

ADB  
Asian Development Bank

28 September 2005

Mr. Hemantha Withanage Executive Director  
NGO Forum on ADB  
85-A Masikap Extension  
Central District, Diliman  
Quezon City 1101 Philippines

Dear Mr. Withanage,

Thank you for the letter of 22 July from the NGO Forum to President Kuroda on ADB's Safeguard Policy Update process. We have been working on a discussion note that sets out the proposed approach to the safeguard policy update, which accounts for the delay in our response.

You have raised several important issues in your letter, which reflects your expectation that the policy update should be carried out in consultation with development partners, governments, civil societies, and affected peoples. We share that expectation, and look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration through frank exchanges that will enhance our ability to deliver development assistance effectively.

As we discussed earlier, the planned steps in the policy update include posting an approach paper/discussion note for a 90-day period, preparation of a policy statement and operational procedures, extensive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders, submission of a working paper (W-Paper) to the Board of Executive Directors based on the outcome of the consultations, and a final policy paper (R-Paper) to the Board by November 2006.

We intend to follow an approach to the policy update consistent with your recommendations. We have already posted a notice on the web (18 July 2005) indicating our general objectives and the means through which we propose to carry out the update, welcoming any comments that might be relevant to the current stage of preparation. We have also prepared a more detailed approach paper and will post that on a dedicated safeguards website (<http://www.adb.org/safeguards/default.asp>) that we have established for the update we expect to post the approach paper in early October for a 90-day comment period.

Structured consultations are expected to begin in the first quarter of 2006 based on a draft policy working paper. In preparing the first draft of the working paper, we will consider comments made on the approach paper. We also intend to make the policy working paper publicly available for a second 90-day consultation phase. During that period, we will have structured consultations as we would like the process of revising and improving the paper to be dynamic and fully responsive. We will, of course, provide documentation sufficiently in advance to participants at the consultations to review the papers and prepare for discussions. Translations will be provided in the major languages associated with the consultation workshops so that there is adequate outreach.

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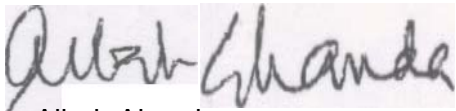
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The policy working paper will be finalized. after the consultation workshops, taking into consideration feedback on the first draft at those consultations and web and e mail-based comments. The working paper will be submitted to our Board of Directors three weeks in advance of its consideration, and simultaneously posted on the website. Taking into consideration comments on the working paper, we intend to submit a final policy per to the Board for consideration in November 2006, and this, too, will be simultaneously posted on the safeguards website.

As we have proposed already, we plan to organize five subregional consultations and at least five country consultations in developing countries, in addition to some in donor countries if you wish, we could also have a meeting with members of the Forum on the approach paper prior to the structured consultations.

We hope to fully engage with you in the policy update process, along with other key stakeholders. We would greatly appreciate it if you could share this response with members of the Forum.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Albab Akanda', is written over a light pink rectangular background.

Albab Akanda  
Principal Safeguard Specialist/Team Leader- Safeguard Policy Update  
Environment and Social Safeguards Division  
Regional and Sustainable Development Department