



September 14, 2009

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

Cc: Board of Directors
Sector Director, Gender and Development

Re: Influencing World Bank Funding for Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS

Dear Mr. Zoellick,

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, seek your commitment and leadership in ensuring increased and improved World Bank funding for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS in developing countries where the World Bank manages investments and development projects.

Gender Action, the only organization dedicated to monitoring International Financial Institution (IFI) investments for their gender impacts, has demonstrated that the World Bank's total funding for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS projects during 2000-2007 constituted less than one percent of World Bank's total spending during this period. Gender Action's research also reveals a lack of gender sensitivity in World Bank reproductive health and HIV/AIDS investments, despite its public commitments to promote gender equality and the critical importance of addressing gender roles in these issues. Furthermore, Bank policies and practices routinely undermine progress toward achieving reproductive health and HIV/AIDS Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Health sector privatization and user fees resulting from Bank loan and grant requirements and recommendations to governments, for example, make reproductive health and HIV/AIDS services unaffordable to the poor.

The Bank's own 2009 Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) report evaluating Bank support for Health, Nutrition, and Population (HNP) since 1997 reveals weak Bank performance in ensuring projects improve health outcomes for the poor, despite Bank goals to reduce global poverty and foster sustainable development. According to this report, few projects with pro-poor or equity objectives were successful. The report demonstrates that about two-thirds of HNP projects overall - but only a quarter of HNP projects in Africa - have had satisfactory outcomes.

While there has been an increase in Bank investments in HIV/AIDS over the last decade – which is attributable to a boost in multi-sectoral and multi-agency projects addressing HIV/AIDS – Bank investments to reduce high fertility and improve family planning lags behind. As the bank triples its HNP funding, including spending for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS projects, to \$3 billion in 2009 from \$1 billion in 2008, we urge the World Bank to:

1. Exclusively make grants, not loans, for these critical activities to avoid burdening poor countries with debt.
2. Increase grants for sexual and reproductive health programs, particularly to reduce maternal mortality and ensure women's access to family planning services, safe abortion and safe prenatal and post-natal healthcare.
3. Expand grants for combating HIV/AIDS in low-income countries with high HIV prevalence, particularly programs targeting prevention and access to antiretroviral treatment (ART).
4. Design gender sensitive reproductive health and HIV/AIDS projects through systemic gender analysis of project design, implementation and evaluation.
5. End harmful conditionalities, such as privatization of health services, which impede poor people's access to high quality family planning, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS services in developing countries.
6. Intensify efforts to improve the performance of the HNP project portfolio as recommended by the above-mentioned 2008 IEG report.

This letter is endorsed by the following organizations and individuals:

1. 34 Million Friends of UNFPA (Global)
2. American Jewish World Service (USA)
3. Anthony Addison, Professor of Development Studies at University of Manchester (UK)
4. Arthenia Joyner (Florida State Senate)
5. Association for Women's Rights in Development, AWID (Global)
6. Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo, AIDOS (Italy)
7. Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc (USA)
8. Bangladesh Women Progress Association (Bangladesh)
9. Bank Information Center (USA)
10. Beatrice A. Atim, Member of Parliament for Kitgum District (FDC Party) Member of Natural Resources and HIV/AIDS Committee (Uganda)
11. Center for Community Development and Education, CCDE Banda Aceh (Indonesia)
12. Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (Uganda)
13. Center for Health and Gender Equity (USA)
14. Center for Health Policy and Innovation (Canada)
15. Center for Mind Body Medicine (USA)
16. Center for Reproductive Rights (USA)
17. Center for Women Policy Studies (USA)
18. Channel Foundation (USA)
19. Clearinghouse on Women's Issues (USA)
20. DECA Equipo Pueblo A.C., Social Watch Mexico (Mexico)
21. Donna Boe (Idaho state Representative)
22. Elsa Gómez Gómez, Independent Consultant
23. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (Egypt)
24. Farhikhteh Community Empowerment Association (Iran)
25. Feminist Majority (USA)
26. Foundation for Studies and Research on Women (Argentina)
27. Friends of the Earth (USA)
28. Gender Action (USA)
29. Global Fund for Women (Global)
30. Global Healing Foundation (Global)
31. Global AIDS Alliance (Global)
32. Gloria Careaga, Fundacion Arcoiris por el Respeto a la Diversidad Sexual (Mexico)
33. Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign - National Advocacy Committee (Canada)

34. Green Concern for Development formerly Abgremono for Development (Nigeria)
35. Halifax Initiative Coalition (Canada)
36. Indira Ghale, Feminist Dalit Organization FEDO (Nepal)
37. International Accountability Project (Global)
38. International AIDS Women's Caucus (Global)
39. International Community of Women living with HIV and AIDS (Global)
40. International Planned Parenthood Federation (Global)
41. International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region (Regional)
42. International Women's Health Coalition (Global)
43. International Women's Tribune Center (USA)
44. Ipas (Global)
45. Iranian Women Researchers on Islamic Studies (Iran)
46. Irene Tinker, Professor Emerita, University of California Berkeley (USA)
47. Integrated Social Development Effort, ISDE (Bangladesh)
48. Jean Marie Mbarusha, Lawyer (Rwanda)
49. Jewish Women International (Global)
50. Jubilee Australia (Australia)
51. K.U.L.U.-Women and Development (Denmark)
52. Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network (LAC)
53. Linda Lopez, State Senator (Arizona)
54. Lokoj Institute (Bangladesh)
55. Marilyn Lee, State Representative (Hawaii)
56. Martha Kwataine, Malawi Health Equity Network (Malawi)
57. Metropolitan Public Health Association (USA)
58. Mima Simic, Lesbian Group Kontra (Croatia)
59. Mosaic Training, Service and Healing Center for Women (South Africa)
60. Namibia Women's Health Network (Namibia)
61. National Council for Research on Women (USA)
62. National Council of Women's Organizations (USA)
63. National Organization for Women (USA)
64. Network for Justice and Democracy (Nigeria)
65. Nigeria Labour Congress (International Trade Union Confederation, Nigeria)
66. Organization for Holistic Health and Development of Young People (OHDYP-Uganda)
67. Outaleb Fatima, Union de L'Action Feminine (Morocco)
68. Oxfam Canada (Global)
69. Patria Jiménez, El Closet de Sor Juana (Mexico)
70. Population Action International (USA)
71. Professor Robin Porter (UK)
72. Representative Donna Boe (Idaho State Legislature)
73. Rozaria Memorial Trust (Zimbabwe)
74. Salamander Trust (UK)
75. Sexuality and Development Programme, Institute of Development Studies (UK)
76. Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Center (Pakistan)
77. SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective (USA)
78. SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (Nepal)
79. Stay Alive For Us All, SAFUA (Kenya)
80. Straight Arrows Inc (Australia)
81. Strategies from the South (Regional)
82. Tafadzwa R. Muropa, Social Justice Activist (Zimbabwe)
83. TASO (Aids Support Organization - Uganda)
84. The Bretton Woods Project (UK)
85. The Honorable Afsatu Kabba, Member of Parliament (Sierra Leone)

86. The Honorable Chong Eng, Member of Parliament (Malaysia)
87. The Honorable Peace Baku, Member of the Provincial Assembly (Ghana)
88. The Network of Zimbabwean Positive Women, NZPW+ (Zimbabwe)
89. Treatment Monitor (Women and HIV/AIDS Gauge) Health Systems Trust (South Africa)
90. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society (USA)
91. VOICE (Bangladesh)
92. WIDE (Belgium)
93. Winrock International (USA)
94. Women's Business Development Center (USA)
95. Women Forum Northern Region Chapter (Malawi)
96. Women for Women's Human Rights (Turkey)
97. Women In Sustainable Enterprise Development Ltd (UK)
98. Women's Crisis Center (Malawi)
99. Women's Intercultural Network (USA)
100. Women's Research & Education Institute (USA)
101. World YWCA (Switzerland)