**Category: Obligations Relating to Those in Vulnerable Situations**

**Sub-Category: Minorities and Low-Income Populations**

**Name of Good Practice: Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations**

Key Words: Environmental Justice, Vulnerable

Implementing Actors: National Ministry: US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); various Federal agencies

Location: United States, Puerto Rico, Mariana Islands

Description: The purpose of Executive Order 12898 is to focus federal attention on the environmental and human health effects of federal actions, especially on members of minority and low-income groups, as well as on indigenous peoples, with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities. The Executive Order requires federal agencies to identify and address any potentially high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies and activities on members of minority or low-income populations. Additionally, each major federal agency has a working group on environmental justice that provides guidance for that agency and coordination with other agencies. Specifically, the EPA’s Environmental Justice Permitting Initiative aims to develop tools to enable members of overburdened communities to have full and meaningful access to the EPA permitting process.

The EPA has also developed Environmental Justice Access Plans that set out measurable commitments that address the Agency’s national environmental justice priorities as established by environmental justice advocates. The EPA has also instituted “Plan EJ 2014,” a roadmap to help the EPA further integrate environmental justice into the EPA’s programs, policies and activities. By engaging with environmental justice advocates and communities through community research and open dialogue, the EPA attempts to ensure public participation in integrating environmental justice into their day-to-day work and decision-making. In 2013 and 2014, the EPA issued annual reports toward meeting the commitments outlined in Plan EJ 2014. The 2013 progress report found that the EPA had made significant progress in achieving the goals laid out in Plan EJ 2014, and set additional objectives for 2014. The 2014 report found that the EPA had completed these additional objectives, and laid out further steps for integrating Environmental Justice in light of the growing threat of climate change under President Barack Obama’s Climate Action Plan. These reports are available for review on the EPA’s website at <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/plan-ej/index.html>.

Further Information: EPA’s environmental justice webpage: [www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice](http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice); Website for the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice: [www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/interagency/#overview](http://www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/interagency/#overview).