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Disclosure Review
Office of External Relations
Asian Development Bank
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11 November 2003

Dear Mr. Salamon

Re: One World Trust's comments on the ADB Review of its Disclosure and Information Policies

The One World Trust is delighted that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is openly reviewing its disclosure and information policies and welcomes the opportunity to offer its recommendations on this matter.

The One World Trust is a charity based in the UK Houses of Parliament which has been advocating the need for greater accountability within global organisations for the last fifty years. The Trust's Global Accountability Project (GAP) recently published a report called 'Power without Accountability' which assessed eighteen of the world's most powerful organisations ranking them according to their access to information and their governance. The degree to which affected individuals and communities have access to meaningful and timely information is crucial to enabling them to effectively hold organisations to account. The report found that many global organisations have significant improvements to make in this area and the following recommendations for ADB draw on these findings. A full copy of the report is available on our website www.oneworldtrust.org.

The Trust would like to suggest the following key recommendations:

Need for comprehensive, publicly available information disclosure policy which contains the following information:

- A comprehensive list of types of information/documents available to the public
- A comprehensive list of the types of information/documents not available to the public
- A clear definition of the criteria used for non-disclosure of documents and information (it should be noted that the 1994 Disclosure policy does offer a definition of what constitutes classified information)

TRUSTEES:

Lord Archer of Sandwell QC Geoffrey Bindman Nazila Ghanea-Hercock Eirwen Harbottle Christopher Layton
Peter Luff Dr Wendi Momen JP Joanna Reynolds Professor John Roberts Dr Gavin Strang MP Ted Wheatley
Baroness Whitaker

Need for greater transparency of the ADB's Board of Executive Directors

Presently the ADB executive board governs in the dark. The One World Trust recommends that the following should be available:

- An advance annual work plan of the Board to enable stakeholders to plan interventions
- The detailed agenda of all executive board meetings six weeks prior to the meetings
- Disclosure of key papers to be discussed at forthcoming board meetings
- Access to minutes and summaries of board meetings

More timely information available about organisations activities

The following pieces of vital information should be disclosed, which presently are not;

- All 'Aid Memoires' between ADB and the borrower country
- A detailed operational budget for ADB
- All social and environmental reports for ADB-supported financial intermediaries

And the following information should be available in draft form to ensure input from external stakeholders before finalised;

- All institution-wide policies and strategies
- Country strategies
- Project descriptions (Report and Recommendation of the President)

Finally, ADB needs to provide country strategies and project documents in the language of the countries concerned.

I very much look forward to seeing these recommendations within ADB's new information disclosure policy

Yours sincerely

Hetty Kovach
Global Accountability Project Manager
One World Trust