

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**OPIC Criticized For Ongoing Systemic Weaknesses,
More Than One Year After Report on Disastrous Liberia Project**

(WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 19, 2016) — Two reports have been published highlighting persistent systemic weaknesses at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (“OPIC”), the U.S. Government’s development finance institution. Critically, both reports identify risks that OPIC is not meeting its development mandate by failing to ensure that its projects achieve positive development impacts.

On January 11, 2016, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (“GAO”) released a report criticizing the agency’s monitoring of the environmental, social and development impacts of its projects. The report noted that OPIC’s reliance on client-reported data, with little on-site or off-site verification, “increases the potential that OPIC is relying on inaccurate or incomplete data.” Where onsite visits have taken place, the GAO report notes that the lack of any specific requirement for timely documentation of those visits has resulted in visit reports written several years after the visits occur. The report concluded that “OPIC’s current monitoring processes may not provide adequate information on projects’ annual policy compliance and development impact status to support program goals.”

Today, Accountability Counsel released a scorecard report criticizing OPIC’s implementation of the recommendations of OPIC’s own Office of Accountability (“OA”), made following the OA’s review of OPIC’s disastrous biofuel project in Liberia. In January 2014, hundreds of Liberian farmers, charcoalers and workers filed a complaint about harm caused by OPIC’s investment in the failed project. In September 2014, the OA released its report, finding many of the allegations of harm credible and making a number of recommendations in order to avoid such harm recurring in the future. The scorecard report finds that OPIC’s response to those recommendations has been vague and incomplete. The report scores OPIC’s performance against a number of criteria, with OPIC achieving a score of only 35 out of a possible 170 points.

OPIC recently initiated a review of its Environmental and Social Policy Statement. OPIC must use this opportunity to comprehensively resolve the weaknesses identified by these reports. Without those changes, OPIC risks repeating the mistakes it made in Liberia and again leaving vulnerable communities worse off as a result of its investments.

Notes for editors

1. The full GAO report is available at <http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/674142.pdf>. A one-page “highlights” document is also available at <http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/674141.pdf>.
2. More information about the Liberia case can be found at <http://www.accountabilitycounsel.org/communities/current-cases/liberia-biomass-project-of-buchanan-renewables/>. The complaint itself and the accompanying report are available at <http://www.accountabilitycounsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/OPIC-Complaint-Letter.pdf> and <http://www.accountabilitycounsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Fueling-Human-Rights-Disasters-smaller-file.pdf>. The OA’s Report is available at [https://www.opic.gov/sites/default/files/files/OA%20Buchanan%20Report\(1\).pdf](https://www.opic.gov/sites/default/files/files/OA%20Buchanan%20Report(1).pdf).

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