery was abolished in most Latin American countries at or soon after their independence from Spain in the1820s, but continued in Brazil until1888.

As slavery and lingering racism have left an indelible mark on Afro-Latinos, so too has the long but little-known legacy of black rebellion and self-liberation (marronage). The first slave rebellions occurred in Puerto Rico (1514) and Hispaniola (1522). By the 17th century, maroons (escaped slaves) in Latin America have been estimated to have numbered between 11,000 and 30,000.[11] Maroons formed communities with sovereign territoriality in remote terrains with low population densities that now constitute the prominent Afro-Latino areas of eastern and northern South America, Central America, and the Caribbean.[12] According to the Brazilian Ministry of Culture, there are at least 1,098 *quilombola* (escaped slaves) communities in Brazil today. Afro-descendant communities in Honduras and Nicaragua are generally rural communities descended from escaped slaves who immigrated to Central America from the Caribbean in the 17th and 18th centuries. Many of those communities, particularly the Garifuna in Honduras, have developed distinct racial, cultural, and political identities based on communal land ties in areas that are geographically isolated from the rest of their country's populations.

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[8] For Brazilian census figures, see Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, Censo Demográfico — 2000, at [http://www.ibge.gov.br].

[9] Johannes Postma, The Atlantic Slave Trade. (London: Greenwood Press, 2003).

[10] Howard Dodson, "The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Making of the Modern World," in *African Roots/African Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas*, Sheila Walker, ed. (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001); Hillary Mayell, "Re-Examining U.S. Slaves' Role in Their Emancipation," *National Geographic News*, December 6, 2002.

[11] Ibid., Mayell.

[12] For a comprehensive history of the African diaspora in the Americas, see Norman E. Whitten and Arlene Torres, eds., *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998). For a more recent history of Afro-Latinos, see George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Current Status. Although some countries with large Afro-Latino populations, such as Brazil and Colombia, disaggregate socioeconomic data by race, most countries do not, making it extremely difficult to find good quantitative data on Afro-Latinos. Despite these data limitations, household surveys and anecdotal evidence from across the region point to a correlation between African descent and political, economic, and social marginalization. Disparities between Afro-Latinos and the general population in Latin America have persisted despite rising income and growth levels throughout the region.[13] Statistics from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador Honduras, and Nicaragua generally support that finding.[14]

Brazil. Afro-Latinos represent 45% of the population of Brazil but constitute 64% of the poor and 69% of the extremely poor. With respect to education, 18% of Afro-Brazilians have completed secondary school as compared to 38% of those who self-identify as white. Afro-Brazilians have, on average, roughly five years of schooling, whereas whites have completed nine years of school. They earn, on average, some 44% less than non-blacks. Some 41% of Afro-Brazilians live in houses without adequate sanitation and 21% lack running water, versus 18% and 7% of white households. The maternal mortality rate of Afro-Brazilian women is three times that of their white counterparts. Afro-Brazilians have lower life expectancies than whites (66 years as compared to 71.5 years) and nearly twice the homicide rate of whites. On recent study found that violence is becoming the leading cause of death for Afro-Brazilian men.[15]

Colombia. Colombia has the second largest Afro-descendant population in Latin America after Brazil. While most analysts assert that Afro-Colombians constitute between 19% and 26% of the Colombian population, only 11% of the population self-identified as Afro-Colombian in the country's 2005 national census. Most Afro-Colombians reside in rural areas on the country's Pacific Coast, but many have also fled to poor neighborhoods in the country's large cities as a result of the country's ongoing armed conflict. Some 80% of Afro-Colombians live in conditions of extreme poverty, and 74% of Afro-Colombians earn less than the minimum wage. Chocó, the department with the highest percentage of Afro-Colombians, has the lowest per-capita level of government investment in health, education, and infrastructure. Some 30% of the Afro-Colombian population is illiterate, with illiteracy in some rural black communities exceeding 40%. The Colombian health care system covers only 10% of black communities, versus 40% of white

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[13] Jonas Zoninsein, "The Economic Case for Combating Racial and Ethnic Exclusion in Latin American and Caribbean Countries," Washington, DC: IDB, 2001.

[14] These countries were selected because there is some data available on the socioeconomic conditions of their Afro-descendant populations.

[15] Ricard Henriques, "Desigualdade racial no Brasil," Brasilia: Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), 2001; "Blacks Celebrate, but Still Suffer in Brazil," *Latinnews Daily*, November 21, 2007; United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report: Brazil*, 2005.

communities. Despite their marginalized position in Colombian society, Afro-Colombians reside on some of the country's most biodiverse, resource-rich lands.[16]

Ecuador. Afro-Latinos represent between 5% and 10% of the Ecuadorian population. Some 69% of Afro-Latinos in Ecuador reside in urban areas, primarily in the coastal regions of Guayas and Esmeraldas. Afro-Ecuadorians generally live in slightly better conditions than the indigenous population, but both groups post poverty rates significantly above the country's average (90% and 74% respectively as compared to 62%). This poverty is perpetuated by a lack of access to health care, sanitation, education, and well paying jobs. For example, Esmeraldas, a region whose population is 80% Afro-Ecuadorian, has infant mortality rates double the national average. At a national level, only 15% of Afro-Ecuadorians aged 18 and over have completed secondary school as compared to 23% of the general population. As a result, although Afro-Ecuadorians have a high labor participation rate, the vast majority are employed in low-wage jobs.[17]

Honduras. Afro-Latinos represent roughly 2% of the population of Honduras. The Afro-Honduran population is primarily composed of Garifuna and Afro-Antilleans. Some 80% of Garifuna reside in rural communities along Honduras' northern Atlantic coast, while 85% of the Afro-Antilleans reside in the Bay Islands. The 2001 Honduran census reports that these regions, though poor, have lower poverty levels than the rest of Honduras' departments. According to the national census, some 55% of Garifuna households and 63% of Afro-Antilleans report having their basic needs met. In addition, while the national illiteracy rate is estimated at 20%, the illiteracy rate for Garifuna is 9% and for Afro-Antilleans is 4%.[18] The Garifuna are a high-risk group for HIV/AIDS, with over 8% of the population infected (as compared to the national prevalence rate of 1.8%).[19]

Nicaragua. Afro-descendants constitute roughly 9% of the Nicaraguan population. Nicaragua is the second poorest country (behind Haiti) in the Western Hemisphere. Although Afro-Nicaraguans do not reside in the poorest regions of the country, their communities are located in some its most isolated coastal regions. Most Afro-descendants reside in the Caribbean lowlands of Nicaragua, a region that was never part of the Spanish empire but rather a de facto British protectorate from the 17th through the late 19th centuries. As recently as 1993, there were no paved roads connecting lowland Caribbean communities to Nicaragua's Pacific region. The

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[16] U.S. Department of State, *Colombia: Country Report on Human Rights Practices, 2006*, March 2007; "Más Allá de los Promedios, Afrodescendientes en América Latina: Los Afrocolombianos,"World Bank, February 2006; Milam Fitts, "The Mundo Afro Project," Inter-American Foundation, September 2001.

[17] Juan Ponce, "Más Allá de los Promedios, Afrodescendientes en América Latina: Los Afroecuatorianos," World Bank, February 2006.

[18] Mary Lisbeth González, "Más Allá de los Promedios, Afrodescendientes en América Latina: Los Afrohondureños," World Bank, February 2006.

[19] Mary Lisbeth González, "Más Allá de los Promedios, Afrodescendientes en América Latina: Los Afrohondureños," World Bank, February 2006; UNAIDS, *AIDS Epidemic Monitor*, December 2004, p. 59; U.S. Department of State, *Honduras: Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2005, March 2006.

World Bank has recently reported that although an average of 60% of Nicaraguan households have access to potable water and 49% have electricity, comparable figures for the Atlantic coast are 21% and 17% respectively.[20]

Issues Affecting Afro-Latino Populations

This section provides a brief overview of some of the major issues affecting Afro-descendant communities in Latin America. These issues include legal protection, political representation, land rights, human rights, and access to quality healthcare. When applicable, the section compares and contrasts the situation of Afro-descendants to that of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are, generally, descendants of the Amerindian ethnic groups that lived in the hemisphere prior to the European conquest who retain distinct communal, cultural, linguistic, or geographic identification with that heritage.

Indigenous peoples have, perhaps as a result of their distinct heritage and shared history, generally exhibited a stronger sense of group identity and a higher level of political mobilization than Afro-descendants. For example, while the First Inter-American Indian Congress was held in Mexico in 1940, the first large-scale hemispheric meeting of Afro-descendant leaders was held in 1977, and the first meeting of Afro-Latino legislators was held in Brazil in 2003. Some have argued that Afro-descendant communities that have been able to prove their "indigenous-like" status have achieved more rights and recognition from their governments than other blacks in the region.[21] Others assert that it has been easier for the indigenous to achieve collective rights than Afro-descendants as political elites in Latin America have tended to award those rights on the basis "of a perceived possession of a distinct cultural group identity, not a history of political exclusion or racial discrimination."[22]

Despite those limitations, Afro-descendant leaders in Latin America have used international forums, multilateral donors, and diplomatic channels to garner support for increased rights and representation for their communities. Since 1990, these efforts have resulted in significant improvements in the formal rights accorded to their communities in a relatively short period of time. They have also been relatively successful in garnering international support for their movement, including support from some Administration officials and Members of Congress. Afro-Latino mobilization efforts have been less successful in galvanizing grassroots support for race-based public policies or in "ensuring that public policies are implemented or that laws are followed once they are created."[23]

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[20] Tim Merrill, ed., *Nicaragua: A Country Study*, Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1994; Stubbs and Aoki, 2005.

[21] Eva T. Thorne, *NACLA Report on the Americas*, New York: September/October 2004, Vol. 35, Issue 2.

[22] Juliet Hooker, "Indigenous Inclusion/Black Exclusion: Race, Ethnicity, and Multicultural Citizenship in Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, May 1, 2005.

[23] Thorne, 2001.

The most salient challenges for the Afro-descendant movement in Latin America include increasing public awareness and group identification among Afro-Latinos while also ensuring that formal rights granted by governments result in meaningful improvements in the standards of living of their communities.

Political and Legal Issues

National Census. A government may define race and delimit a country's concept of "otherness" by the categories it chooses to include in its national census. In a 1991 census, Brazilians used 100 different words to define their racial categories.[24] In the early 1990s, some analysts criticized the Brazilian government's historic tendency not to encourage citizens to define their racial identity in strict categories. They argued that ambiguous census categories inhibited the formation of advocacy groups and political movements to improve the status of Afro-Brazilians.[25] In 1995, Fernando Henrique Cardoso assumed the presidency in Brazil and, under his leadership, the Brazilian government began to use fewer racial categories in the country's national census. The government sought to collect official statistics on Afro-Brazilians in order to assess whether specific public policies were needed to improve their socioeconomic status. Some observers have attributed Brazil's subsequent adoption of some affirmative action policies as a positive byproduct of this census reform.

In 2000, encouraged by the Brazilian example, the World Bank sponsored the first of two conferences on census reform for officials from national statistics bureaus across the region. As a result of these conferences, and ongoing census reform, all countries in Latin America now include some sort of racial indicator in their national censuses. Many countries are also including "racial modules" in household surveys, which will enable them to track the socioeconomic status of Afro-descendants as compared to the general population.

Anti-Discrimination Legislation. No Latin American country has ever enacted the type of strict racially based discriminatory laws that were once common in the United States. A paradoxical result of that distinction is that the law has, thus far, proved to be a more successful tool for dismantling racism in the United States than it has in Latin America.[26]

According to the Inter-American Dialogue, a great deal of variation exists among Latin American countries with respect to anti-discrimination legislation targeted at Afro-descendants.[27] As of October 2006, only Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador had constitutional bans on racial discrimination that are specific to Afro-descendants. In several other countries — Nicaragua, Honduras, and Peru — Afro-

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[24] R. Reichmann, *Race in Contemporary Brazil: from Indifference to Inequality* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

[25] Htun, 2004.

[26] Cottrol, 2001.

[27] For a detailed discussion on constitutional provisions and legal actions related to Afro-Latinos, see Inter-American Dialogue, "Race Report," August 2004.

descendants, though not specifically identified by a constitutional provision, have been given the same sort of legal protection and collective rights as indigenous peoples.[28] The Dominican Republic stands out as the only country in Latin America with a large Afro-Latino population that has neither constitutional provisions nor major laws to prevent racial discrimination.

Political Representation. Afro-Latinos are under-represented politically in many Latin American nations. In 2006, Brazil, a country with 45% of its population claiming some African ancestry, 25 congressmen of a total of 594 self-identified as Afro-Brazilian. In Ecuador, the population is between 5 and 10% Afro-Latino, but in 2006 there was only one Afro-Ecuadorian serving in the 100-member Congress.[29] Representation has increased in some countries, however. In November 2005, for the first time in the country's history, Hondurans elected 3 Garifuna to serve in the country's legislature.[30] There are now Afro-descendant leaders serving as ministers in several countries throughout the region including Brazil, Ecuador, and Colombia.

Some policy-makers in Latin America believe countries should employ quotas in order to ensure that Afro-descendants (as well as indigenous peoples) are represented on party tickets and in legislative bodies. Quotas, though controversial, have been used across the region to increase female political representation. In 1991, Argentina enacted a law requiring parties to present at least 30% female candidates in their party lists. By 1997, women's representation in the Argentine Congress had risen to 28%, one of the highest rates in the world. Since the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, at least eight other Latin American countries have passed laws requiring political parties to reserve 20%-40% of candidacies for women.

In 1993, Colombia passed a law that set aside two seats in Colombia's House of Representatives for persons of African descent. That law was declared unconstitutional in 1996, and several years passed during which few Afro-Colombians were elected to serve in either the Senate or the House of Representatives. Colombia now has two Afro-Colombian senators and seven Afro-Colombian members of its House of Representatives. On October 26, 2006, the Colombian Black Caucus was officially launched, at which time it presented its priorities, which include legislative proposals that would condemn racism, enforce land titles for Afro-Colombian communities, and establish quotas for the representation of indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians in public entities. Similar groups are being initiated in the legislatures of Honduras, Panama, and Venezuela.

Another way to address the issue of race and political representation has been the creation of new institutions to promote racial equity and affirmative action. In 2003, Brazil established a Special Secretariat with a ministerial rank to manage

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[28] Juliet Hooker and Edmund T. Gordon, "The Status of Black Land Rights in Central America," paper presented at the 2004 Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Conference, October 2004.

[29] Figures for Brazil and Ecuador are drawn from the U.S. Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights* covering 2006.

[30] U.S. Department of State, *Honduras: Country Report on Human Rights, 2006,* March 2007.

Racial Equity Promotion Policies. The mission of the Special Secretariat is to develop initiatives to reduce racial inequalities by developing affirmative action programs, coordinating with other Ministers and government entities, and cooperating with the private sector and international institutions. Despite the Special Secretariat's efforts to address racial discrimination in Brazil, some grassroots Brazilian groups maintain that its Afro-Brazilian leaders have been coopted by the government and assert that the Special Secretariat is under-funded and under-performing. Other countries in the region that have similar government entities in place include Ecuador, Honduras and Peru.

Affirmative Action. In 2001, Brazil became the first Latin American country to endorse quotas in order to increase minority representation in government service. Although Brazil's public universities are free, most Afro-Brazilians, the majority of whom attend public high schools, have been unable to pass the admissions test required to attend those universities. In 2000, black students comprised only 2% of Brazil's 3 million college students.[31] Since 2002, over 40 universities throughout Brazil have enacted quotas setting aside admission slots for black students. The Brazilian Senate has passed draft legislation that would enact racial quotas for public universities, television casting, and government agencies. It is now under consideration in the Chamber of Deputies. In 2004, the first university in Latin America established to serve black students opened in Sâo Paulo, Brazil.

The use of quotas in university admissions and government hiring programs has opened up a vigorous debate on affirmative action in Brazil that may spread to other countries in Latin America. Although most Brazilians favor government programs to combat social exclusion and inequality, they disagree as to whether the beneficiaries of those programs should be selected on the basis of race or income.[32] Several court cases in Brazil have challenged the fairness of using racial quotas for university admissions. Some observers have stated that state governments throughout Brazil have not budgeted the funds necessary to provide financial assistance and supplementary services for minority students admitted under the quota program.[33] Critics of affirmative action programs fear that they will artificially divide Brazilian society along "'pseudo-racial' lines and foster the kind of overt racial tension with which Brazil is not familiar."[34]

Human Rights

For the past several years, both the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the multilateral development banks have shared the goal of increasing

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[31] Marion Lloyd, "In Brazil, a Different Approach to Affirmative Action," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 29, 2004.

[32] Livio Sansone, "Anti-Racism in Brazil," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, September 1, 2004.

[33] Jonas Zoninsein, "Affirmative Action and Development in Brazil," paper presented at the 2004 Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Conference, October 2004.

[34] "Brazil Separates Into a World of Black and White," *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 2006.

human rights protection and access to the justice system for minority groups in Latin America, but progress has been slow in both these areas. The State Department Human Rights Report for Brazil covering 2006 finds that "darker-skinned citizens, particularly Afro-Brazilians, frequently encountered discrimination." Afro-Ecuadorians reportedly face both official discrimination and negative stereotyping and are stopped by police for document checks more frequently than other citizens.[35] A 2004 report on people of African descent and the judicial systems of Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and the Dominican Republic finds weak enforcement of laws against racism, and limited access to justice for blacks in these countries.[36] Though data on Latin American prisons is limited, the survey also found blacks to make up large percentages of prison populations living in conditions that were often overcrowded, violent, and unhygienic.

The absence of an effective state presence in Afro-Colombian communities has created a vacuum into which the country's 40-year conflict between paramilitaries and guerrilla forces has spread. In May 2002, a battle between paramilitaries and guerrilla forces resulted in the bombing death of 119 Afro-Colombian civilians who had sought refuge in a town church. According to the Colombian Consultation for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES), the displacement rate of these communities is 20% higher than the national rate. Nationally, Afro-Colombians compose roughly 22% of the total displaced population, which is now estimated to be 3 million. In the last five years, more than 2,500 young Afro-Colombians have been killed, primarily in the cities of Tumaco and Buenaventura. Buenaventura posted the highest murder rate of any city in Colombia in 2006, some seven times the rate in Bogotá.[37] In 2006, the United Nations expressed concern that the Colombian conflict was having a disproportionate effect on indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.[38] Afro-Colombian leaders have expressed concern that the Colombian government, though making an effort to protect some endangered Afro-Colombian leaders, has not responded to black communities' demands for better government services and increased protection.

Land Titles

Giving poor families access to land titles has been identified as an important poverty-fighting measure.[39] Land titles can enable families to obtain mortgages to finance home improvements, to start small businesses, or to pay for their children's

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[35] U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2006: Ecuador*, March 2007.

[36] Justice Studies Center of the Americas, "The Judicial System and Racism Against People of African Descent," March 2004.

[37] "Cocaine Wars Make Port Colombia's Deadliest City," *New York Times*, May 22, 2007.

[38] Testimony of Luis Gilberto Murillo-Urrutia, Former Governor of Chocó, Colombia before the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 24, 2007; "Colombia: UN Agency Voices Renewed Concern Over Mass Displacements From Conflict," *States News Service*, July 7, 2006.

[39] Tyler Bridges, "Land Titles Give Poor a Chance to Advance," *Miami Herald*, April 4, 2004.

education. Increasing legal land ownership enables governments to collect more property taxes to pay for schools, hospitals, and infrastructure projects. The World Bank has helped finance land-titling programs in Peru, Bolivia, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

In the 1980s, a number of Latin American countries began to recognize the importance of land reform. One type of land reform that has benefitted indigenous and some Afro-descendant groups has been ethnic-specific. Starting with Brazil in 1988, and Colombia in 1991, Latin American governments began to recognize the historically derived land rights of some black communities, notably maroon communities of escaped slaves' descendants.[40]

Afro-descendant groups have, in general, been much less successful than indigenous groups in gaining collective land rights. In Central America, only Afro-Latinos in Honduras and Nicaragua have gained the same collective land rights as indigenous communities. For example, the Garifuna community, descendants of escaped slaves from St. Vincent that inhabit the Caribbean coast of Central America, won communal land rights in Honduras and Nicaragua by proving that their language, religious beliefs, and traditional agriculture techniques are inextricably linked to their notion of land and territory.[41] In contrast, Afro-Latinos whose ancestors were brought as slaves have been integrated into the mestizo culture of Central America and do not therefore possess the racial/cultural group identity or specific relationship to the land that the Garifuna possess.

Even Afro-descendant groups that have communal titles, such as the Garifuna, are facing increasing challenges to their land titles, especially in coastal areas, as real estate developers seek to capitalize on the recent boom in tourism development. Some Garifuna have also expressed concerns that a 2004 Honduran law granting land titles for individual and private capital development, may threaten their communal land rights. On May 30, 2005, Gregoria Flores, a prominent Garifuna leader, was shot while collecting evidence to present to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in support of Garifuna land rights claims against developers in Honduras.[42]

A similar situation has occurred among Afro-descendants who live in the Pacific Coast region of Colombia. Since the early 1990s, Afro-Colombian communities have been mobilizing for increased rights and representation. In 1993, the Colombian government passed Law 70, which recognized the collective land rights of Afro-Colombian communities. While some 6.1 million hectares of land have been granted titles under Law 70, large percentages of Afro-Colombian communities have been forced off their ancestral lands because of the ongoing internal conflict. Some Afro-Colombian lands are being used by private companies (in violation of Law 70) to

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[40] Thorne, 2004; Hooker and Gordon, 2004.

[41] Hooker and Gordon, 2004.

[42] U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Honduras*, March 2006.

develop African palm oil.[43] This practice has reportedly been accelerated by new laws passed by the Colombian Congress to encourage commercial development of the country's forests, water, and other natural resources. In addition, illegally armed groups have increasingly engaged in both licit and illicit extractive activities (such as mining, agro-business, and coca cultivation) in the Afro-Colombian territories.

In Brazil, the government of President Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva has improved health, education, and electricity provision to many *quilombola* communities, but many of those communities still lack titles to their land. Press reports indicate that Brazil's federal and state governments have provided only 23 land titles out of more than 400 requested by *quilombola* communities. A recent study found that if all of those requests were granted, Brazil would have to give out a tract of land equal to half the size of California.[44]

Health

Although extensive regional data are not yet available, existing studies from selected countries indicate a persistent gap between health indicators for Afro-descendants and for the general population in Latin America.[45] Analysts from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) assert that these health differentials result, at least in part, from racial discrimination. Discrimination in health can limit ethnic minorities' access to services and reduce the quality of information and services provided to them. Racial discrimination also operates indirectly, according to PAHO, by limiting the types of jobs, living conditions, and educational opportunities available to indigenous groups and Afro-descendants.

Health disparities are evident in some countries by higher rates of infant mortality, homicide, suicide, and HIV/AIDS among Afro-Latinos than other people in Latin America.[46] The infant mortality rate in the Chocó, a region that is 70% Afro-Colombian, is the highest in Colombia, more than three times higher than the rates in Bogotá. Similarly, in Brazil, the infant mortality rate by race of the mother in 1993 was 37 per 1,000 for whites and 62 per 1,000 for blacks. Figures from Ecuador reveal significantly higher homicide and suicide rates in Esmeraldas, a coastal region that is inhabited by Afro-descendants, than the national average. In Honduras, the Garifuna community of Afro-descendants has a much higher HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (an estimated 8%-10%) than the general population (where the rate is less than

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[43] "In Colombia, Chocó Seeks Prosperity After Fighting," *World Politics Watch*, September 22, 2006; David Bacon, "Blood on the Palms: Afro-Colombians Fight New Plantations," *Dollars & Sense*, July 18, 2007.

[44] "Descendants of Slaves Still Suffer in Brazil," *Reuters*, July 3, 2007; "Justice for Descendants of African Slaves," *Latin America Weekly Report*, August 16, 2007.

[45] Cristina Torres Parodi, "Working to Achieve Health Equity with an Ethnic Perspective," Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), October 2004; Cristina Torres Parodi, "Ethnicity and Health: Another Perspective Towards Equity," PAHO, June 2001.

[46] These statistics were drawn from country statistics cited in two sources. See PAHO, "Health in the Americas," 2002, vol 1; PAHO, "Health and Ethnic Groups," Presentation for Latin American Parliament Meeting in Guatemala, 2004.

2%). In 2002, a household survey in the Dominican Republic found a higher HIV/AIDS rate among Haitians and Dominico-Haitians working in the sugarcane fields (4.9%) than for the general population (1.7%). These figures, though far from exhaustive, illustrate some of the major health challenges facing Afro-descendants in Latin America.

U.S. Policy Considerations

Recent actions and statements by Bush Administration officials have demonstrated that the U.S. government has an interest in improving the condition of Afro-Latinos in Latin America. When President Bush visited Colombia in March 2007, the only civil society groups he met with were members of Afro-Colombian organizations. In a July 2007 interview, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reiterated her interest in supporting African descent populations in Latin America. She maintained that the United States has an interest in supporting multiethnic democracies throughout the region "preserve the belief that you don't have to be of a particular color, or a particular ethnic background or a particular economic status in life in order to progress."[47]

These statements have occurred as Congress has moved to increase assistance to Afro-descendants in Colombia. Congress completed action on FY2008 funding in a Consolidated Appropriations Act, Division J (H.R. 2764) passed the week of December 17, 2007. H.R. 2764 stipulates that up to $15 million in U.S. alternative development assistance to Colombia may be provided to Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities. On July 11, 2007, the House passed H.Res 426 (McGovern), recognizing 2007 as the year of the rights of internally displaced persons (including Afro-Colombians) in Colombia and offering U.S. support to programs that seek to assist and protect them.

People of African descent comprise a significant portion of the population in several Latin American countries, and account for nearly 50% of the region's poor. For many Afro-descendants, endemic poverty is exacerbated by isolation, exclusion, and racial discrimination. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) notes that Afro-Latinos are among the most "invisible" of the excluded groups as they are not well-represented among national political, economic, and educational leadership in the region.[48] They have also been, until recently, absent from many countries' census and socioeconomic data.

Although Afro-descendants have benefitted from general development assistance to the region, they have not, in most cases, received the same degree of attention or targeted funding as indigenous peoples. Afro-descendant communities have suffered human rights abuses, especially in Colombia. They may also be at a

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[47] Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Press Availability, July 9, 2007.

[48] Social exclusion occurs when certain populations are denied the benefits of social and economic development based on their race, gender, ethnicity, or disabilities. See [http://www.iadb.org/sds/soc/site_3094_e.htm].

high-risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Some argue that their demands — for political representation, land rights, jobs, access to health and education programs, and human rights protection — intersect with strategic U.S. goals for the region.

This section outlines several U.S. foreign assistance programs that are already targeting Afro-descendant communities in Latin America. It then discusses how multilateral development banks and regional political institutions, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), entities of which the United States is a member and major funding source, are engaging on this issue. The section includes a brief description of previous legislative activity addressing the concerns of Afro-Latinos, as well as legislation being considered during the 110th Congress. It concludes with a brief discussion of other policy approaches that have been proposed should the United States elect to provide further support for Afro-Latinos.

U.S. Foreign Assistance and Afro-Latinos

Assisting Afro-Latinos has never been a primary U.S. foreign policy objective. However, a number of economic aid agencies that receive U.S. funding have benefitted Afro-descendants and their communities either directly or indirectly. Three of these agencies — USAID, the State Department, and the Peace Corps — are government agencies. One — the Inter-American Foundation — is an independent agency of the U.S. government. The last organization — the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) — is a private foundation funded by the U.S. government. Since many of the programs serving Afro-Latinos are small and relatively new, few independent evaluations exist to evaluate their effectiveness. Unless otherwise noted, sources for the program descriptions contained in this section of the report were compiled from documents provided by the agency or entity in question.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Bilateral economic aid to Latin America is primarily administered by USAID. Under President Bush, U.S. policy towards Latin America is based on three broad objectives — strengthening democracy, encouraging development, and enhancing security. In Latin America, USAID policy is to support efforts to deepen and broaden the participation of all groups, especially those that are poor and marginalized. According to USAID, beneficiaries of its programs in the region include indigenous populations and Afro-Latinos. In some countries these groups have faced legal or official discrimination in employment, access to health and education programs, and property rights. In Colombia, they have suffered from human rights abuses as a result of an ongoing armed conflict. To address these issues, USAID has reached out to indigenous and Afro-Latino populations, both through targeted programs and through broad efforts to support marginalized populations. Among USAID's recent programs targeting Afro-Latinos are the following:

Regional Programs. USAID supports Afro-Latinos through an agreement with the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights (IIDH). IIDH is completing applied research on the ease of access and level of participation in political-electoral processes by Afro-Colombians and Afro-Panamanians. IIDH has also recently completed an activity to help the Afro-Panamanian movement set its "Strategic Advocacy Plan" and influenced both the enactment of a law prohibiting workplace

discrimination in Panama and the creation of a special commission to develop government policy for the full inclusion of Afro-Panamanians.

Programs Benefiting Afro-Colombians. USAID/Colombia supports Afro-Colombians and their communities through six programs. Those programs include alternative development, local governance, administration of justice, human rights, peace initiatives, and support for internally displaced persons. USAID's alternative development programs include an agriculture program that has taught approximately 6,900 Afro-Colombian families (34,000 individuals) viable alternatives to illegal drug production. USAID also completed a sustainable forestry project in 2005 benefitted an additional 18,000 Afro-Colombians. According to USAID, its governance programs have trained an estimated 60,000 Afro-Colombians to strengthen citizen participation in local governments. USAID assisted with the creation of the National Association of Mayors of Municipalities with Afro-descendant Populations (AMUNAFRO). Afro-Colombian leaders have complained, however, that USAID and other development agencies have not always sought Afro-Colombian participation in project formation and implementation. USAID has created "justice houses" in five departments to provide access to government services and conciliation services. In 2006, 77,000 Afro-Colombians used the services of the justice houses. USAID asserts that its assistance to displaced persons has benefitted over 650,000 Afro-Colombians.

USAID also funds technical assistance for the continued development of a Colombian Black Caucus within the Colombian legislature through its political party strengthening program. On October 26, 2006, the Colombian Black Caucus was officially launched, at which time it presented its legislative priorities. USAID also supported the drafting of an Anti-Discrimination Statute, which is part of a proposed Equal Statutory Law.

Programs Benefiting Afro-Ecuadorians. USAID has designated funding to support the development of water and sewage systems in marginalized Afro-Ecuadorian communities along the country's northern border with Colombia. The program has benefitted more than 51,000 individuals. USAID funds have also built bridges in Esmeraldas and in Imbabura, two provinces with significant Afro-descendant populations, which have benefitted roughly 23,692 and 2,400 individuals respectively. USAID is currently providing $25,000 to support training of a core group of 40 Afro-Ecuadorian human rights promoters and the establishment of a network of Afro-Ecuadorian community advocates. It has also supported agricultural training and small grants programs that have benefitted some 1,799 Afro-Ecuadorians.

U.S. Department of State. In FY2005, the State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affair's Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (WHA/PDA) began to implement outreach programs aimed at empowering Afro-Latinos and other marginalized youth. Many of these programs have been administered by the Public Affairs Sections of U.S. embassies in different countries throughout Latin America. In early 2007, for example, WHA/PDA began a two-year program to provide Afro-Latino and indigenous secondary school students two years of English training, college preparation tools, and advising in order to help them pursue higher education opportunities. The U.S. Embassy in Colombia is providing

support to 87 Afro-Colombian university students for English language courses, leadership training, and advising on possible graduate study and scholarship opportunities in the United States.

Inter-American Foundation (IAF). The Inter-American Foundation is a small federal agency that provides approximately 60 new grants each year to non-profit and community-based programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The grants are awarded to organizations that promote entrepreneurship, self-reliance, and economic progress for the poor. The estimated appropriation for the IAF in FY2008 is for $21 million.[49]

Since the mid-1990s, the IAF has been working to raise awareness of the issues facing Afro-descendants, a group that has long benefitted from its grassroots development programs. In FY2007, the IAF funded 9 grants totaling $1.5 million to organizations working in Afro-Latino communities in Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Some of this funding will break new ground by assisting communities new to the IAF: Nicaraguan and Guatemalan Garifuna communities and Haitians and Dominico-Haitians living near abandoned *bateyes* (small communities bordering sugar mills) in the Dominican Republic. In addition to its grant work, the IAF has represented the U.S. government in a number of regional and international groups and forums in which Afro-descendant issues have been discussed. In 1999, the IAF became a founding member of the Inter-American Dialogue's Inter-Agency Consultation (IAC) on Race Relations in Latin America.

Peace Corps. The Peace Corps sends U.S. volunteers to developing countries to provide technical aid and to promote mutual understanding on a people-to-people basis. The FY2007 estimated appropriation for the Peace Corps in Latin America was $44.8 million. Peace Corps volunteers are currently working in several countries in the region that have significant Afro-Latino populations. Those countries include the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Ecuador. Peace Corps/Dominican Republic says that 100% of its 176 volunteers are working with Afro-descendant populations, including 20 volunteers working on basic healthcare and HIV/AIDS prevention work in bateyes, which are among the poorest areas in the country. The vast majority of the beneficiaries in those communities (90%) are of Haitian/African descent. Peace Corps/Ecuador reports that 20 of its 151 volunteers are working with Afro-Ecuadorians in activities related to life skills development (including self-esteem, leadership, and job skills), income generation activities, water and sanitation, and HIV/AIDS prevention and education.

National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), funded by Congress since 1983, plans and administers grants to promote pluralism and democratic governance in more than 90 countries around the world. The primary focus of these organizations is to foster participation of citizens in their national political systems. Between FY2002 and FY2007, NED provided close to $1.5 million in grants to organizations working with Afro-Latinos in Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, and Peru. Two of its largest grantees have been the

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[49] This total may change as a result of an across the board rescission of 0.81%.

Association of Youth Groups Freedom, which supports Afro-Colombian citizen participation in local and national politics, and the League of Displaced Women, which supports training and leadership programs for displaced Afro-Colombian and indigenous women. Since FY2005, NED has also provided some $297,066 to support AfroAmerica XXI, an organization based in Colombia that helps promote the political participation of Afro-Latino organizations throughout the region.

Multilateral Development Banks and Afro-Latinos

In addition to its bilateral aid, the United States is a member and the major funding source of the multilateral development banks that work in Latin America — the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The World Bank and the IDB have both funded a number of projects benefiting Afro-descendants in Latin America.

World Bank. Since 2001, the World Bank has sought to assist Afro-descendants in Latin America through both its lending and non-lending operations. In terms of strategy, the Bank's Country Assistance Strategies for Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, and Uruguay have added a special focus on Afro-descendants. With respect to operations, the number of World Bank programs targeting Afro-descendants increased from five programs between 1997 and 2000 to 23 programs between 2000 and 2005.

World Bank operations targeting Afro-descendants include a wide range of activities. The World Bank has supported efforts to incorporate race/ethnicity variables into national censuses. To date, all countries in the region except Venezuela include a self-identification question in their national censuses. In February 2006, the World Bank released reports on the socioeconomic situation of Afro-Latinos in Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Honduras. The Bank has funded Afro-descendant civil society groups in different countries and co-sponsored conferences bringing together leaders of the Afro-descendant community from across the region, including a February 2006 conference held in Washington D.C.

Inter-American Development Bank. In 1996, the IDB undertook the first comprehensive assessment of the situation of Afro-descendants in Latin America. Since that time, the IDB has focused on combating poverty and social exclusion in Afro-Latinos communities. In addition to its membership in the Inter-Agency Committee on Race Relations in Latin America, the IDB formed a Working Group and a High Level Steering Committee on Social Inclusion in 2000. The IDB's broad social inclusion program includes indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, persons with disabilities, poor women, and people with HIV/AIDS. With respect to exclusion based on race and ethnicity, the IDB has pledged to increase capacity-building within the bank and in the region, to support research on this topic, and to expand projects focused on Afro-descendants and indigenous groups. In 2004, the IDB published a book on Social Inclusion and Economic Development in Latin America.[50] It has also provided training, travel grants, and best practices rewards to

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[50] Mayra Buvinic and Jacqueline Mazza, eds., *Social Inclusion and Economic Development* (continued...)

non-governmental organizations working with Afro-descendants throughout the region.

The IDB has also supported country-level projects in Brazil, Ecuador, and Nicaragua, among others, as well as regional projects related to census participation, education, and health care. Some recent examples of IDB operations supporting Afro-Colombians include a $35 million loan to improve local capacity to deliver basic services to communities in the Pacific Coast region, as well as a $70,000 grant to support the development and implementation of an affirmative action policy for Afro-Colombians. The Multilateral Investment Fund of the IDB has approved a $1.4 million grant to increase indigenous and Afro-descendant communities' involvement in Honduras' expanding tourism industry.

In February 2003, the IDB launched a Social Inclusion Trust Fund (SITF), which is being funded by initial investments by the governments of Norway and Great Britain, to support small-scale initiatives to promote social inclusion. In its first three years in operation, the SITF approved 26 projects, totaling $1.4 million. The SITF has financed small projects in direct support of Afro-descendants, including $80,000 to support the Afro-Brazilian Observatory, a research center devoted to gathering socioeconomic data on Brazil's black population, and $55,000 to support the dissemination of information on the situation of Afro-Uruguayans. The SITF has also helped incorporate social inclusion components into at least six major IDB projects, as well as several country strategies and policies, and supported awareness-raising initiatives, media, and outreach campaigns. In April 2005, the SITF supported the participation of several Afro-descendant leaders and public policy agencies working with Afro-descendant communities in a regional conference on affirmative action held in Brazil.

International Organizations, Conferences, and Afro-Latinos

The United Nations (U.N.) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination entered into force in 1969. The United States, along with all the Spanish- and Portuguese- speaking countries in Latin America, are parties to this convention. As signatories, these countries have agreed to condemn racial discrimination and undertake all appropriate means necessary to eliminate it in all of its forms.

Organization of American States. Hemispheric leaders reiterated a commitment to ending poverty and discrimination at Summit of the Americas meetings held in Santiago (1998), Quebec (2001), and Monterrey (2004). In 2003, Brazil proposed a resolution requesting that the Organization of American States (OAS), a political body of Western Hemisphere countries, draft an Inter-American Convention for the Prevention of Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. As a followup to this resolution, the OAS commissioned a report by the Justice Studies Center of the Americas, completed in March 2004, on the judicial

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[50] (...continued)
in Latin America (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank/Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

systems and racism against Afro-descendants in several countries in the region.[51] Several cases involving Afro-descendants and their communities have been resolved or are pending before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR) and the Inter-American Court. In February 2005, the IAHCR created a Special Rapporteur on the Rights of People of African descent and racial discrimination. The OAS, under the leadership of the Brazilian Mission to the OAS, is currently negotiating a draft text of the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention of Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.

Inter-Agency Consultation on Race in Latin America (IAC). In 2000, the Inter-American Dialogue founded the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race in Latin America (IAC), a consultative group of international development institutions that meets regularly to address issues of race, discrimination, and social exclusion facing Afro-descendants in Latin America. The IAC is comprised of representatives from the British Department for International Development, World Bank, IDB, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), OAS Commission on Human Rights, Inter-American Foundation, and Ford Foundation. Its mission is to encourage the hemisphere's policy-makers, including the U.S. government, as well as the international development agencies, to address issues of race and discrimination when designing and implementing programs. The IAC has, in consultation with academics and Afro-descendant advocacy and research groups in Latin America, sponsored a number of forums and conferences to increase the visibility of Afro-descendants and their communities.

Impact of Durban and Regional Conferences. In 2001, the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa increased regional interest in the challenges of Afro-Latinos. After a national dialogue on race leading up to its participation in the conference, the Brazilian government reportedly admitted for the first time that racial prejudice and discrimination were serious problems that Brazil had to overcome.[52] In 2003, Brazil hosted the first meeting of Afro-descendant legislators in the Americas. The resulting "Brasilia Declaration" outlined concrete regional and national goals for advancing Afro-Latino concerns, and set forth the framework used to organize a second meeting of Afro-Latino legislators in Bogotá, Colombia, in May 2004. Legislators, including Members of the U.S. Congress, met for a third time in Costa Rica in August 2005. They and other Afro-Latino leaders are preparing to assess progress in advancing Afro-Latinos rights that has been made since the regional meeting to prepare for the Durban conference was held in Santiago in 2000. A "Santiago + 5" meeting was also held in May 2006 in Brazil.

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[51] Justice Studies Center of the Americas, "The Judicial System and Racism Against People of African Descent," Santiago, Chile, March 2004.

[52] Some have argued that two byproducts of Brazil's active participation in the Durban Conference and subsequent regional meetings on Afro-descendants have been its recent adoption of affirmative action programs, and legislation that requires schools to teach Afro-Brazilian history. See Htun, 2004.

Prior Legislative Activity

Congress has expressed some concern in recent years about the status of Afro-Latinos in Latin America. In the 107th Congress, the House Appropriations Committee report to the FY2003 Foreign Operations Bill (H.R. 5410, H.Rept. 107-663) included a section acknowledging the human rights violations suffered by Afro-Colombians, and urging USAID to increase funding on their behalf.

In the 108th Congress, one bill and two resolutions concerning Afro-Latinos were introduced in the House, but no action was taken on any of these initiatives. In November 2003, Congressman Menendez proposed a bill, H.R. 3447, the Social Investment Fund for the Americas Act of 2003, that would have provided assistance to reduce poverty and increase economic opportunity to the countries of the Western Hemisphere. The Social Investment Fund would seek to combat poverty and the exclusion of marginalized populations by targeting assistance to people of African descent, indigenous groups, women, and people with disabilities. It would have authorized the appropriation of $250 million to USAID and to the IDB respectively for each of the fiscal years 2005 through 2009.

In February 2004, Congressman Rangel introduced a resolution, H.Con.Res. 47, recommending that the United States and the international community promote research, development programs, and advocacy efforts focused on improving the situation of Afro-descendant communities in the region. In July 2004, Congressman Meeks submitted another resolution, H.Con.Res. 482, urging the United States government to work with the governments of Latin America, as well as the rest of the international community, to promote the visibility of Afro-descendants and to support efforts to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Legislation in the 109th Congress. On July 18, 2005 the House passed H.Con.Res. 175, recognizing the injustices suffered by African descendants of the transatlantic slave trade in all of the Americas and recommending that the United States and the international community work to improve the situation of Afro-descendant communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. On July 20, 2005, a companion resolution was referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations after being received by the House.

Some Members of Congress also expressed specific concerns about the situation of Afro-Colombians affected by the conflict in Colombia. Legislation was introduced — H.R. 4886 (McGovern) the Colombian Temporary Protected Status Act of 2006 — that would have made Colombian nationals, including Afro-Colombians affected by the country's ongoing conflict — eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Another resolution, H.Res. 822 (McCollum), was introduced recognizing the efforts of Afro-Colombian and other peace-building communities in Colombia and urging the Secretary of State to monitor acts of violence committed against them.

Legislation in the 110th Congress

In the 110th Congress, there are several bills with provisions related to Afro-Latinos. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY2008 (H.R. 2764/P.L. 110-161), requires the State Department to certify that the Colombian military is not violating the land and property rights of Afro-Colombians or the indigenous. It also prohibits the use of Andean Counterdrug funds for investment in oil palm development if it causes displacement or environmental damage (as it has in many Afro-Colombian communities). In the explanatory statement to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, the conferees stipulate that up to $15 million in alternative development assistance to Colombia may be provided to Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities.

On July 11, 2007, the House passed H.Res 426 (McGovern), recognizing 2007 as the year of the rights of internally displaced persons (including Afro-Colombians) in Colombia and offering U.S. support to programs that seek to assist and protect them. Another resolution, H.Res. 618 (Payne), recognizing the importance of addressing the plight of Afro-Colombians, was introduced on August 3, 2007.

In addition to considering this and other legislation with provisions related to Afro-Latinos, the 110th Congress may discuss the situation of Afro-Colombians during its consideration of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

Possible Options for Support for Afro-Latinos

In general, U.S. foreign aid has not addressed Afro-Latinos as a unique and specific category of beneficiaries aside from the unique case of Afro-Colombians. Afro-Latinos are not treated in the aid program the way "women in development" are — that is, as a group requiring special attention, including the need to enumerate those served in order to demonstrate and encourage progress. Rather, insofar as Afro-Latinos comprise a large proportion of the poor in Latin America, they are helped by the general assistance programs that serve the poor. Additionally, some U.S. agencies have, to the extent possible, developed interventions specific to the needs of certain Afro-descendant communities.

Some assert that the United States has an interest in increasing assistance to Afro-Latinos and delineating a clearer policy to address their needs. These analysts argue that Afro-Latinos have a set of problems specific to their situation that economic assistance is not yet adequately addressing. Three examples they point to include the dearth of data on the socioeconomic situation of Afro-descendants, the limited support given to Afro-Latino community organizations, and the precarious nature of the land titles held (and still being sought) by Afro-descendant communities.

Proponents of expanded assistance to Afro-Latinos emphasize the need for the United States to support or encourage Latin American governments' efforts to collect better data on race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. These proponents also are likely to support legislative initiatives targeting aid to Afro-Latinos and their communities, especially capacity-building programs for Afro-Latino community organizations. They believe that it is important to encourage USAID and other

development institutions to include Afro-Latinos in the process of designing and implementing local programs. Finally, advocates of increased support for Afro-Latinos assert that it is important to sponsor exchanges between Afro-descendant leaders, organizers, and elected officials and interested groups in the United States.

In addition to increasing bilateral aid programs targeting Afro-Latinos, some argue that the United States could take a more active role in multilateral initiatives on behalf of Afro-Latinos. For example, the United States government could contribute (as Norway and Great Britain have) to the IDB's Social Inclusion Fund for the Americas. Or the U.S. government might decide to support the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention of Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance currently being drafted by the OAS.

Others question whether increasing assistance to Afro-Latinos is feasible at a time when limited development assistance is being allocated to Latin America. They point out that Afro-Latinos are already benefiting from development assistance programs. Targeting further assistance to Afro-Latinos through earmarks or other means might force USAID and other agencies to cut funding for other needy groups. It may also increase the regulatory burden on development agencies by forcing them to gather statistics on a new subgroup that is, for reasons outlined in the section on identity in Latin America, sometimes difficult to delineate. Finally, they argue that mandating the inclusion of Afro-Latinos in Peace Corps, IAF, or Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) portfolios for a country may go against the priorities outlined by the agency or the country in question.

Still others caution that race is a sensitive issue for many countries in Latin America, and that the United States should proceed with caution when approaching this issue. Notions of race and national identity vary widely between the United States and Latin America, and within the countries of the region. Some maintain that it would be inappropriate for the United States to attempt to impose its views and policies with respect to race on other sovereign nations.

Figure 1. Afro-Latinos as a Percentage of Total Country Population

Source: Statistical data provided by Inter-American Dialogue Race Report, January 2003. Map Resources. Adapted by CRS. (K.Yancey 10/18/04).