



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Farm and
Foreign
Agricultural
Services

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

1400
Independence
Ave, SW
Stop 1064
Washington, DC
20250-1064



TO: All Employees

FROM: Phil Karsting
Administrator
Foreign Agricultural Service

DATE: April 7, 2014

SUBJECT: Civil Rights and Diversity Policy Statement

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is fully committed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's civil rights and equal opportunity goals in all programs and services, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, marital or familial status, political beliefs, parental status, receipt of public assistance, genetic information, or retaliation for participating in equal employment opportunity activity.

As the Administrator of FAS, I strongly support Civil Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Diversity and Inclusion, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), and the Secretary's Cultural Transformation initiatives. I steadfastly acknowledge that FAS's most valuable asset is its diverse and multi-talented workforce. As such, in order to realize our vision of a modern workforce working in a modern workplace, FAS must become a model agency of tolerance and inclusion. Managers, supervisors, and employees must work together to reflect our commitment to ensuring equal opportunity. All FAS staff will be held accountable for their conduct and performance as public servants; we will have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or reprisal.

In addition, FAS is committed to the use of ADR (mediation) as a management tool to resolve disputes at an early stage, in an expeditious, cost effective, and mutually acceptable manner. Mediation gives parties the opportunity to discuss the issues raised in a complaint, clear up misunderstandings, find areas of agreement; and, incorporate those areas of agreement into a final resolution of the complaint.

We all share in the responsibility of promoting equal access to the workplace and our programs and services. Any employee who believes that his or her rights have been violated is encouraged to contact the FAS Office of Civil Rights at Phone: (202) 720-7233, or TTY: (202) 720-1228 within 45 (forty-five) calendar days of the alleged discriminatory event to begin the complaint process.