

# HABITAT



## UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Office of the Executive Director

Postmarked Nairobi 9.1.81  
Postmarked Denpasar 17.1.81  
Arrived Sayan 23.1.81

Dear George,

8 January 1981.

re: INS/78/059

Good to get your letter of 2 December. I assume that you have my cable of 8 January and that, by the time you get this, I shall have a reply from you. However, I wanted to send a letter immediately to put you in the picture, so that you don't go wrong, if you participate in the upcoming mission to Jakarta.

First of all, let me say that I did not get any comments from you on the draft Prodoc and probably shan't for another week at least. However, this is not important, since the technicalities of the project are probably the least crucial aspect at this stage. The important thing is to get some kind - any kind - of workable project accepted by the Government and off the ground.

Our adviser for the project, Nick Houghton, will be coming to Jakarta. He is largely responsible for drafting the existing Prodoc and naturally feels some pride of authorship about it. Please respect this. If you want to suggest changes, bear in mind that the purpose is not to improve the substance of the project. The purpose of changes is:

- (a) To make the project acceptable for Government signature. Any request of the Government in this regard should be supported, unless it is so outrageously stupid that even the Resrep will question it.
- (b) To make the project administratively workable from our viewpoint. No fancy streamlining ideas, please - the UN is an old-fashioned bureaucracy, and slowness is the order of the day. Tight deadlines, intricate co-ordination etc. are out.
- (c) To meet any objections of the Resrep which do not clash with the Government's desires. Government first, Resrep second.

Keep changes to the minimum, no matter how silly the document seems at present.

Mr. W.G. Clarke,  
P.O. Box 15,  
Denpasar,  
Indonesia.

*This letter took only 8 days from  
Nairobi to Denpasar.  
My second letter (comments on PRODOC)  
was posted in Denpasar on  
31.12.80. It should have arrived  
in N*

...../



Nick Houghton is very conscious that he is in charge and that you will be assisting him. Don't be pushy or emphasize your acquaintance with Government officials that he doesn't know. He has consultants of his own in mind and will probably spend some time in Indonesia chatting up ex-Ford people and so on that he has thoughts of bringing into the project.

Always think of this as a sales job where the important thing is to develop a product the customer (Government) will buy and where the quality of the product is very much a secondary consideration. I think minimum acceptable quality is a good phrase to keep in mind. There have been two previous consultants on this project, and they have both made a balls-up, so Houghton is prejudiced against you from the start. If he comes back with a bad report, I am going to have trouble explaining to the Executive Director.

For what it's worth, my personal feeling is that the UN can never field 10 experts to carry out the core studies. The Strategy should be prepared by a contracting firm. The four subsidiary studies may be bait to the Government, because of the suggestion that Indonesian firms will get the contracts. I don't know whether any Indonesian firms have the capabilities. If not, the fewer contracts the better because the co-ordination and administration of four or five contracts is going to be a massive headache. If we go to subcontract for all the technical work, we shall of course still need a full-time Chief Adviser as our representative in the field - maybe even two people: I can't judge that because I'm not there. See that the provisions for local administration are workable - vehicles, maintenance, secretarial, equipment and supplies, office space, furniture. If in doubt, suggest including it in the Prodoc.

All UN projects are unworkable as written: that is part of the game we play with Governments. The important thing is to have capacity within the project to produce a workable result once we are in action. We shall eventually produce whatever we are capable of producing, no matter what the objectives of the project were said to be when we started.

Anyway, this letter is already long enough, so I'll say no more. I hope I get the chance to see you in Bali sometime, but there is no prospect right now. Good luck with the assignment if it works out.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Hyland, Chief,  
Technical Co-operation Policy  
and Co-ordination Unit,