



August 4, 2020

Honourable Mary Ng, MP
Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade
Global Affairs Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 1A0

Dear Minister Ng,

We were grateful for the opportunity to meet by phone with members of your staff on July 22. We asked for the call following the [unsatisfactory response](#) from Export Development Canada's President and CEO, Mairead Lavery, to the thousands of [emails](#) she received from Amnesty Canada supporters and others. The emails denounced EDC's [2016 loan](#) to help build the Hidroituango dam in Colombia and called on the agency to provide reparations to the affected communities and advocate for their protection.

During the call, we spoke again of the serious human rights and environmental [harms](#) related to the dam's construction and near collapse. We also expressed grave concern for the safety of members of the Movimiento Ríos Vivos Antioquia, an association of communities affected by the dam. We called on your office to urge Colombian authorities to immediately implement the [collective protections](#) that have already been ordered for Ríos Vivos members, who face violence and death threats for publicly opposing the dam, and [to not reduce](#) the protection measures provided to Ríos Vivos spokesperson Isabel Zuleta.

We further requested that your office urge Colombian authorities to close Hidroituango's work camps in order to minimize the [spread of COVID-19](#), and to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected communities, whose ability to provide for themselves has been compromised by the dam's construction, its near collapse and now the quarantine.

Your office urged us to raise these particular concerns with your Cabinet colleague, Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne. We have indeed done so, and have copied you on that correspondence. In our meeting we requested that your office, and you personally, similarly raise these concerns directly with Minister Champagne, which we are reiterating here.

During the call we also urged the government to complete its review of EDC's governing legislation, the *Export Development Act*, and adopt reforms to make the agency accountable for the human rights consequences of its decisions. The review is currently stalled in the Standing Committee on International Trade, where the former Minister of International Trade Diversification, Jim Carr, [referred his report](#) on the review in June 2019.

Your office committed to ensuring that the next steps in this review are taken in the fall.

Lastly, we called for an independent review of EDC's decision to provide a loan to EPM despite warnings of corruption and social and environmental harm. As we noted, the Inter-American Development Bank Group has already approved [an investigation](#) into its decision to lend money for the project.

We would like to thank you again for the opportunity to speak with your staff. Together with Ríos Vivos, we look forward to updates from your office on steps the Canadian government is taking to ensure that its export bank no longer supports destructive projects like Hidroituango.

Sincerely,



Alex Neve, Secretary General
Amnesty International Canada



Karen Hamilton, Program Officer
Above Ground

cc:

Mairead Lavery, President and CEO of EDC

Martine Irman, Chairperson of EDC's Board of Directors

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay, MP Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, Bloc Québécois

Randy Hoback, MP Prince Albert, Conservative Party

Elizabeth May, MP Saanich-Gulf Islands, Green Party

Judy Sgro, MP Humber River-Black Creek, Liberal Party

Daniel Blaikie, MP Elmwood-Transcona, New Democratic Party

Marcel Lebleu, Ambassador of Canada in Colombia