Board wrestles with energy and environment

On Nov 24 the Board reviewed the "New Environmental Strategy for the Energy Sector: Fuel for Thought," in its draft final stage. This strategy was formulated jointly by the EMT and ENV sector boards, and IFC—making it a good model for inter-network cooperation. Numerous comments and suggestions were made, and another draft will be prepared for the Board in early 1999.

Issues raised included:

- Respective roles and responsibilities of developed and developing countries in tackling environmental problems
- Linkages and priorities between local (e.g., air pollution) and global (e.g., climate change) environmental issues
- Sequencing of actions at the local, regional, and global levels
- The Bank's priorities in its assistance program, bearing in mind possible tradeoffs between clients' needs for affordable and plentiful energy for development, and local and global environmental impact
- Pros and cons of the consultation process that was followed in developing the strategy
- Role played by the new Country Energy/Environment Review

The Board indicated strong interest in a full Energy Strategy, which would address not only the environmental agenda in energy but also the other strategic aspects of the Bank's energy work.

ESSD Council retreat confronts key issues

The ESSD Council agreed at its Nov 18 quarterly retreat to bring in representatives from other networks to promote the mainstreaming of sustainable development issues. Nick van Praag outlined a network communications strategy approach, which was approved, and the detailed plan will now be defined. Kevin Cleaver led a discussion of knowledge management, and the Council agreed to prepare a KM strategy, due end Feb. Kevin will chair a strategy group charged with identifying synergies and coordination within ESSD, with other networks, and with external partners.

Bob Watson reported on the climate change meeting in Buenos Aires, Alex McCalla on forests and water, and Maritta Koch-Weser on natural disaster preparedness, all of which have social implications. Andreas Raczynski described the role of the new IFC ombudsman. Bob Watson also introduced a discussion about compliance and quality assurance and outlined plans for the development of a corporate environment strategy. This will form part of a broad sustainable development plan. Full notes are available on the web.

Hello from Ian...

Internal communication is really critical. We discussed it at the recent Council meeting and decided that we should have a short, periodic, issues-oriented newsletter. This is the first issue. All your ideas for the newsletter and how we can improve our communications are welcome. Best wishes for a happy holiday and new year.

Flash from the field

The Guatemala Resident Mission has been working to put together a US$20 million emergency package to help the country cope with consequences of Hurricane Mitch. The Social Investment Fund, the Local Reconstruction Project implemented through the National Fund for Peace (FONAPAZ), the Basic Education Project, and the Roads Project have been re-programed to address the populations worst affected by the hurricane/tropical storm. A complementary Bank Emergency Operation/Loan (preliminary estimate, US$25 million) is being negotiated with the government on Dec 4. The Bank's emergency package should help primarily with the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase that the country is now entering. In
addition, a major effort has been made to coordinate donors: a common UN system approach/strategy is being developed for the eastern part of the country, particularly hard-hit by Mitch.

IFC implements revised environmental review process

IFC’s Environment Division has revisited its environmental review procedure and harmonized its IFC safeguard policies. The revised review process is being implemented for all new IFC investments, and the division is conducting training seminars to introduce all headquarters and field staff to the new policies, procedures, and guidelines.

World Commission on Dams seeks continued Bank cooperation

On Nov 19 and 23 Achim Steiner, Secretary General of the World Commission on Dams (WCD), visited the Bank. In presentations to staff, management and EDs, Mr. Steiner highlighted the need for the Bank to support the work of the commission by providing access to its knowledge base and promote acceptance of the commission’s findings when they are issued in June 2000. Created in 1997, the commission is a pioneering effort by IUCN and the Bank to map a way out of the large dams controversy. It includes key stakeholders in the public and private sectors. The commission’s secretariat is in Cape Town, South Africa. It has raised about 60 percent of its $10 million budget and defined a 2-year work program that will culminate in the development of generally accepted guidelines for decisionmaking on dams.

NGO working group keeps focus on decentralization

The NGO Working Group on the World Bank met at HQ Nov 16-18. Main outcomes were: (a) agreement to follow up the Plan of Action emerging from the Participation Conference, with special reference to collaborating with the Bank on Flagship Country Partnerships to build capacity for primary stakeholder participation and enhancing the Country Assistance Strategy process in partnership countries; (b) collaboration with the Bank in select processes leading up to the WDR 2001 on Poverty; and (c) partnering with the Bank in sponsoring a Civil Society/NGO Information Mall. The NGO Working Group will also assist in disseminating OED’s report on Nongovernmental Organizations in Bank-supported Projects, review the main findings and conclusions at the regional level, and provide feedback to the Bank. Gloria Davis will consult with the committee on the final selection of a new Civil Society/NGO thematic coordinator, as well as the evolving role and function of the NGO Unit under the leadership of the new coordinator once s/he has been selected.

ESSD 18-month calendar coming online

The new calendar will be on the ESSD internal website Jan 1, 1999. Meanwhile, major ESSD-related events through year’s end include:

**December**

1–11 Conference of the Parties (COP II) to the UN Convention on Combating Desertification, Dakar, Senegal

9 “Development and Human Rights,” Address by Mary Robinson, UNHCR Commissioner, HQ H auditorium, 1:10pm

9–10 WWF/WB high-level meeting to consolidate forestry alliance and look at other areas of partnership

14–16 4th Consultative Group Meeting on the Prototype Carbon Fund, HQ

15–16 Annual Water Week Conference, Loews Hotel, Annapolis, Maryland

New ESSD Network publications

Agriculture and the Environment: Perspectives on Sustainable Rural Development Ed. E. Lutz

Coral Reefs: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Management M.E. Hatzizelos, A.J. Hooten, and M. Fodor

Ethics and Values: A Global Perspective J. Serageldin and J. Martin-Brown

New Opportunities for Development: The Desertification Convention (English and French)*

Organizing Knowledge for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Serageldin and Martin-Brown

Partnerships for Global Ecosystem Management: Science, Economics and Law Serageldin and Martin-Brown


— Unless starred, all are formal World Bank publications offered for sale at the InfoShop.

Your ESSD resources

Are you aware of these helpful services and website?

- Bank’s Directory of Expertise: if you register in it, anyone across the Bank looking for someone with your particular skills can find you. To get information or to update your listing, click on [add live link] or contact your Help Desk.

- Social Development and ESSD Network information packets: for use on mission or at meetings to explain what ESSD and the families do; intended primarily for external use. Available from Bonnie Bradford and Alicia Hetzner respectively.

Contributors to this issue include:

Karl Jechoutek, Andres Liebenthal, Mario Marroquin, and Peter Neame. Designed and desktopted by Jim Cantrell; edited by Alicia Hetzner.

HAPPIEST OF HOLIDAYS!!