

September 28, 2006

Ms. Hanne Inger Bjurstrøm  
Chair of the Meeting of the Parties  
Convention on Access to Information,  
Public Participation in Decision-Making and  
Access to Justice in Environmental Matters  
Environment, Housing and Land Management Division  
Bureau 232  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10  
SWITZERLAND

Dear Ms. Bjurstrøm,

Thank you for your letter to Mr. Wolfowitz of June 16, 2006. I have been asked by the President's office to reply on his behalf.

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, and a founding partner of the Partnership for Principle 10, launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa (see [www.pp10.org](http://www.pp10.org)), the World Bank recognizes the importance of transparency and public participation and welcomes the opportunity to take part in this consultation process. (We were pleased to see participation by the Aarhus Convention Secretariat at recent meetings of the Partnership). Hence, in principle, the Bank is also interested in attending the international workshop that you mention.

In answer to your questionnaire, I can inform you that Bank projects and activities are governed by Operational Policies, which are designed to ensure that they are economically, financially, socially and environmentally sound. The Bank's Operational Manual, which can be found at [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), spells them out, and provides guidance on how to comply with them ("Bank Procedures" and "Good Practices"). The Bank has also put in place accountability mechanisms related to each of these policies are in place. Among the key types of policies catalogued are Safeguard Policies, which include Environmental Assessment (OP. 4.01) and other policies designed to prevent unintended adverse effects on third parties and the environment, and which support public participation and consultation in decision making.

As regards access to information, it is the Bank's stated policy to be open about its activities and welcome and seek out opportunities to explain its work to the widest possible audience. Therefore, under its 2002 Information Disclosure Policy, the Bank makes an enormous amount of operational information available to the public, ranging from project and policy documents to strategy and evaluation documents. On March 8, 2005, the Bank's Board approved a number of revisions, aiming to further improve and enhance the Bank's record on information disclosure with a set of proposals that would extend, rationalize, or simplify the provisions of the 2002 disclosure policy. The details of the Bank's policy of can be found at [www.worldbank.org/operations/disclosure/](http://www.worldbank.org/operations/disclosure/).

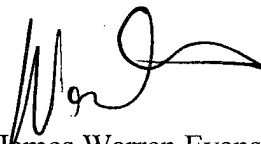
In addition, you may be interested in the International Finance Corporation's disclosure policy and the more recent developments regarding IFC's environmental standards (see [www.IFC.org](http://www.IFC.org)).

Illustrative of some of the Bank's non-formalized practices that you inquire about are the Environment Monitor publications to facilitate dissemination of environmental information produced by our East Asia and Pacific Regional Department (see [www.worldbank.org/eap](http://www.worldbank.org/eap)). You may also be interested to learn of the Bank's involvement in civic engagement work and community driven development (see [www.worldbank.org/socialdevelopment](http://www.worldbank.org/socialdevelopment)), and its work on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and country environmental analysis (CEA) (see [www.worldbank.org/environment](http://www.worldbank.org/environment)).

Again, in principle we are interested in attending the workshop and we look forward to being kept informed of the work of the Task Force. Our designated representative to follow-up on this matter is Mr. Charles di Leva, Chief Counsel of the environmental unit of our Legal Department.

We wish you every success with this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Evans', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

James Warren Evans  
Sector Director  
Environment Department

cc. Mr. Charles di Leva, Chief Counsel, LEGEN