

December 20, 2012

Dr. Jim Yong Kim
President
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433

Dear Dr. Kim,

We welcome the long-awaited review and update of the World Bank safeguard policies currently being undertaken. With the attached paper, we take the opportunity to share with you our views on the scope, substance and process of the upcoming review and offer our initial recommendations on how these policies may be improved.

By preventing or mitigating social and environmental harm, the safeguards are critical to the World Bank's core mandate of alleviating poverty and reducing inequality. However, many provisions of the existing safeguards should be updated to reflect international law, current knowledge, and methodological innovations that would better protect people, their rights, and the environment. In this paper, we have outlined the ways in which the safeguards should be revised to better serve the Bank's commitment to poverty alleviation and deliver sustainable development results.

It is also the case that the current implementation procedures, incentives and policy structures contain significant weaknesses, as pointed out by Inspection Panel reports, Independent Evaluation Group reports and specific policy reviews undertaken by the Bank. We address in the paper ways in which the implementation of safeguards can be improved to better ensure that intended outcomes are reached.

We stress that the architecture of the safeguards should be addressed in this review, and caution that the model of the International Finance Corporation, which is over-reliant on self-reporting and self-policing by private sector clients, has not been proven to protect people, their rights, and the environment, and does not provide a useful model for lending to the public sector. Similarly, the recent Investment Lending Reform process, which moved many previously binding requirements to guidance, has caused serious concerns.

Additionally, it is essential in our view that the safeguard review and update process be mandated to review the application of safeguard policy and procedural requirements and principles across all parts of the World Bank portfolio. Consistent and uniformly effective standards across all lending instruments are required to provide certainty to borrowers and to the people affected by Bank-financed actions. The World Bank has so far indicated its intention to only look at 'safeguard' policies related to the Investment Lending instrument in the current review, despite this limitation not being imposed by the Approach Paper for the review. This would be a serious missed opportunity. We urge you to instruct the safeguard review team to include in their work consideration of how uniform safeguard standards and policies would be implemented in each of the operations and instruments employed by the Bank.

Further, it is imperative that the Bank ensures a transparent, effective, and inclusive consultation process on the review, which is sensitive and responsive to communities impacted by World Bank operations. We note that there were significant problems associated with the Bank's initial consultations on the safeguard review, including inadequate advance notice of meetings, limited opportunity to provide input, and lack of accessibility to all interested stakeholders. We urge that future consultations follow the recommendations found in the attached paper.

We are encouraged by your recent statement made at the CSO Town Hall Meeting in Tokyo, expressing your commitment not to dilute the safeguards. Given the fundamental importance of safeguards in helping countries develop in a sustainable manner, we believe that the review provides a critical opportunity to strengthen the Bank's development model. The Bank should strive to be a standard-setter among development institutions, and this review provides an opportunity to lead a race to the top in establishing strong and effective safeguards. Many of our organizations have worked constructively with the Bank on safeguards issues in the past, and we look forward to working with you to achieve a successful review and update of the safeguard policies.

Sincerely,

Endorsing Organizations

CC: Paul Bermingham, Director, Operations Policy and Country Services

Rachel Kyte, Vice President and Network Head, Sustainable Development

This letter has been endorsed by the following organizations:

11.11.11 - Coalition of the Flemish North-South Movement
Accountability Counsel
ActionAid International
African Rivers Network (ARN)
Al Khashaba Foundation
Alternative ASEAN Forum on Burma (Altsean-Burma)
Alternative Development for Burma
Alyansa Tigil Mina, Philippines
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
Another Development for Burma (ADfB)
Arakan Human Rights and Development Organisation (AHRDO)
Articulação Pacari - plantas medicinais do Cerrado, Brasil
Asociacion Ambiente y Sociedad, Colombia
Asociacion ANDES
Asociacion de Comunidades del Parque de la Papa
Back Pack Health Worker Team
Bank Information Center

Bedar- har-Moe Civil Society Organization, Myanmar
Bedar Rural Development Programme, Myanmar
Beyond Copenhagen Collective, India
Bretton Woods Project
Bureau on Human Rights and Rule of Law
Burma Partnership
Call of the Earth Group on Intellectual Commons
Campaign for Climate Justice, Nepal (CCJN)
Carbon Market Watch
Center for Environmental Justice/Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka
Center for Human Rights and Development (CHRD), Mongolia
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
Center for Introduction of New Environmentally Safe Technologies, Kazakhstan
Center of Concern
Centre for Research and Advocacy, Manipur, India
Centre national de coopération au développement, CNCD-11.11.11
Committee on the Protection of Natural Resources in Manipur, India
Community Development Cambodia
Community Management Center, Myanmar
Community Response Group (ComReG) , Myanmar
Conflict Risk Network
Crude Accountability
Dawei Development Association, Myanmar
Department of Ecology, Institute for Tropical Biology, Vietnam
Disabled People's International (DPI)
EarthRights International (ERI)
ECOA, Brasil
EcoDoc Africa
Ecosistemas – Chile
Environmental Investigation Agency US
Equitable Cambodia
Ethnic Human Rights Network
Forest Peoples Programme
Forum for Democracy in Burma (FDB)
Forum of Dialogue and Partnership for Development (FDPD)
Friends of the Earth Japan
Fundación para la defensa del ambiente, Argentina (FUNAM)
Fundar, Center of Analysis and Research, Mexico
GegenStroemung - CounterCurrent
Gender Action
Generation Wave, Myanmar
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA)
Global Community Rights Framework Initiative
Global Witness
Global-Local Links Project
Golden Generation, Myanmar
Green Future, Myanmar
Green ID (Innovation for Development), Vietnam

Green Network, Myanmar
Greenpeace
Halifax Initiative, Ottawa, Canada
Helping Hands Donation Group, Myanmar
HuMA Foundation, Indonesia
Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB)
Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
Human Rights Law Centre
Human Rights Trainer & Defender Team, Myanmar
Human Rights Watch
Humanitywatch
Inclusive Development International
Indigenous Peoples' Biocultural Climate Change Assessment Initiative (IPCCA)
Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity Network (IPBN)
Institute for Asian Democracy
Institute for Democracy and Sustainability, India
Institute for Essential Services Reform, Indonesia
International Accountability Project
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International
International Rivers
International-Lawyers.Org
Kachin Peace Network, Myanmar
Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN)
Kenouz Sinai for Economical Development and Environmental Protection
Kyauktan Saving Group, Myanmar
La Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD)
London Mining Network
Lumiere Synergie Developpement
Machimar Adhikar Sangharsh Sangathan, India
Mae Tao Clinic
Manthan Adhyayan Kendra, India
Myanmar – China Pipeline Watch Committee
Myanmar CSO-IFI-Watch Group
Myanmar Green Network
Myanmar Youths Empowerment Program
Myita Yardanar, Myanmar
Nadi Chindwin Myit Min Thalar (Mon Ywa), Myanmar
National Association of Environmentalists (NAPE)
Natural Justice: Lawyers for Communities and the Environment
Network for Environment and Economic Development (NEED-Burma)
NGO Forum on Cambodia
North East Peoples Alliance, India
Odisha Chas Parivesh Suraksha Parishad, India
Online Knowledge Society
Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña (OFRANEH)
OT Watch, Mongolia
Oxfam International
Pacific Environment

Padonma Youth, Myanmar
Peace Network, Myanmar
Public Governance Research Center
Radiant of Social Care Alliance , Myanmar
Red Jurídica Amazónica - RAMA
Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT, Cambodia)
Sakhalin Environment Watch
Sein Lan Pwin Oo Lwin, Myanmar
Sein Yaung So, Myanmar
Shelter
Shwe Gas Movement (SGM)
Shwebo Shwe Chintae Social Service Group, Myanmar
Social Justice Committee of Montreal (SJC-CJS)
South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People
Spectrum, Myanmar
Spirit of Youth for Environmental Services Association Egypt
Student Christian Movement, Myanmar
Students and Youth Congress of Burma (SYCB)
Takagi Fund for Citizen Science
Taza Tabigat (Clean Environment)
Thazin Development Foundation, Myanmar
The Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR)
Transparency International - USA
Uganda Network on Toxic Free Malaria Control (UNETMAC)
Ulu Foundation
United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN)
Urgewald
US Campaign for Burma
Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment, Bangladesh
Volunteers Trainer Team, Myanmar
WISE Foundation, Thailand
Worldview - The Gambia
Yangon People Honorary Network
Yang Chi Oo Workers Association (YCOWA)
Youth Doctors, Myanmar