

May 13, 2016

**Office of the President  
World Bank Group**

**Ref: World Bank Group Fact Sheet: Honduras and Indigenous Peoples**

We appreciate the attention to our communication sent on May 11 and the rapid response from the Bank in the Fact Sheet referenced. We appreciate that our original letter and the present response will be disseminated by the Bank in the same way as the Fact Sheet.

We will like to point out the following:

1. Regarding the remarks at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, we appreciate and share the consideration that Berta Caceres assassination was “incredibly tragic”. We take note of the clarification that President Kim did not refer to her assassination when talking about “incidents”. From our perspective his remarks, in the context of the question made, are subject to different interpretations, including the one made in our letter regarding that the assassination of Berta was one of the incidents that hydropower projects cause. This is the basis to request the public apology.
2. The “*impacts of involuntary resettlement in the development of infrastructure*” constitutes a gross violation of human rights as recognized by the former Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations in 1977.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is worrying that the World Bank Group refers to them as incidents. Affected people and in particular indigenous peoples are in more vulnerable situation with these kinds of projects. These groups have the right to resist involuntary displacement. Unfortunately, in several occasions, their resistance is violently repressed, even with assassinations as it was evidenced in the case of Berta Caceres and Honduras.
3. In the letter, the organizations highlighted the existence of alternatives to hydropower in the form of renewable energy. Hence, we consider of vital importance to clarify the remarks of the World Bank Group regarding hydropower being the only or main alternative to other sources of energy, such as coal and nuclear. In particular considering the effort that the World Bank Group affirms to be doing for the implementation of new renewable energies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Almost 40 years ago the Commission on Human Rights “Affirms that the practice of forced eviction constitutes a gross violation of human Rights”. Resolution 1993/77, E-CN\_4-RED-1993-77

4. The Fact Sheet points out also that “*Some organizations have called for the World Bank to withdraw funding for the construction of the Agua Zarca hydroelectric Project in Honduras*”. The letter signed by more than 300 organizations on May 11 affirms that the World Bank does not finance the project, thus we consider it is not relevant to make reference to this point.

In honor of your commitment to “*hear the voices of the Berta Caceres of the world*” we look forward to the World Bank Group moving towards energy alternatives that are respectful of the human rights of people and communities; that are more efficient, less expensive and actually respectful with the planet. That is the main way to achieve real prosperity for all.

Sincerely,

AIDA, CEJIL, COPINH, International Rivers and Otros Mundos  
Drafting Committee

Cc.  
Dr. Jim Yong Kim  
President  
World Bank Group

Mr. John Knox  
Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment  
United Nations

Mr. Michel Forst  
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders  
United Nations

Ms. Vicky Tauli-Corpuz  
Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples  
United Nations

Working Group on Business and Human Rights  
United Nations