

Petition Letter from RWESA to JBIC

From: "Kevin Li" <sanxia@yahoo.com>

To: <k-murata@jbic.go.jp>

Cc: "Mekong Watch Japan" <mekong-w@co.xdsl.ne.jp>; "FoE-J" <aid@foejapan.org>;
<mail@sg-egl-jbic.org>

Sent: Friday, April 13, 2001 10:59 AM

Subject: Appeal Letter for JBIC

To: Mr. Hiroshi Yasuda (Governor, JBIC)

Dear Sir,

I, on behalf of Rivers Watch East and Southeast Asia (RWESA), am writing to express our concern in the environmental guidelines to be established by JBIC. We urge JBIC to make a clear commitment to adopt the strategic priorities and policy principles defined by the World Commission on Dams (WCD). Please find attached our petition letter.

We are looking forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin LI

(for Rivers Watch East and Southeast Asia)

-----attached document to follow-----

c/o Southeast Asia Rivers Network
78 Moo 10, Suthep Road
Muang, Chiang Mai 50300
Thailand
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April 12, 2001.

Mr. Hiroshi Yasuda
Governor, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)
4-1 Otemachi 1-chome, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8144, Japan.

Dear Mr. Yasuda,

Examining the history of industrialization, a model of development has emerged in which the needs of local communities and peoples directly affected by the impacts of development projects are often neglected. This has had tragic impacts upon millions of people. The consequences of development-induced environmental destruction are being felt with phenomena such as global warming, desertification, and loss of biodiversity.

Unfortunately, it has been this model of development that has shaped much of the ODA and international economic cooperation patterns we see today, and JBIC is clearly also a product of this history. There is hope, however, as we see international financial institutions beginning to re-examine their policies and implement more stringent social and environmental practices.

We write to you as members of Rivers Watch East and Southeast Asia (RWESA), a regional network of NGOs and dam-affected peoples working to stop destructive river development in the region. RWESA is aware that JBIC is currently establishing new environmental guidelines, and would like to encourage it in this process. We urge JBIC to make a clear commitment to adopt the strategic priorities and policy principles defined by the World Commission on Dams (WCD) and reflect this commitment by incorporating the policy principles into the new environmental guidelines of JBIC.

Specifically, we call on JBIC to:

1. Incorporate the WCD strategic priorities and policy principles in the new environmental guidelines;
2. Make the guidelines binding;
3. Develop a clear compliance mechanism to ensure that the guidelines are followed;
4. Conduct an independent, open and transparent review of all on-going dam projects that are receiving JBIC funds for compliance with the WCD policy principles. Construction on these projects should be halted until the review has been finalized;
5. Institute a moratorium on funding for all large dam projects until the WCD's guidelines have been implemented and on-going projects have been reviewed.

JBIC should refrain from funding any project that violates the WCD policy principles. To fund projects which violate the principles, thereby violating the rights of project affected communities and damaging the environment, would only indicate hypocrisy rather than sincere commitment to development which respects human rights and environmental sustainability.

We would appreciate very much if JBIC would inform RWESA of its position regarding the WCD report and the current status of progress being made on the environmental guidelines. As members of international civil society, we encourage JBIC to develop a set of guidelines that are consistently implemented. We hope that these guidelines can be a model for other export credit agencies, and JBIC can act as a leader in this field.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Endorsed by:

Hui Seng Kin, SOS Selangor, Malaysia

Dr Kua Kia Soong, SUARAM, Malaysia

Colin Nicolas and Carol Yong, Centre for Orang Asli Concern, Selangor, Malaysia

Joan Carling, Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Philippines

Kong Socheat, Church World Service, Kompong Thom, Cambodia

Kevin Li, Globalization Monitor, Hong Kong

Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia

Sahabat Alam Malaysia

Indigenous Peoples Development Center, Sarawak, Malaysia

Philippine Indigenous Peoples Links

Friends of the Earth Japan

Mekong Watch Japan

Southeast Asia Rivers Network, Thailand

South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, India

AID/WATCH, Australia

EarthRights International

International Rivers Network

cc. Study Group on Environmental Guidelines for JBIC, JBIC Hong Kong Office