

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **ADB President Disappoints Civil Society Organizations**

"We're very upset! Kuroda did not answer our questions concretely and categorically," said Princess Nemenzo, International Convener of the NGO Forum on ADB, during the meeting with the ADB president.

Civil society organizations from all over Asia and Pacific region were once again disappointed with the ADB president for completely evading the issues on corruption, mismanagement, and social and environmental destructions connected to the Bank's funded projects. He only gave them his usual rhetorical statements that ADB is preventing corruption, promoting transparency and people's participation, and is really concerned in reducing poverty incidence in the Asia and Pacific Region.

"ADB only consulted 37 unknown people for the Melamchi Project. NGOs and the local communities who are against the project were never consulted." Gopal Siwakoti "Chintan" of WAFED-Nepal said during NGO Forum on ADB's press conference. "The president did not respond to calls by local communities for better and cheaper alternatives to expensive projects," he added.

Civil society organizations are pointing out to ADB's non-implementation of its Safeguard Policies resulting to displacement of communities and environmental destruction. But the Bank's president did not answer these. "The Safeguard Policies should not be made flexible but mandatory. Lest, it would have great negative impact on poor communities," said Mishka Zaman of Bank Information Center (BIC).

Bruce Rich of the Environmental Defense Fund-USA also said that there is a wide disconnect between the minds of the management of ADB and the affected communities. "Project after project, ADB does not address the concerns in the ground. The president keeps on saying that ADB will address the concerns of the local communities. But no actions have been made until now," he said.

On debt cancellation, the Bank remained silent. The G-8 already agreed last year to cancel the debt of 18 countries, mostly from Africa. "The World Bank-IMF and the African Development Bank as well followed suit and cancelled the multilateral debt of these countries. However, ADB has remained silent on the issue," said Princess Nemenzo.

Many issues were left hanging. Many questions unanswered. Until when will ADB continue to ignore the plight of affected people from their destructive projects? Civil society organizations are now having second thoughts if it is still worthy to engage the Bank's president.

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