September 24, 2000

Dear President O'Neil,

On the occasion of IDRC's 30th anniversary, I am writing to express my warm congratulations. I would like also to congratulate yourself to preside over such an honorable organization as IDRC at its 30th birthday and at the beginning of a new millennium.

When you came to Beijing last November, we jointly reviewed the last 20 years fruitful collaboration between IDRC and China. A group of leading Chinese researchers and research administrators reported their rewarding projects with IDRC's assistance. Behind the successful stories I saw devoted and highly professional staff, effective and efficient mechanism of delivery, and evolution of policy focus of IDRC according to reality of the developing world.

As you know, IDRC was among the first international donor agencies that started support research projects in China in the early 1980s, when we just opened up to the outside world. You helped us strengthen the basic agricultural and forestry science. The focus was initially on improving the scientific basis of research on crop and tree varieties, such as cereal canola, oilcrop rapeseed, the tree species of pawlonia and bamboo. During the process, IDRC exposed our researchers to international research and training in research skills, thus enhancing the local research capacity building. With the well-established extension network and vast area of farmland in China, the economic benefits have been significant, particularly for the people in remote regions. Later on, equal success was achieved when IDRC shifted its focus onto farming systems and agro-forestry.

With continuous IDRC's support, combined with other channels of international collaboration, a group of leading scientists and researchers has emerged in our research community. The expertise and new approaches gained from implementing IDRC-supported projects have been incorporated into our National Five-year Plans. One typical example is the biological pests control on which IDRC supported project served as pioneering research and paved the way for further studies and nationwide
Similarly, as we are striving to implement the West China Development Strategy to narrow the gap between the east and the west regions, we intend to draw the knowledge pool accumulated in the ongoing projects of Community Based Natural Resource Management program in desert Tarum Basin and karst mountainous rural Guizhou and Pan Asia Networking Program in Tibet. In this endeavor we will continue to benefit from IDRC's significant in-house knowledge and experience and that of your partners and networks.

The policy implications of IDRC supported projects in China can also be told in the medicare sector. Based on previous projects starting from 1980's, we are implementing the project of Strengthening Strategic Planning in the Health Sector in China. Its objective is to design and implement a new model of organization and financing for community-based health care in urban areas based on the principles of family health care. The project, among other parallel schemes, serves as a pilot experiment and is expected to point the general direction for future medical care reform in the most populated nation in the world.

My personal experience in participating partially in our joint projects were both enlightening and enjoyable, first with the Decade Review of Science and Technology Policy Reform in China and then its follow up project in China's National Strategy of International Science and Technology Cooperation. Leading policy researchers and practitioners from Canada and other parts of the world, together with their Chinese counterparts, addressed science and technology policy issues of China. The lively debates and discussions made direct contributions towards the policy thinking of the Chinese Government.

In conclusion, I would to say that the present world, with increasing information and knowledge divide, needs more of IDRC's professional assistance. I am looking forward to working with you even closely to address the development problems facing China and other less developed parts of the world.

Sincerely,

Zhu Lilan
Minister
Ministry of Science and Technology
For practically half of IDRC's 30-year existence, its research and development program had first priority in my professional life. As a Senior Research Fellow, I did the landmark book: BEYOND MANILA: PHILIPPINE RURAL PROBLEMS IN PERSPECTIVE. Through this publication, my rural development credentials were launched and a career path established.

But of much deeper meaning than this book are the eleven years I spent in IDRC's Board of Governors, without missing a single meeting. In other words, during those years, I devoted a great deal of time on IDRC. I not only understood what IDRC was all about but respected very much its philosophy. I knew the people who made things happen whether at Headquarters or at the Regional Offices. Its CORPORATE CULTURE was a reflection of the fact that development and developing countries lie at the heart of its raison d'être. The problems of those who have less in life were those who deserved more of its research resources. I was very proud that Canada was extremely supportive of a philosophy that was rare among rich countries. Both the substance of its program and the methods by which research projects were identified, developed, and funded and the manner with which research capacity was developed were pioneering, risk-taking, anticipatory but always relevant not only to the immediate but to the more distant future. Long before the computer and the information age became part of everyday life, IDRC already had an Information Sciences Division which started information networks of many kinds. Long before participation and partnership became fashionable in international development circles, IDRC was already partnering and participatory in its approach.

There were countless initiatives which IDRC supported at a time when they were just a "gleam in the eye" of development thinkers. A few of these are: agroforestry; dryland agriculture; fisheries and aquaculture; bananas and plantains; food policy research; economic policy research in Africa, Latin America and Asia; economy and the environment in Southeast Asia; health research as essential link to equity in development; indigenous knowledge and genetic resources; community-based natural resource management; local governance; micro-impacts of macro-adjustment policies; evaluation and self-assessment capacity development; farming systems research; changes in rice farming in Asia (the first research network at IRRI); women-in-development. CODESRIA (social sciences) in Africa; urban problems and even urban agriculture; population and development, etc.! As a consequence of these innovative research ventures, many development researchers owe their beginnings and eventual maturity to IDRC networks which gave them a sense of identity; a consciousness of kind; and a solidarity with other researchers in similar circumstances. This is of immeasurable value in this world which has gotten smaller but not always
better and wiser. IDRC researchers were always encouraged to be grounded in field realities so they could learn not only with their minds but also with their hearts.

Most of all, IDRC taught us interdisciplinarity in practice; social equality regardless of language, color, creed, race and gender; dignity even as we dialogue with those who have more in life; and INTERNATIONALITY in HUMANITY is one great legacy I personally acknowledge. The global policy discussions; the in-house debates on capacity development strategies; the reviews of research projects (intended and completed); the research networks within and across continents; and the field trips which enabled us to touch base with the powerful and the powerless gave us real-life lessons few development professionals have the privilege to receive. In the many visits I have made in other countries through other "incarnations" there is almost always a story of an IDRC "presence" which is said to have made a difference.

Thank you for making our development your reason for being. This has made us think of SIGNIFICANT OTHERS beyond ourselves.

Gelia T. Castillo
Re: Guiyang Workshop, China, October 16-20, 2000

Dear Mr. Tyler,

Although I did have the opportunity to tell you so during the Guiyang workshop, I want to reiterate to you how very impressed I was by the event. When I look back over all the symposia and workshops that I have attended in the past 40 years, many of them in Asia, I can think of none that was so successful, either in terms of content or form. Although it was rigorously planned, the activities program still left sufficient room for spontaneous initiatives. Despite the heavy schedule, there was still time for participants to catch their breath. It is also true that our hosts, both the members of the Guizhou Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the staff of the Jin Yang Hotel where most of our activities took place, were fully up to the task. The result was a week that struck an excellent balance of work (workshops, presentations, poster sessions, questions-and-answers and discussions) but also allowed for informal conversations, and for some rest and relaxation, including some wonderfully healthy food! I found that having several IDRC representatives on hand at all times, far from seeming invasive, was in fact very effective, reassuring and stimulating. Many participants must have had the impression that the workshop had been the object of a whole series of preparatory sessions, while I assume that, even if a great deal of work went into setting up the event, it was in no sense pre-cooked. The participants, I noted, came from an astonishing range of places and situations, and to bring them all together in this way was in itself a real feat. Above all, the fact that the chemistry worked, that everyone got on so well together, the success of the visit to the minority communities in the mist-shrouded and well-watered hills of Guizhou, all bore witness to the sound rationale of the gathering.

Beyond this very favorable overall impression, I was also struck -- and this is what seems to me particularly important -- by the contents and substance of the workshop, the professional activities if you like, which were exceedingly enriching for everyone, and certainly for me. I learned a great deal both about the importance of community management of natural resources and about the fine work that many of the teams supported by IDRC are doing in the area of both research and practical application of management principles. The scope of initiatives and successes is amazing. I am
thinking, among others, of water management from Xinjiang to Pakistan, including the foothills of the Nepalese Himalayas, coastal fisheries in Cambodia and in the Philippines, and the development of sustainable agriculture in many regions of almost a dozen Asian countries, including among minority groups such as in China and Vietnam, the growing involvement and recognition of women, and the educational presentation of issues and activities including the remarkable one by the Cambodian team from Ratanakiri. All these initiatives are clearly the result of time-consuming and detailed work, often unrewarding, which was apparently only made possible by a lucky combination of skills, motivations and well-targeted institutional support.

During that long journey to Guiyang, undertaken in the very midst of the teaching year, I came to ask myself what kind of mission I was embarked upon, and why I had to go to such a remote place to take part in a workshop. But from my first day in Guiyang, despite the rather bleak weather, despite the headiness occasioned by the presence of so many people from such disparate backgrounds, I no longer asked myself what I was doing there, I knew that I had come on a voyage of learning and discovery. And believe me, it was not in vain.

Once again, then, I want to transmit to you, and to all of your colleagues at IDRC, my appreciation and my congratulations for a model workshop, one that has left its mark and has established a solid foundation for networking among the researchers that you are supporting and training. I am certain that, like me, all of your guests will long retain the lessons of this workshop, and that happy memories will come back to them whenever they have occasion to say, proudly, "I was at Guiyang!"

Please accept, my dear Mr. Tyler, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Rodolphe De Koninck
Professor
17 October 2000

Maureen O’Neil,
President Gordon S. Smith, Chairman
Fax: (613) 235-6391

Dear Maureen and Gordon,

Only a prior commitment in Asia prevents me from joining you in the celebration of IDRC’s 30th anniversary. I’m sad that this is so, for the Centre is dear to me and I should have liked very much to be with you on such a special occasion. From its imaginative conception in the mind of Maurice Strong, the support given it in its earliest year by Prime Ministers Pearson and Trudeau, during the brilliant leadership of David Hopper, and through the thirteen years that I was privileged to be associated with it, IDRC was an important part of my life. To be able now to witness its reputation and accomplishments under your guidance gives me much pleasure and pride.

The Centre has been effective not simply because of its unique mandate but because of the superb quality of the persons associated with it in Ottawa and in the Regional Offices. These women and men have made a difference because they have been both professional and caring. IDRC, almost alone in the ODA community, has presented a human, sensitive face to those whose partnership it was proud to nurture. Happily this facet has been well understood and supported by those distinguished persons that have served on its Board of Governors.

To the entire IDRC family, I extend greetings and congratulations. In this message Ann joins enthusiastically. Each of us is a proud Centre alumnus, and each remembers fondly our happy and fulfilling years there.

With warmest good wishes.

Sincerely,
Ivan
Dear President Maureen O'Neil,

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of IDRC, I would extend my warmest congratulations to you and IDRC on behalf of the State Forestry Administration, the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF), and in the name of myself, and express my heartfelt gratitude for the support and cooperation from IDRC in forestry and various other fields.

In the 30 years since its establishment, IDRC has played a vital role in international cooperation and research, particularly in forestry and environment, has offered generous support to many developing countries, making itself a worldwide famous and influential international research institution.

Starting from 1979, the cooperation between IDRC and China has, in over 20 years, given great support to the construction of environment and forestry research in China, of which the research projects implemented by the Chinese Academy of Forestry have been as much as 18, with a total grant of $4.5 million Canadian dollars, covering more than 40 project sites in 16 provinces and regions of China, and generating considerable social, ecological and economic benefits in China.

The implementation of the cooperative projects supported by IDRC has enabled CAF to acquire much experience in research management and policy-making, which has greatly upgraded our level of research management and strengthened the capabilities of Chinese forestry scientists and technicians.

In 1997, with the support from IDRC and International Fund for Agricultural Development in Rome, the first international organization that has based its headquarters in China - the International Network of Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) was established under the joint sponsorship of the Chinese Government and Canadian Government. The setup of the organization has been vigorously pushing the development of bamboo and rattan in the world as well as in China, facilitating poor people of developing countries getting out of poverty and promoting the improvement and protection of the global ecological environment.

At present, China is implementing the strategy of grand development of the western region, which is an important decision made by the Chinese Government at the turning point of the century. It will effectively ameliorate the ecological environment of China's west, even of the whole country, and stimulate the improvement of global ecological environment and climatic conditions. Now the Global Environment Facility, UNDP and
World Bank etc. show great concern about the development of China’s west. As well we expect IDRC to participate and support the development of China’s west. Along with the acceleration of the integration of world economy, international cooperation and exchange will play an increasing part. The 30 years of history, research expertise and rich experience in international cooperation of IDRC will make it play an even greater role on the international stage.

Finally, I wish IDRC greater achievements in the coming century and wish you, President Maureen O’Neil, a good health and a successful career.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Jian Zehui
President
Chinese Academy of Forestry
Dear President Maureen O'Neil:

I have known the IDRC for more than 15 years and developed a fruitful collaboration between IDRC and Beijing in the field of health services in 1985. I was invited to participate in a WHO meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) in Geneva. At the meeting I made a presentation and showed the importance of infant pneumonia, particularly newborn and young infant pneumonia, which accounted for about 25-30% of infant mortality rate in China as well as in the developing world. After my presentation, a young lady came to meet with me. She introduced herself as representative of the International Development Research Center of Canada and expressed here interest in my report. It was the story that I knew IDRC. A delegation of IDRC soon visited my institution in Beijing - the Capital Institute of Pediatrics, National Advisory Center for Child Health and Disease Control. Resulting from the visiting, we started the cooperative research with IDRC in the field of disease control and health service system.

The first two IDRC projects in the Capital Institute of Pediatrics were "Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Pneumonia in Rural China (1986-1990), and "Previous Strategies for Reducing the Risks of Death Due to Pneumonia in Children in Rural China" (1993-1996). They focussed on the prevention and management of childhood pneumonia - the first killer in infant and child mortality in rural areas in China. The Ministry of Health of China paid much concern and support to them. Based on the successful results and recommendations of the projects, MOH developed a National Program of ARI Control, which was recognized as the first priority of strategies in control of high infant and childhood mortality rates in China.

Our third IDRC cooperative project is the Strengthening Strategic Planning in the Health Sector in China, which are being implemented in Beijing and Chengdu since 1998. This project would provide a new model of community-based health system in urban and suburban areas for the health system reform being carried out in China. Ministry of Health established a project committee. Preliminary results, for example, training model for family physicians and community nurses and identification of main functions of community health centers and stations have been accepted by Beijing Municipal Government and been introduced to more areas in the city.

All IDRC projects were related with the most important health problems and health
strategies. The results of the projects were regarded not only by the local people but also by the nation-wide. The recommendations were adopted in national programs of disease control. We sure that the third project will provide important reference to Chinese Government for implementation of health reform.

When I initiated the collaboration between the Capital Institute of Pediatrics and IDRC in 1985, I was the head of the institute. A few years latter, I moved to the Beijing Municipal Government as the Director-General of Beijing Municipal Health Bureau. Although that, I am still supervising the IDRC project and concerning the cooperation between IDRC and China. I believe that IDRC is our good friend and always ready to contribute to health development in China.

On behalf of Beijing Municipal Health Bureau and myself I would like to express the deep thanks to IDRC and wish the cooperation relationship between IDRC and China develop continuously and successfully.

With best regards,

Zonghan Zhu, M.D.
Director-General
Beijing Municipal Health Bureau
Beijing, 100053
China