

FIDH
17, passage de la Main d'Or
75011 Paris
France

Mr Rémy Rioux
Chief Executive Officer of the French
Development Agency

03 September 2020

Dear Mr Rioux,

From November 9th to 12th, 2020, the French Development Agency will convene the first global summit of all Public Development Banks (PDBs). Gathering PDBs from around the world, it is aimed to provide a collective response to global challenges, reconciling short-term responses to the Covid-19 crisis with sustainable recovery measures, redirecting financial flows towards sustainable development objectives.

The summit is highly relevant and timely, but for a truly comprehensive and inclusive dialogue, it should draw lessons from the past to shape the strongest future with full participation of the communities impacted by PDB projects and supporting civil society organizations. In many instances, PDB supported activities have exacerbated poverty and inequality and human rights abuses such as reprisals against human rights defenders and forced evictions, without meaningful redress for affected communities. The summit should include reflection and discussion on the importance of respecting international human rights standards in achieving sustainable recovery goals, including addressing human rights abuses widely documented in PDB supported investments and projects.¹ The summit should contend with the challenges of increased investment from PDBs lacking robust standards for human rights, social and environmental protection, climate change, and anti-corruption, or where those standards exist, how to address failures to follow them in practice.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted and aggravated the failures of the health, social, and economic systems, requiring a deep rethinking of the way governments, PDBs, and other actors operate. Several grassroots community groups and organisations have been calling on PDBs to ensure that the funding and support they provide for the Covid-19 response, and during the economic recovery period, respects human rights and leads to economic, social and environmental justice for those who are most vulnerable.² New impetus in attaining the core principle of “leave no one behind” is needed.³

We welcome the opportunity to engage with PDBs during the summit to better serve the principles and goals of international human rights standards, the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), transparency, and accountability. To that end however, and as a matter of credibility and efficiency, it must be a priority to ensure human rights and community needs are explicitly discussed and part of the joint declaration foreseen at the end of the summit. As stated by OHCHR last year:

1 Coalition for Human Rights in Development, *Uncalculated Risks* (2019), available online at <https://rightsindevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Uncalculated-Risks-Full-report-cmpr-h.pdf>.

2 Coalition for Human Rights in Development, *Statement to Development Finance Institutions regarding Covid-19 response (2020)*, available online at <https://rightsindevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020.05.13-Declaration-on-Covid-19-to-DFIs-ENG.pdf>. For French please see: <https://rightsindevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020.05.13-Declaration-on-Covid-19-to-DFIs-FRENCH-1.pdf>

3 “Leave no one behind” – Don’t forget your commitments in your response to the COVID-19 crises, UN expert urges States, 9 April 2020 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25786&LangID=E>

“with the most pivotal decade of SDG implementation ahead of us, human rights are not only the right way, but the smart way to accelerate progress for more equitable and sustainable development. Development is not just about changing the material conditions It is also about empowering people with voice ... to be active participants in designing their own solutions and shaping development policy. ... Empowering people means moving beyond purely technocratic solutions and treating people as passive objects of aid or charity. People are empowered when they are able to claim their rights and to shape the decisions, policies, rules and conditions that affect their lives.”⁴

As SDGs are at the core of the summit, human rights and participation of communities are then key. That requires adapting the agenda and the expected outcomes. Our recommendations on ensuring an inclusive event follow:

1. Human Rights should be reflected in the core agenda of the summit, attendance and participation. As conceived, the research conference and summit do not appear to provide specific space to human rights defenders and community representatives. Commitment to public participation and protection of civil society space have long been recognised as essential to ensuring effective development. **Human rights and grassroots organizations, human rights defenders, and communities should** guide the future of the development model, and therefore should be involved in organizing, contributing to the agenda, and participating in the summit. It is a matter of priority to have human rights defenders and communities directly impacted by PDB activities at the table.

2. The principles of a human rights-based and community-led development should be included and highlighted on the expected deliverables of the summit including research papers and collective statements. We encourage governments and PDBs to make a commitment to reinforce and strengthen the principles of human rights-based and community-led development in PDBs' mandate and governance; policies and practices; internal culture and incentives; what projects and activities they support and invest in; and how they work with other PDBs, governments and key actors. These commitments should lead to improvements, such as:

(a) Full and free participation of directly affected communities in all PDB supported activities and projects, and free prior and informed consent for indigenous peoples. Innovative approaches will have to be developed to address the closing space, risks and challenges for communities, human rights defenders and civil society to meaningfully participate in decisions that impact their lives, livelihoods, environment and resources. Zero tolerance policies against threats and reprisals by PDBs and their clients should be a basic requirement.

(b) Identifying investments that are aligned with international human rights, climate protection, and SDGs, and reorienting investments towards sustainable development that respects these standards, while ensuring that the priorities and needs of marginalised persons are met.

(c) Improving social and environmental requirements through inclusion of human rights standards. PDBs and their clients should adhere to human rights principles and standards enshrined in international conventions. Safeguard policies and procedures should ensure that activities financed directly or indirectly by PDBs, respect human rights, do not contribute to human rights abuse, and contribute to equitable, inclusive development that benefits all persons.

(d) Developing and improving transparency, monitoring, oversight, grievance and accountability mechanisms to actively prevent PDB activities and investments from undermining human rights.

(e) Ensuring private sector clients or partners also adopt high human rights and environmental standards, and do not avoid or evade taxes.

⁴ OHCHR, Empowerment, Inclusion, Equality: Accelerating sustainable development with human rights, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/EIEPamphlet.pdf>

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(f) Development of common guidance by PDBs on *ex ante* human rights due diligence and impact assessments in project investments and in support for economic reform policies or programs. This includes identification of contextual and specific risks, prevention and mitigation strategies, and remedy in line with international human rights norms. Ensure that these assessments are developed in close consultation with affected communities, and are updated iteratively based on changing conditions and new information.

(g) Developing coordinated approaches to ensure that PDB supported activities do not exacerbate debt or contribute to cutbacks in public expenditure that will negatively impact human rights or access to essential services for the most vulnerable. As reiterated by the OHCHR, effective governance for sustainable development requires non-discriminatory, inclusive, participatory, and accountable governance. With the most pivotal decade of SDG implementation ahead of us -- and in the context of intersecting health, environmental, economic and social crises building greater integration and coherence between the development and human rights agendas will be key:

*"Human rights are not only a guide on the right way to achieve SDG implementation, but the smart way to accelerate more sustainable and equitable development"*⁵.

PDBs should open channels for the meaningful participation of communities, human rights defenders, and civil society groups in the appraisal, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their projects and activities, as well as in their decision-making processes. For these reasons, the agenda and the deliverable of the summit should duly reflect the centrality of human rights and community-led development to effective and sustainable development.

Remaining at your disposal for further information.

Yours Sincerely,

Eleonore Morel, Fédération internationale pour les droits humains,
emorel@fidh.org

Siddharth Akali, Coalition for Human Rights in Development,
sakali@rightsindevelopment.org

The logo for FIDH (Fédération internationale pour les droits humains) consists of the lowercase letters "fidh" in a white, sans-serif font on a dark purple rectangular background.The logo for the Coalition for Human Rights in Development features a stylized sunburst icon to the left of the text "COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT" in a blue, sans-serif font.

⁵ OHCHR, Empowerment, Inclusion, Equality: Accelerating sustainable development with human rights, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/EIEPamphlet.pdf>

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Signatories:

1. 350.org Japan Japan
2. Abibiman Foundation Ghana
3. AbibiNsroma Foundation Ghana
4. Accountability Counsel USA
5. ACT Alliance Advocacy to the EU Belgium
6. ActionAid International International
7. Action contre la Faim France
8. Action Santé Mondiale France
9. Adivasi Nanjewan Gathan Navjyoti Agua(ANGNA) India
10. Al-Haq Palestine
11. Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities Ghana
12. Al-Marsad- Arab Human rights Center in Golan Heights Occupied Syrian Golan
13. ALTSEAN-Burma (Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma) Burma/Myanmar
14. Alyansa Tigil Mina Philippines
15. Ancien Rapporteur Spécial des Nations unies sur la situation des défenseurs des droits de l'Homme (2014-2020) France
16. Arab Forum for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (AFRPD) MENA
17. Arab Watch Coalition MENA
18. ARA e.V. (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Regenwald und Artenschutz) Germany
19. ASIA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES NETWORK ON EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES AND ENERGY Asia
20. Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) Thailand
21. Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de las víctimas de la Violencia en las Verapaces, Maya Achi.- ADIVIMA- Guatemala, CA.
22. Asociación Unión de Talleres 11 de Septiembre Bolivia
23. Association Democratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM) Morocco
24. Association Green Alternative Georgia
25. Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir
26. Association Rwandaise pour la Défense des Droits de la Personne et des Libertés Publiques, ADL. Rwanda
27. Association Tunisienne pour le Droit de Développement Tunisia
28. Autistic Minority International Switzerland/

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		global
29.	Bank Information Center	USA
30.	Bankwatch Network	Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)
31.	Both ENDS	Netherlands
32.	Bretton Woods Project	UK
33.	Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO)	Uganda
34.	Business & Human Rights Resource Centre	Global
35.	Bytes For All, Pakistan	Pakistan
36.	Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)	Middle East and North Africa
37.	Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAHR)	Canada
38.	CARE France	France
39.	Catholic Board of Education	Odisha
40.	Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)	International
41.	Center for Pan-African Affairs	USA
42.	Centre for Human Rights and Development	Mongolia
43.	Centre for Research and Advocacy, Manipur	Manipur, India
44.	Centre Libanais des droits humains (CLDH)	Liban
45.	Centro de Investigación y Promoción de los derechos Humanos	Honduras Centro América
46.	Centro de Políticas Públicas y Derechos Humanos - Perú EQUIDAD	Peru
47.	Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental, A.C. (CEMDA)	México
48.	Centro Nicaraguense de Derechos Humanos CENIDH	Nicaragua América Central
49.	Chairperson Oil Workers' Rights Protection Organization Public Union	Azerbaijan
50.	Civil Society Institute NGO, Armenia	Armenia
51.	CLEAN (Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network)	Bangladesh
52.	Climate Action Network Europe	Europe
53.	Climate Action Network International	Mexico
54.	CNCD-11.11.11	Belgium
55.	CNS/ Asha Parivar	India
56.	Coalition for Human Rights in Development	Global
57.	Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)	Commonwealth/ India
58.	Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ)	Nepal
59.	Consejo de Pueblos Wuxhtaj	Guatemala, Centro América

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60.	Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos (CAFCA, CALDH, CIIDH, ECAP, ICCPG, ODHAG, SEDEM, UDEFEGUA, UNAMG)	Guatemala
61.	Coordinadora de Comunidades Afectadas por la Cosntruccion de la Hidroelectrica Chixoy.-COCAHICH-	Guatemala
62.	Counter Balance	Europe
63.	Crude Accountability	USA
64.	Damascus Center for human rights studies	Syria
65.	Defenders Protection Initiative -DPI	Uganda /Africa
66.	Democracy and Workers' Rights Center in Palestine	Palestine
67.	Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales	Peru
68.	Disabled People's International (DPI)	International
69.	Displaced Kids Association	Iraq
70.	EarthRights International	USA
71.	Egyptian Center for Civil and Legislative Reform (ECCLR)	Egypt
72.	Environics Trust	India
73.	Eurodad (European Network on Debt and Development)	Belgium / Europe
74.	European Network on Debt and Development, Eurodad	Europe
75.	FIAN Austria	Austria
76.	FIAN Belgium	Belgium
77.	FIAN Germany	Germany
78.	FIAN International Switzerland for the Right to Food	Switzerland
79.	FIAN International	International
80.	FIAN Sweden	Sweden
81.	First Peoples Worldwide	USA
82.	FOCSIV	Italy
83.	Forest Peoples Programme	Netherlands and UK
84.	Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI)	Uganda
85.	Foundation for the Conservation of the Earth	Nigeria
86.	Freedom from Debt Coalition	Philippines
87.	Freedom House	Global
88.	Friends of the Earth United States	USA
89.	Friends of the Siberian Forests	Russia
90.	Friends with Environment in Development	East Africa
91.	Front Line Defenders	Ireland
92.	Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)	Argentina

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93.	Fundación para el Desarrollo de Políticas Sustentables (Fundeps)	Argentina
94.	Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)	Belgium/ International
95.	Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Global
96.	Global Policy Forum	International
97.	Global Social Justice	Switzerland
98.	Global Witness	Global
99.	Green Advocates International	Liberia
100.	Haki Jamii Rights Centre	Kenya
101.	Heartland Initiative	USA
102.	Heinrich Böll Stiftung Washington, DC	USA
103.	HRM "Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan"	Kyrgyzstan
104.	Human Rights Center of Georgia	Georgia
105.	Human Rights in China (HRIC)	China
106.	iLaw	Thailand
107.	India Indigenous Peoples	India
108.	Indian Social Action Forum	India
109.	Indigenous Peoples Forum Odisha	India
110.	Inspire Girls Foundation (IGF)	Uganda
111.	Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense	Latin America
112.	International Accountability Project	Global
113.	International Dalit Solidarity Network	South Asia
114.	International Federation for Human Rights	International
115.	Internationale Liga für Menschenrechte	Deutschland
116.	International Rivers	USA and Global
117.	International Trade Union Confederation	Global
118.	International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP Asia Pacific)	Malaysia
119.	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)	Denmark
120.	Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society	Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir
121.	Joy for Children Uganda	Uganda
122.	Just Associates (JASS)	USA
123.	Justice for Iran	Iran
124.	Kenya Union of Hair and Beauty Workers (KUHABWO)	Kenya
125.	Koalisi Rakyat untuk Hak atas Air (KRuHA)	Indonesia
126.	Lao Movement for Human Rights	Laos
127.	Las Abejas	Mexico

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128.	Latin America Working Group (LAWG)	USA
129.	Latvian Human Rights Committee	Latvia
130.	Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP)	Nepal
131.	Lawyers for Human Rights, Manipur	India
132.	Leadership Initiative for Transformation and Empowerment(LITE) Africa	Nigeria
133.	League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran	Iran
134.	Lebanese Union of Persons with Physical Disabilities (LUPD)	Lebanon
135.	LGBT Centre	Mongolia
136.	Liga voor de Rechten van de Mens (Dutch League for Human Rights)	The Netherlands
137.	Ligue des droits de l'Homme - France (LDH)	France
138.	Lok Shakti Abhiyan	India
139.	Lumière Synergie pour le Développement	Senegal
140.	Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN)	Maldives
141.	MANUSHYA Foundation	Southeast Asia
142.	Mekong Watch	Mekong Region
143.	Mitini Nepal	South Asia
144.	MONFEMNET National Network NGO	Mongolia
145.	Movimento Nacional de Direitos Humanos - MNDH Brasil	Brazil
146.	Narasha Community Development Group	Kenya
147.	National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NAFIN)	Nepal
148.	National Union of Domestic Employees	Trinidad and Tobago – Caribbean
149.	NGO Forum on ADB	Asia
150.	NGO "Youth Group on Protection of Environment"	Tajikistan
151.	NomoGaia	USA and Global
152.	Odhikar	Bangladesh
153.	Odisha Adivasi Manch	India
154.	Oil Change International	Global
155.	OPEN ASIA Armanshahr	Afghanistan
156.	Oyu Tolgoi Watch	Mongolia
157.	Pakistan Kissan(Farmers) Rabta Committee	United Kingdom
158.	Partnership for Policy Integrity	USA
159.	Peace Brigades International	Global
160.	Phenix Center for Economic & Informatic Studies	Jordan
161.	Philippine Alliance of Human Rights	Philippines

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Advocates (PAHRA)

162.	Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ)	Philippines
163.	Press Freedom Advocacy Association	Iraq
164.	Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy, Northeastern University School of Law	USA
165.	Project on Organizing, Development, Education and Research (PODER)	México and Latinoamerica
166.	Protection International Mesoamérica	Mesoamérica
167.	Psychological Responsiveness NGO	Mongolia
168.	"Public Administration New Initiative" NGO	Mongolia
169.	Recourse	The Netherlands
170.	Réseau Action Climat France	France
171.	Réseau Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l'Homme (RECODH)	Afrique
172.	Réseau International des Droits Humains RIDH	Genève, Suisse
173.	Resonate! Yemen	Yemen
174.	Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID)	United Kingdom
175.	Rivers without Boundaries Coalition - Mongolia	Mongolia
176.	Rivers without Boundaries International Coalition	Eurasian continent
177.	Sisters' Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF)	Yemen
178.	Social Initiatives for Growth and Networking (SIGN)	India
179.	Sri Lanka Nature Group	Sri Lanka
180.	Steps Without Borders NGO	Mongolia
181.	Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC)	Yemen
182.	SUARAM	Malaysia
183.	Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression	France
184.	Tata Institute of Social Sceinces	India
185.	Tebtebba	Philippines
186.	The Lao Movement for Human Rights	Laos
187.	The PRINCESS center for girls and young women's rights	Mongolia
188.	The Society of the Divine Word	India
189.	Thy Kingdom Come Foundation	India
190.	Tunisian Association for Governance and Social Accountability (GoAct)	Tunisia
191.	Tunisian Association for Local Governance	Tunisia
192.	Union for Civil Liberty	Thailand
193.	Universal Rights and Development NGO	Mongolia

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194.	urgewald	Germany
195.	VedvarendeEnergi	Denmark and international
196.	Verein für sozial-ökologischen Wandel	Germany and International
197.	Vietnam Committee on Human Rights (VCHR)	Vietnam
198.	Wedian Association for Social Development	Yemen
199.	Witness Radio - Uganda	Uganda
200.	Women Engage for a Common Future	International
201.	WoMin African Alliance	Africa
202.	Yemeni Organization for Promoting Integrity (OPI)	Yemen
203.	Yemen Observatory for Human Rights	Yemen
204.	Youth For Environment Education And Development Foundation (YFEED Foundation)	Nepal

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