

**Bank Information Center • Center for International Environmental Law •
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Peoples Programme • The Rainforest Foundation • Bretton Woods Project • Urgewald •
Les Amis de la Terre**

April 17, 2008

President Robert Zoellick
The World Bank Group
1818 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20433

Re: Inspection Panel Selection Committee and Process

Dear President Zoellick:

We are writing to express our deep concerns regarding the existing procedure for choosing new members of the World Bank's Inspection Panel, and, in particular, with the recently constituted Selection Committee. We believe the process and composition of the Selection Committee potentially threaten the Panel's independence. We respectfully request that the current Selection Committee be reconstituted and the selection procedure be revised, as proposed below.

The current "Selection Procedures for the Selection of Members of the Inspection Panel" articulate important principles but fail to ensure that these principles are secured. More specifically, we support the statement: "[t]he process to select members of the Inspection Panel, should be orderly, timely and transparent, and protect the independence of the function of its professionalism." The procedures, however, fail to uphold these principles by ascribing a significant role to Bank management in selecting panel members. Because activities of Bank management are often the subject of the Panel's review, involvement of management in the selection of the Panel's independent investigators creates inevitable conflicts of interest. For example, the recently constituted Selection Committee presents a glaring and significant conflict of interest by the inclusion of a Regional Vice President whose region includes projects that are the subject of Panel claims.

Second, we are concerned that the Panel's role is limited currently to interviewing already-selected candidates. The Panel is uniquely situated to help identify candidates who would serve the mechanism and safeguard its independence most effectively.

Third, as the primary mechanism for civil society to seek redress of potential harm associated with Bank-financed operations, the Panel's primary stakeholders should be provided a means to participate in the selection of new members.

We would like to submit the following requests and recommendations to strengthen the Panel's independence and to ensure greater transparency of and participation in the selection process of new Panel members:

- Immediately reconstitute the current Selection Committee to remove the glaring conflict of interest presented by membership of a Regional Vice President.
- Revise the existing "Selection Procedures for the Selection of Members of the Inspection Panel." Specifically, ensure the following:
 - The Selection Committee specifically exclude representatives of Bank Management. It should be comprised of the Chair of the Panel, the Dean of the Board, the Chair of CODE, and one civil society representative.
 - In addition to the general application process, there is an open and transparent nominations process that invites nominations from civil society. Openings in the Panel should be publicly announced and circulated to civil society groups through the Panel itself, World Bank External Relations, and World Bank field offices.

Sincerely, on behalf of the listed organizations:



Anne Perrault
 Director, IFI Program
 Center for International Environmental Law
 1350 Connecticut Ave, NW #1100
 Washington, DC 20036
aperrault@ciel.org



Chad Dobson
 Executive Director
 Bank Information Center
 1100 H St NW #650
 Washington, DC 20005
cdobson@bicusa.org

Oscar Rivas, General Coordinator, SOBREVIVENCIA/Amigos de la Tierra, Paraguay

Mushtaq Gaadi, Chashma Lok Sath, Pakistan

Chhith Sam Ath, NGO Forum on Cambodia

Korinna Horta, Environmental Defense Fund, USA

Peter Bosshard, Policy Director, International Rivers, USA

Antonio Tricarico, Coordinator, Campagna per la riforma della Banca mondiale, Italy

Tom Griffiths, Coordinator, Responsible Finance Programme, Forest Peoples Programme, UK

Simon Counsell, Director, The Rainforest Foundation, UK

Lucy Baker, Bretton Woods Project, UK

Knud Voecking, Urgewald, Germany

Sébastien Godinot, Les Amis de la Terre, France

Cc:

Mr. Eli Whitney Debevoise, Executive Director, US