

Printed below is the text of a fax received by the Indian Law Resource Center on Friday, May 17. The fax is in response to the letter drafted and signed by 48 indigenous representatives at the 2002 Special Session of the OAS Working Group on the Proposed Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, March 11-15, and hand-delivered by Armstrong Wiggins and Alex Page of the Indian Law Resource Center to the office of World Bank President James Wolfensohn on March 15.

The World Bank  
Washington, D.C. 20433  
U.S.A.

May 17, 2002

Mrs. Alexandra Page  
Staff Attorney  
Indian Law Resource Center  
601 E Street SE  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Mrs. Page:

I would appreciate if you can pass on this response to Mr. Eduardo Alfredo Nieva and other representatives from the Americas working on the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

On behalf of World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn, let me thank you for your letter dated March 13, 2002. He has asked me to reply to you in my capacity as Acting Vice President for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development.

As you know, the World Bank has been engaged in a process of consultation with external stakeholders on its draft policy on Indigenous Peoples. The consultation began in July 2001 and ended in February 2002.

After receiving inputs from 1200 stakeholders and hundreds of Web-posted responses, The Indigenous Peoples Policy Team will analyze all the feedback received during the consultation period in order to consider it along with other inputs in drafting the final policy.

We share your concerns regarding the protection of indigenous peoples rights, and we are consistently working towards harmonizing our lending policies to those rights.

In regard to your proposal, Mr. Ian Johnson, Vice President, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development, would be happy to meet with a delegation representing the different organizations that signed the letter, in order to address your specific concerns and move forward in achieving our common objectives.

Sincerely,

Francisco Reifschneider  
Acting Vice-President  
Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development