

Ms. Ann Quon
Acting Director, Office of External Relations
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City
1550 Metro Manila, Philippines

November 18, 2009

Dear Ms. Quon,

We write to you in connection with the upcoming review of the ADB Public Communications Policy (PCP) pursuant to paragraph 166 thereof. In anticipation of the official review process, the NGO Forum on the ADB, in cooperation with the Global Transparency Initiative, has undertaken a number of preparatory consultations on the PCP with Forum partners in Asia-Pacific. In these consultations, affected communities and groups working on ADB programs and projects have voiced serious concerns relating to a number of fundamental provisions of the PCP as well as its implementation. We expect to deepen our consultations, with a number of regional meetings on the PCP scheduled to take place in the coming months.

We are keenly interested in actively participating in the official review process. However, it is important that ADB assures us at this point that the review will be conducted in a truly transparent and participatory manner, and that ADB shall seriously take into account the concerns we will raise.

More specifically, ADB should give express commitment that:

1. ADB recognizes that affected communities are primary stakeholders in the review;
2. ADB recognizes that the people have a right to information held by ADB;
3. The review will include extensive consultation and thorough examination of the PCP provisions on (a) access to information by affected people, (b) exceptions, and (c) appeals mechanism; and,
4. The review will include an assessment of PCP compliance monitoring as well as resources for PCP and their allocation.

We also hope that the review process will recognize the need to expand the areas for mandatory disclosure to include new areas of critical public interest, such as carbon accounting, and clarify a mechanism for the harmonization of other bank policies with the updated PCP that will result from the review.

To ensure maximum engagement by interested groups, we urge the ADB to open the process of formulating and deciding the consultation agenda and its methodology, the timeline of the review process, and the determination of participants and venue for the consultations.

The granting of these pre-consultation requests will help build confidence and enhance the quality of participation in the review process, consistent with the PCP mandate to actively engage interested individuals and organizations in the review.

Thank you very much, and we hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

NGO Forum on the ADB

Global Transparency Initiative

Red Constantino

Nepomuceno Malaluan