



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

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June 30, 2004

Mr. Peter Woicke
Executive Vice President
International Finance Corporation
2121 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20433

2004 JUL 16 PM 11:09

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Dear Mr. Woicke,

Re: IFC Policy Review

I am writing to you from the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI's), an international NGO committed to the practical realisation of human rights throughout the member states of the Commonwealth.

We were recently informed of your upcoming review process to update and revise the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) disclosure policy, environmental and social policies, and over 70 technical pollution standards. We hope that the process will be participatory and that you will consider the concerns of civil society organizations around the globe.

With the globalisation of the world economy and the rapid industrialization of many developing nations, the one constant in the business economy seems to be change. The IFC has been at the forefront of many of these developments. As such, the IFC should also be at the forefront of implementing responsible policies concerning developing nations.

Specifically, we wish to express our hope that review process will result in a new rights-based approach to development. This approach should give priority to the recognition and protection of human rights, including labour rights, the rights of indigenous peoples and women's rights as well as community-based rights to be fully informed and offer consent to development projects and to benefit directly from, and be an equal partner in, the monitoring and oversight of projects. These rights should set the framework for all of the IFC's safeguard policies and requirements of its clients. We have enclosed a copy of CHRI's Millennium Report, *Human Rights and Poverty Eradication: A Talisman for the Commonwealth*; Chapter 3 discusses the rights-based approach to poverty eradication in detail.

Notably, in addition to our general human rights mandate, CHRI also works specifically on promoting the right to information. In this context, we welcome the IFC's decision to review its disclosure policy. At a

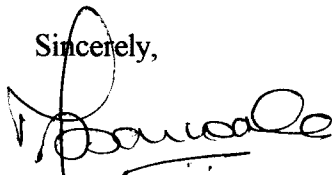
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general level, CHRI urges the IFC to formally recognise in all of its documentation the importance of participation from the public in the activities of the IFC and the organisations it sponsors.. Agreements with national governments are not sufficient. In any democratic society, the citizens must be active participants.

Transparency in business dealings and accountability of the IFC and the private companies it supports should be the hallmarks of the IFC's disclosure policy. The principle of maximum disclosure, already explicitly incorporated into many national access to information laws as well as the UNDP's disclosure policy, should underpin the IFC's approach to information disclosure. We have enclosed a copy of our 2003 Report, *Open Sesame: Looking for the Right to Information in the Commonwealth*, for your information. This Report discusses the principles of the right to information in detail. We hope that you will consider it when reviewing the IFC's disclosure policy.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ms Charmaine Rodrigues, who leads CHRI's Right to Information Programme on charmaine@humanrightsinitiative.org or me on maja@humanrightsinitiative.org, should you wish to clarify anything in this letter or if we can offer any assistance.

Sincerely,



Maja Daruwala

Enclosure (2)