

World Bank Group  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433

10 May, 2012

Dear Robert Zoellick,

Today's investments in energy access are heavily skewed toward traditional large-scale centralized fossil fuel projects. However, according to the IEA, in order to deliver universal energy access, at least half of all people lacking access to energy today will rely on off-grid sources of energy. To date, energy markets have not yet recognized the vast potential off-grid clean energy investment provides for expanding energy services to the world's poor in an economically sustainable fashion. **In order to reverse this situation, and catalyze this important market, the undersigned coalition of civil society organizations supports the call from clean energy access practitioners for the World Bank Group to secure up to \$500 million to de-risk off-grid clean energy investments at the upcoming Rio+20 conference.** We ask for the money to be fully distributed by no later than 2015 and supported by the creation of a consolidated and focused complimentary technical assistance program based on the important work of the Lighting Africa, Lighting India, and Green Power for Mobile programs.

Skewed investment flows prevent practitioners from accessing the capital needed to expand this nascent industry, hire local workers, and help meet the energy needs of the poor. We believe that financial instruments like loan guarantees will be instrumental in un-locking the potential in this market by helping practitioners overcome the false perceptions held by some in the investment community that off-grid clean energy for the poor is an economically unattractive investment. This perception hinders the ability of practitioners to secure loans which in turn hampers our collective ability to meet the United Nations goal of delivering Sustainable Energy for All by 2030. World Bank Group loan guarantees can reverse this situation by making the most effective and efficient use of limited government resources to reduce perceived risk and raise awareness of the viability of this sector.

While loan guarantees will help catalyze the market, they are not enough to ensure long term success. It is vital that they are paired with technical assistance programs dedicated to building the pipeline of projects and practitioners. The World Bank has existing and successful models from which to build that have leveraged private sector resources into sustainable markets to provide affordable off-grid lighting projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. By expanding upon these programs to support the development of a global off-grid, clean energy market, the World Bank can lead the way in achieving the UN Sustainable Energy for All goals.

Ultimately, there is a clear need for transformational interventions at several levels in order to deliver universal energy access. Spurring growth in this nascent sector is an important part of the access solution and delivering on our shared sustainable energy goals. The World Bank Group has a tremendous opportunity to support these efforts by putting a monetary commitment on the table at the upcoming Rio+20 conference. We strongly urge you not to let this opportunity pass, and to ensure the World Bank group leads global efforts to secure universal energy access.

Sincerely,

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Dr. Bharat Jhunjhunwala, Power Policy Analyst India

Carol Muffett, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

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