
LETTER FROM KATHERINE SIERRA

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The world's population is increasing rapidly, mostly in developing countries. With growing numbers of people comes an expanding need for basic goods and services such as water, food, energy, sanitation, housing, and transport. Meeting these needs depends on our ability to govern our use of resources and ecosystems in a sustainable way. In the World Bank, we believe that environment must be intrinsically linked to our key development activities. This year we have reorganized our work to assure this comprehensive approach by forming the new Sustainable Development Network. In it, we are fully integrating units responsible for meeting basic human needs and infrastructure services with environmental and social units that guide our actions. This reorganization will enable a more dynamic assimilation of sustainability analysis into our core development activities.

Development and conservation are often considered trade-offs, but the time has come to set aside the myth that economic growth must lead to environmental degradation, or that sustaining the environment harms people's options for growth and development. The poor are fundamentally dependent on the health of their environment, and managing natural resources well is vital to fighting poverty in developing countries. A major challenge is in recognizing—and accounting for—these environmental benefits and costs, including resource depletion and population growth.

Factors such as climate change, invasive species, and water scarcity will increase the challenges. Because some of these factors are difficult to control, we must seek to manage those factors that are most tied to human behavior.

As well, confronting poor governance and corruption is a certain way of delivering greater benefits to the poor and a healthier environment for all. In support of good governance, the World Bank is:

- Working with our country partners to improve public governance capacity over environmental resources, and enhance their tools for accountability and transparency
- Strengthening demand for better governance through institutions such as a free media, vibrant civil society, and a flourishing, competitive, and responsible private sector
- Tightening controls for corruption in World Bank projects to ensure that resources are used for the intended purposes
- Developing stronger collective and collaborative action with developed and developing country partners, the private sector, and civil society

Poor countries face difficult trade-offs. Our role as responsible global partners is to support countries as they work to solve these challenges in a sustainable way. From forests and fisheries to agricultural lands and water supply, the survival of human societies depends upon healthy systems and the sustainable use of these resources. Otherwise, our efforts to reduce poverty, hunger, and child mortality will not be enduring. The World Bank is committed to working closely with all of our development partners not just to protect but also to enhance our planet for future generations.



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