



Canada

International Centre for Ocean Development  
Centre international d'exploitation des océans

March 12 1992

Mrs. Elisabeth Mann Borgese  
Pearson Institute  
Dalhousie University  
1312 Edward Street  
Halifax, NS B3 3J5

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Dear Elisabeth,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter that I wrote on <sup>your name</sup> ~~our~~ behalf to all ICOD board members. I thought the official letter of termination from the PCO totally arrogant and disrespectful.

I have also written individual brief personal letters, again on behalf of the board, to all the employees at ICOD. It's the least they deserve.

What else is there to say?!

Fondly,

John Vandermeulen  
Erstwhile Vice-Chair ICOD



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To Board Members

March 12 1992

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

By now you will have received your notification from the Privy Council's Office that ICOD has been discontinued. I deeply regret to confirm that this has indeed happened. As the letter from the PMO did not contain any more information than that terse notification, I felt that you were entitled to some further information. I am writing similar letters to all other board members, and have written all of the staff on behalf of the board also.

ICOD's entire activities are in fact in the process of being wound down, and all existing and ongoing project are being transferred to Ottawa to be carried on by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). All its staff are being laid off, from the president down to the receptionists, and I expect that the doors will be officially locked by the end of April. This includes the ICOD sub-offices in Ottawa, Dakar, and Fiji.

There were no indications or even rumors that this would happen. At the very moment of the announcement, our new president, Mr. Alan Farmer, was himself in Malmö to discuss future joint projects with officials of the Swedish International Aid Agency. And, the Hon. Mme Monique Landry, minister responsible for ICOD, had made plans, just a few weeks prior to this, to attend a special ICOD reception in Halifax.

ICOD's dissolution was part of a general move to eliminate, reduce, or restructure some 46 different "stand-alone" agencies, boards, and commissions of the Canadian government. It would appear that there were mixed motives - including reducing federal spending, reducing the size of government as perceived by the public, and reducing the number of such "stand-alone" bodies.

ICOD got caught out in the middle of this sweep for reasons that are not clear, at least to me. Unfortunately that doesn't help our 65 or so staff who are now faced with a very uncertain future. There is no offer from the federal government to absorb them elsewhere into government employment. Staff is presently negotiating a severance package, and they have been extended the services of counselling and job relocation firms.

Ongoing and committed projects will continue, but these will now be administered from Ottawa from within CIDA. I am less sure of non-committed programming, but Gary Comber will undoubtedly be informing all relevant and concerned parties.

I deeply regret this decision by our government in Ottawa, in terms

of the inevitable loss of a vital and unique program that had been built up over the last eight years. We, staff and the board, believed that we were moving very solidly, with new ideas, and responding in a sensitive and substantive way to assist our friends in the developing world in the new area of ocean resource management. It will not be a simple matter of moving that 'rapport' to an overcrowded desk in CIDA.

As for our ICOD staff, I do not have the words to tell them of my deepest regrets that this happened. It becomes impossible when we really can not explain it.

On behalf of Elisabeth Borgese, who had to be out of country, and the other fellow board members, I want to express my deepest thanks to you for your commitment to the work of ICOD. It was a great personal pleasure to have met you, and worked with you.

With best regards,

John H. Vandermeulen, Ph.D.  
Former Vice-Chairman Board of Directors