



MEDIA ALERT

2nd May, 2008

Wayne Swan, use your ADB vote to stop Climate Change

Theatrical demonstration: 5.30pm, 1 Margaret Street, Sydney.

A colourful theatrical demonstration will be held today to urge Australia's Treasurer Wayne Swan not to fund dangerous climate change through the Asian Development Bank (ADB) ahead of the ADB's Annual Meeting in Madrid this weekend.

Dressed in Spanish costumes demonstrators will demand the ADB funding stop funding climate intensive projects outside the ADB's Sydney office.

The ADB is currently considering a proposal to fund a 500 million tonne coal mine in the Phulbari region of northern Bangladesh which will impact up to 500,000 people and release at least 1.2bn tonnes in Co2 emissions. Three people were shot and hundreds wounded in 2006 when 50,000 local Bangladeshi's marched in opposition to the mine.

Event organisers, AID/WATCH and Jubilee Australia are calling on Australia's governor to the ADB, Treasurer Wayne Swan not to support the Phulbari project and to ensure the ADB supports only renewable energy projects which address the needs of communities.

AID/WATCH Co-director Mr. Flint Duxfield commented "If the Australian government is serious about tackling climate change, then it cannot support destructive, climate intensive development projects such as the Phulbari coal mine through its aid budget. Locking developing countries into fossil fuel futures is a recipe for climate catastrophe and poor people in vulnerable countries like Bangladesh will be the worst affected."

As the ADB's fifth largest donor, Australia maintains an influential permanent directorial position on the ADB board and a decisive vote in determining whether projects such as Phulbari go ahead.

Jubilee Australia's Policy and Advocacy director Steph Lusby said "By backing ADB support of projects such as Phulbari the Australian government is sentencing the most vulnerable people in our region to increased poverty and suffering. The people of Bangladesh will lose out twice, first through the destruction of their environment and livelihoods and second through lost social services as their government is forced to repay the erroneous debt such projects incur."

"It's essential that Mr. Swan take leadership by demanding the ADB immediately stop funding climate-intensive projects and assist vulnerable countries such as Bangladesh build resilience to Climate Change and transition to renewable energy futures" said Mr. Duxfield.

Theatrical demonstration: 5.30pm, 1 Margaret Street, Sydney.

For Comment:

Flint Duxfield, AID/WATCH Co-director

0448646559

Steph Lusby, Jubilee Australia Policy and Advocacy director 0433354 964

ABN: 97 491 078 647,

19 Eve St, Erskineville, NSW 2043

PHONE (+61) (02) 9557 8944 FAX (+61) (02) 9557 9822 EMAIL aidwatch@aidwatch.org.au

All donations to AID/WATCH of \$2 or more are tax deductible

www.aidwatch.org.au