

MODEL LETTER

Sheikh Hasina, Honorable Prime Minister
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister's Office
Old Sangsad Bhaban
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh
Email: info@pmo.gov.bd; pm@pmo.gov.bd; ps1topm@pmo.gov.bd; psecy@pmo.gov.bd
Fax: +880 2 811 3244 / 3243 / 1015 / 1490

Honorable Prime Minister,

I respectfully request your attention to Global Coal Management Resources' (GCM) proposed construction of an open-pit coal mine in Phulbari. I am concerned about the devastating impacts this project would have on your country's people and environment. Along with thousands of Bangladeshi citizens who have protested this project since 2005, I urge you to ban open-pit coal mining in Phulbari.

As an advocate for human rights, I am very concerned about the thousands of families who would be forcibly displaced from their homes and farmlands. Many studies have shown that cash payments to families displaced by development projects result in their impoverishment. In Bangladesh, where nearly half the population currently has too little to eat, it would be cruelly irresponsible to push hard-working families further into poverty. The mine would also destroy 5,000 hectares of productive agricultural land in Phulbari, further reducing the food supply.

The impact on Indigenous Peoples is of particular concern. According to project documents, at least 2, 200 Indigenous people would be forcibly displaced from their homes and farmlands, in violation of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous leaders say as many as 50,000 Indigenous people in 20 different tribal groups could eventually lose their lands and livelihoods as mining depletes the water table. By breaking apart and dispersing the tribal communities, the Phulbari project could destroy cultures and languages that have sustained tribal peoples in this region for 5,000 years.

In addition to these grave human rights considerations, the Phulbari coal mine project should be rejected on environmental grounds. It would pollute the air, soil, and water for centuries to come, destroy river ecosystems, and threaten the Sundarbans mangrove forests that protect Bangladesh from cyclones and provide critical habitat to many endangered species including the Bengal tiger. It would produce greenhouse gases that cause climate change, further endangering Bangladesh's lowland populations.

Whatever short-term gains GCM offers your government for the Phulbari project, the price in human lives and environmental destruction is too high. By rejecting the Phulbari project and banning open-pit coal mining, you will gain the respect and gratitude of your

citizens now and for generations to come. Please embrace this historic opportunity to defend the human rights of your people and prevent environmental catastrophe.

Respectfully,

CC:

Advocate Mostafizur Rahman, M.P.
Honourable State Minister
Ministry of Land
Room # 305, 3rd Floor, Building # 4,
Bangladesh Secretariat
Dhaka, Bangladesh
E-mail: state_minister@minland.gov.bd

Dr. Hasan Mahmud, M.P.
Honourable State Minister of Environment and Forests
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka, Bangladesh
E-mail : minister@moef.gov.bd. jsadmin@moef.gov.bd

Michael Anderson, Director General, Policy and Global Issue
Department for International Development,
1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE
Fax: + 020 7023 0019
Email: via his Executive Assistant Liz Whitby at: l-whitby@dfid.gov.uk

Richard Calvert, Director General, Finance and Corporate Performance
Department for International Development,
1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE
Fax: +020 7023 0019
Email: via his Executive Assistant Kirsten Stewart at: k-stewart@dfid.gov.uk

James F. Moriarty, US Ambassador to Bangladesh
Embassy of the United States Dhaka
Madani Avenue Baridhara
Dhaka Bangladesh 1212
Email: DhakaPA@state.gov
Fax: (880) (2) 9881677, (880) (2) 9885688