Press Release

ADB agrees to investigate the Taza Su water project in Kyrgyzstan

7 April 2008, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan - The Asian Development Bank agreed to investigate the Taza-Su Water Project in Kyrgyzstan. This was in response to complaints filed by Anara Dautalieva, head of NGO "Taza-Tabigat" and representative of the affected people during the lobby day organized by the NGO Forum on ADB on 28 March 2008.

On a letter dated April 2, the Bank has committed investigating the project, through its Office of the Auditor General, for possible cases of fraud and corruption. Specifically, the Bank has agreed to look into parts of the project that are deemed inappropriate, old and defective; and complete the remaining components of the project. The Bank has also committed restructuring the project's financing plan without asking local communities from paying any contribution. Moreover, it will ensure that previous contributions will be returned with interest.

The Taza Su Water Project is a US$36-million community-based infrastructure service sector loan that aims to provide rural communities access to clean and reliable potable water and sanitation facilities. The project also includes installation of latrines and land washing facilities. It is operated and maintained by the village-based Community Drinking Water User Unions (CDWUUs). The Project will benefit 300 villages form Chui, Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken regions.

The Taza Su Water Project started in 2001 and was targeted to be completed in 2006. However, problems emerged two years after the start of project implementation. According to reports, local people had no clear idea about the project design and its objectives. In some villages, local people were made to believe that they should pay five percent share to local authorities. In most cases, people had never received their copies of contracts, as well as invoices or receipts of payments. Worse, they had been harassed when they decided to file complaints at the prosecutor's office.

In early 2007, as a result of the many cases of fraud and corruption, an NGO coalition was formed in Kyrgyz Republic to monitor the project. Local rural activists, together with "Taza-Tabigat" taking the lead, undertook field trips and verified the complaints of affected people. Monitoring the project was made possible with the Kyrgyz Bureau on Human Rights and Rule of Law acting as an adviser and consultant, and with the support from the NGO Forum on ADB regional office.

"The project does not benefit the local communities. Project proponents lack transparency in project implementation," Ms. Dautalieva said. "Taza-Tabigat will continue monitoring the project and the improvements suggested by the Bank."

More information:

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