

THE WORLD BANK/IFC/M.I.G.A.

## OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 19, 2007

TO: Joy Phumaphi, Vice President & Head of Network

FROM: Svein Aass, Executive Director  
Gino Alzetta, Executive Director  
Eckhard Deutscher, Executive Director  
Alexis Kohler, Alternate Executive Director  
Giovanni Majnoni, Executive Director  
Michel Mordasini, Executive Director  
Caroline Sergeant, Alternate Executive Director  
Herman Wijffels, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **The World Bank Strategy for Health, Nutrition and Population Results**

We write to you in connection with the Bank's new Strategy for Health, Nutrition and Population Results (HNP).

After reviewing the strategy document and the supplemental note which was provided at the request of the board, we still have some major concerns regarding this document which will govern the Bank's future engagement in the sector and cannot support it in the present form. The document - including the supplemental note - does not sufficiently reflect the discussion held in the CODE on March 14, 2007. Moreover, it does not live up to the directions given by the members of the 75th Development Committee and the reassurance provided by the President that the Bank's Management will adhere to them. It also does not take the Communiqué of the 75th Development Committee into account.

In detail:

1. The original document makes virtually no reference to sexual and reproductive health, on a strategic level. This is surprising, considering that the Bank has committed almost US\$ 2 billion to

sexual and reproductive health over the past 10 years.

2. The document - including the supplemental note - still does not contain a clear position on how the Bank engages in issues of sexual and reproductive health. WHO and UNFPA may well be the lead agencies regarding the provision of sexual and reproductive health services. However, there is an extremely important role for the Bank to assume, particularly in light of its new health systems approach where the key objective is to align and integrate sexual and reproductive health issues with the countries' PRS and policy process. We welcome the envisaged division of labor with the UN System, but point out that this entails defining the Bank's role in sexual and reproductive health, both in advice and financing.
3. The Bank should clearly spell out its commitment to the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the full Cairo consensus on sexual and reproductive health and rights to guide its work.
4. The document and supplemental note place sexual and reproductive health within the context of population policy and contains language, which suggests a limitation of sexual and reproductive health to tackle "fertility rates". This is not acceptable, nor does it sufficiently reflect the outcome of the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Sexual and reproductive health and family planning are integral parts of health service delivery and, as such, essential for women's health and for achieving MDG 5. They are integrally linked to efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, maternal mortality, infant mortality and should not be viewed as only a population issue.
5. Both, the World Bank Group's Gender Action Plan, as well as the Bank's Gender Strategy underline the importance of access to sexual and reproductive health services for the economic empowerment of women. This is key to achieve the MDGs 3, 4, 5 and 6.
6. We need to see explicit recognition in the strategy document that sexual and reproductive health and family planning will indeed form an integral part of Bank efforts in strengthening country health systems. It is important that the strategy be extremely clear in extending the Bank's scope of activity to include sexual and reproductive health and family planning and, that indicators and targets be included in CASs where authorities request them. As currently drafted, the paper leaves too much room for interpretation and placing the responsibility for sexual and reproductive health and family planning on other institutions.

In light of the above mentioned, we request the document be revised to reflect the guidance given by the Bank's governors and the Communiqué of the 75th Development Committee to allow us to support it. We also request a postponement of the board meeting currently scheduled for April 24th, 2007 to allow sufficient time for a revised document to be distributed and reviewed prior discussion. Subject to the outcome of these revisions we will decide on an appropriate board date.

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To: Joy Phumaphi  
cc: Svein Aass  
Gino Pierre Alzetta  
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Michel Mordasini  
Caroline Mary Verney Sergeant