

Mr. James D. Wolfensohn
President
World Bank Group
1818 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20433

Dear Mr. Wolfensohn:

Striking a Better Balance: the Extractive Industries Review (the final report) is a bold statement coming at a time in the life of the global community when a dramatic shift in “business as usual” is urgently needed and social, economic, and environmental priorities must be re-visioned. As Dr. Emil Salim stated in his letter to you on January 12, 2004, “it is important to keep in mind that sustainable development is a global issue, with the dimension of justice as well as the dimension of sustaining Earth's carrying capacity.” Your initiation of the Review in 2000 has ultimately led to the presentation of a profoundly important document by Dr. Emil Salim and his team. We agree with your comment in the World Bank Group's news release of January 23, 2004, that the Report created “a transparent, independent, and inclusive process” that “raised awareness regarding the extent and nature of our (World Bank) operations.” The report meets the overall objective that you set forth in 2000 -- to “evaluate the World Bank's achievement of poverty alleviation through sustainable development.”

We write to you as people of faith. We have listened to the stories of our sisters and brothers in country after country and some of us have witnessed personally the consequences of misguided World Bank Group projects, programs, and activities upon peoples and the environment. The EIR Report reflects what has been known at a grassroots level in the field for years.

We respectfully remind you, once again, of the moral imperatives rooted in our religious traditions, that to be just, economic policy and programs must: 1) respect and enhance human dignity, gender equity and the integrity of creation; 2) be flexibly designed and implemented with the consent of the people expressed through authentically participatory and democratic processes; 3) and be held accountable to international human rights standards and treaties. Tragically, economic policies and actions supported by appeals to inevitability, efficiency and aggregate growth often have had the effect of serving the interests of the wealthy and powerful at the expense of ordinary people.

We urge you to adopt the Report's recommendations as an integrated whole. The recommendations are derived from skilled research and field study and reflect the sound judgment of a partnership of stakeholders, most especially of the poor. We hold the World Bank Group as a global financial institution accountable for serving the common good, alleviating poverty and preserving the natural environment. Your decisions will profoundly impact the “Earth's carrying capacity” for the peoples of today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,

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