

Mr. Peter Lallas
GEF Conflict Resolution Commissioner
E-mail: plallas@thegef.org
Global Environment Facility
The World Bank Group, MSN N8-800
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433-002.

Dear Peter,

This letter is to respectfully inform you that Conservation Alliance Tanawthari (CAT) are preparing to take formal complaint proceedings against GEF regarding the Ridge to Reef Project.

We regret that it has come to this point, however this project in its current form has a number of serious implications that threaten the rights of thousands of indigenous people living in Tanintharyi Region, the rights of refugees and IDPs to return to their lands and rebuild their lives after decades of conflict, and the fragile peace process between the Karen National Union and the Myanmar government. Furthermore, this project has been developed without the knowledge or consent of the communities that stand to be impacted by it.

When we have met with project proponents, there seems to have been a clear absence of responsibility being taken for the project and the negative implications that it has for local communities. Further, key information pertaining to the project has been withheld and no one has been able to inform us of who has been consulted, of what the project will entail, or of any meaningful guarantees to safeguard the rights of indigenous communities, the rights of refugees to return to their lands, or actions to ensure that the project will not jeopardise the delicate peace process.

Please find the complaint letter attached in the connecting email, which will be lodged with the GEF grievance procedure on 16th July 2018.

We hope that the direction of this project can be urgently changed to protect the rights of indigenous communities and ensure a future of environmental protection that centres on the rights of local communities, rather than excluding them.

If alternative approaches to conservation can be adopted by the project and accepted by the government such as the recognition of Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs), CAT will work with indigenous communities and refugees and IDPs to map community territories and formalise management plans in order that their rights, lands and livelihoods can be protected.

We would like to invite the GEF and the Ridge to Reef management team to discuss alternative proposals with CAT and indigenous communities, and establish a solution that is beneficial for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Conservation Alliance Tanawthari

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