



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Le Secrétaire général
The Secretary-General

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18 April 2002

Jonathan Lash
Dear Mr Lash,

Thank you for your letter of 14 March in which you reminded me of your suggestion at the last Roundtable on Sustainable Development to hold a Roundtable on export credit agencies (ECAs) and how they could contribute to sustainable development.

In fact, Simon and I have discussed this possibility on a number of occasions. We wondered if it might not be a way to inject a new mix of ideas into the debate. I understand that an opportune time for such a meeting could be towards the end of this year or early next year. I also feel that we would need to think carefully about how to structure such a meeting to make it helpful to all parties who are struggling with this issue.

In the meantime, as you may know, the role of ECAs and officially supported export credits is examined within the OECD Export Credit Group (ECG). Part of its work over the past years has been on "qualitative" aspects of export credits, in particular, with regard to the environment and to the Highly Indebted Poor Countries. Also, in the Export Credit Arrangement, there are extant rules on the provision of tied aid credits to ensure that these are directed only towards projects that cannot attract market-financing in developing countries. Against this background, there will be two opportunities under the auspices of the OECD for NGOs to address the question of the possible contribution of ECAs to sustainable development in the near future:

- The OECD Global Forum on Sustainable Development: Conference on Financing the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development (24-26 April): export credits (part of "Policy coherence of donor assistance strategies") is one of six key issues to be discussed under the sub-heading, "Mainstreaming Environment in International Institutions and Official Development Assistance Programmes" in the session on Strengthening International Partnerships.

.../...

Mr Jonathan Lash
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- The annual consultation (28 May, 2002 all day) between the ECG and interested stakeholders (i.e. NGOs, BIAC, TUAC, buyers' countries and the IFIs). It will address the links between ECA activities and the environment.

I am advised that the Chairman of the ECG, Ms. Birgitta Nygren, will be writing to you to invite you to the consultation on 28 May. I am afraid that I am in Montreal on that date, but will be back early on 30 May and would be very pleased to see you if you attend the consultation and can stay on in Paris that long.

Yours sincerely,

Donald J. Johnston