



Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network

24 October 2003

Citizens' Challenge
to Structural
Adjustment

Mr. James Adams
Vice President & Head of Network
Operation Policy and Country Services
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433

Dear Jim:

Steering Committee

Yao Graham
Third World Network
Ghana/Africa

Peter Bakvis
ICFTU/ITS
International

Jorge Carpio
IDEMI
Argentina

Ivan Cisneros
IEDECA
Ecuador

Susana Cruickshank
Equipo PUEBLO
Mexico

Doug Hellinger
The Development GAP
United States

John Jones
Centre for Partnership in
Development
Norway

Godfrey Kanyenze
Judith Kaulam
ZCTU/Poverty Reduction
Forum
Zimbabwe

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Bangladesh

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SAPRIN/Hungary

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The Development Institute
Dominica

John Mihevc
Kairos & Halifax Initiative
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Lidy Nacpil
Maitet Diokno-Pascal
Freedom from Debt
Coalition
The Philippines

Warren Nyamugasira
NGO Forum
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Ann Kathrin Schneider
WEED/Eurodad
Europe

Johanna Sandahl
Forum Syd
Sweden

Hellen Wangusa
African Women's Economic
Policy Network (AWEPON)
Africa

We received your letter of 11 September, which unfortunately fails to address the lack of progress by the Bank in honoring the commitment made last year by Jim Wolfensohn to a number of SAPRIN civil-society country teams. The agreement was that those SAPRIN national networks, as well as other civil-society groups, would be engaged by the Bank in shaping national economic-policy plans, taking into account the "clearly substantive and important" policy issues raised by SAPRIN in the four-continent SAPRI initiative.

We subsequently shared your letter with the SAPRIN teams in Bangladesh, Ecuador, Ghana and Uganda (the Bank no longer has a lending program in Hungary, and the SAPRI process was not completed in Mali) and requested and received their feedback. They were unanimous in the position that the Bank has failed to follow up on its president's commitment. All reject your characterization of the Bank's engagement with civil society in their countries on economic-policy issues as constructive. They responded that your letter "is far from the fact," that the activities undertaken have "no organic link to the policy making process or structure," that "although there has been quite a lot of talking from the Bank, there are no mechanisms set in place," that "the experience and proposals developed in the SAPRI process have not been taken into account," and that "what has happened so far is exactly the opposite of what had been agreed." In the particular case of Ecuador, SAPRIN in fact took the initiative with the Bank early this year to involve civil society in the shaping of economic policy within the context of that country's Country Assistance Strategy, only to experience a lack of cooperation from the Bank, including your office.

Fifteen months have passed -- and over two years since the completion of SAPRI -- and we have yet to see the Bank take any serious action to respond to the myriad of problems inherent in its adjustment agenda, despite the fact that it received clear, grounded and incisive assessments of these policy failures from civil society during the five-year initiative with the SAPRIN network. Disingenuous claims of progress by the Bank, in the face of experience to the contrary on the part of the thousands of people who engaged the Bank and its president in good faith, will only further erode the Bank's credibility in the CSO community.

Sincerely,

Doug Hellinger
SAPRIN Secretariat
for the SAPRIN Steering Committee

cc: Jim Wolfensohn
SAPRIN Steering Committee
Global CSO network

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