



Laureates:

Mairead Maguire, Ireland (1976)
Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala (1992)
Jody Williams, USA (1997)
Shirin Ebadi, Iran (2003)
Leymah Gbowee, Liberia (2011)
Tawakkol Karman, Yemen (2011)

23 February 2015

Dr. Jim Yong Kim
President
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433

Subject: New Bank Safeguards Importance to Women, Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change

Dear President Kim,

I write today on behalf of the Nobel Women's Initiative to thank you for your service as President of the World Bank and to express our concerns with the draft Environmental and Social Framework. As you may know, the Nobel Women's Initiative was established in 2006 to promote peace, justice, and equality throughout the world - a mission that is closely connected to the Bank's objectives of eliminating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

We have been following the discussions on the safeguards review process. We believe this process represents a historic opportunity for the Bank - and the world - to promote environmental and social justice for both people and planet. We are particularly interested in the discussions around how to incorporate gender, indigenous peoples' rights, and climate change. We firmly believe that sharing our unique experiences and collective expertise on these issues could be helpful as you and those most vulnerable to poverty and the effects of inequality. We therefore submit the following recommendations and look forward to further discussion on these important issues:

The World Bank must adopt a mandatory gender safeguard policy: Women, girls, and gender minorities compose more than half of the world's population. Yet they face discrimination, human rights abuses, and frequent exclusion from positive benefits of economic development. We hear this from women we meet on the ground from Colombia to Congo to Myanmar. Even during disease outbreaks, such as Ebola in Liberia, women are disproportionately affected by the direct and indirect impacts of these diseases and responses by the international community.

Advocating for peace, justice and equality

The World Bank does not have safeguard policies to mitigate gender-related risks associated with its investments. It therefore risks excluding these individuals - often society's poorest and most marginalized - from benefitting from or contributing to its projects and/or programs. A mandatory safeguard policy that identifies and mitigates potential negative impacts of Bank projects on women is essential.

The World Bank must eliminate loopholes that would allow countries to violate the rights of indigenous peoples: We support the Bank's inclusion of a requirement for obtaining the free, prior and informed consent in the new Indigenous Peoples policy. Indeed, as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and other research has highlighted, indigenous people's defending their right to consultation for large-scale development projects are among the most vulnerable, subject to attacks and assassination. This new requirement should be advanced further to ensure indigenous peoples can exercise their right to self-determination and are full and equal partners in the development process. The 'opt-out' clause that allows countries to adopt an alternative approach with respect to indigenous peoples - *included in the new policy* - represents a dangerous move toward stripping IPs of their rights in World Bank projects and as such we strongly recommend it be removed.

The World Bank must assess the effects of its projects on climate change: The new World Bank policies must serve as tools in addressing our urgent climate crisis. As pointed out in your "Turn Down the Heat" report, climate change requires everyone's attention to seriously deal with the problem. Yet, neither current Bank policy nor the proposed draft address climate issues systematically. It contains only a generic requirement that a project's impact on climate change be assessed. It notably *does not require* impacts on the resilience of host communities and ecosystems be considered. The Bank must strengthen the new policies with mandatory requirements on climate change. If we fail to address the climate threat now, it will only lead to climate refugees and further conflicts tomorrow.

We appreciate your consideration of this letter and look forward to your reply.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jody Williams, Chair
Nobel Women's Initiative

