

Dear Mr. President,

30 January 2009

the eyes of the world are on you. The hope for a new beginning is great. In your inaugural address you announced „a new era of responsibility“. This appeal is primarily addressed to the world of business but also to the political establishment – and ultimately to yourself. Because the USA have, for decades, opposed and prevented international rules for corporations. Here too, a change is due. The financial sector is not alone in needing much stricter regulation to prevent a rerun of the current crisis a few years down the road. Binding international rules for the protection of people and the environment are urgently needed. The Public Eye in Davos and its sponsoring organizations, Bern Declaration and Greenpeace Switzerland, urge you to adopt worldwide minimum standards that include the following:

Respect People's Rights – Regional communities affected by large scale commercial projects must be consulted at length and their approval is required. This is the only way to make sure that their rights are respected and that they will share in the benefits of infrastructure and industry projects.

No Impunity – Companies that cause serious environmental destruction or are complicit in human rights abuses must not be allowed to do so with impunity simply because the affected country lacks the will or the means to take them to court. It should be possible to bring proceedings against a company and its officers in the country in which the company is based.

Tax Justice – As a Senator you supported the „Stop Tax Havens Abuse Act“ – you know the detrimental effects of tax havens. We now need coordinated international action against these grey zones of the world economy to prevent the circumvention of new and existing rules. Transnational concerns must be obliged to break down their numbers by country.

Climate Protection – an effective follow-up agreement to the Kyoto-Protocol should ensure that all companies of an industry will be held accountable for their CO² –emissions.

In order to successfully confront the world economic crisis and the climate crisis at the same time, an environmental and social restructuring of society is indispensable. The government spending that will be required in one way or another to restart the economy must be used to develop energy efficiency, energies without CO²-emissions, and a sustainable transport infrastructure, while demand should be stimulated by tax-financed redistribution. The regulation of corporate activities will help you realize your ambitious „Green New Deal“. Therefore: Dear Mr. President, regulate corporations now!

Yours cordially and full of hope,

Bern Declaration and Greenpeace Switzerland