

**Statement by Civil Society Organizations, peasant communities,  
Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples and people with disabilities in the  
face of the election of the new president of the Inter-American  
Development Bank (IDB)**

August 2020

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is the primary source of financing for Latin America and the Caribbean and, as such, has a crucial responsibility for the development of the region. In turn, it is a relevant actor that participates in the formulation and implementation of structural reforms in the States of the region, with the promise of promoting development and reducing poverty in our countries. However, as Civil Society Organizations, peasant communities, Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples, and people with disabilities, we have repeatedly questioned the development model proposed by the Bank, highlighting that its actions have generated severe adverse environmental and social impacts. Besides, it has affected different local communities and populations through the development of extractive, infrastructure, energy, agribusiness, and transportation policies and projects, a large part of which is carried out despite the existence of essential flaws and errors in their design and implementation. Additionally, we have highlighted on several occasions the existing weaknesses in terms of access to information on projects and the processes of public consultation, participation, and accountability proposed by the Institution.

This panorama adds to the current crisis of multilateralism that the world is going through; the socio-ecological and climatic crisis that has a particularly severe impact on Latin America; the historical problems of inequity, inequality and poverty in the region; and the current context marked by the Covid-19 pandemic and its ensuing economic, social and health repercussions -as the region has become the new epicenter of the pandemic, according to the World Health Organization-. In this context, the transition in the IDB presidency becomes a vital issue for the future of the region. Faced with this, we raise our concern in relation to the characteristics and conditions of the selection process for the new presidency and, particularly, with regard to the decision of the United States government to nominate a US candidate to head the Institution.

First of all, we express our disagreement with the new IDB president's selection process, since it does not give space to the participation of social organizations and communities. Historically, we have been an excluded part of this and other Bank processes, despite being the main beneficiaries, and in many cases, also the main harmed by the actions of the IDB. The election must go beyond voting, and open spaces for dialogue between male and female candidates with civil society and communities. After 15 consecutive years under the leadership of a presidency that impregnated particular, and in many cases questionable, characteristics to the management and actions of the Bank, a unique opportunity is presented to learn more about the positions and proposals of the different candidates, in relation to the concerns and demands of civil society and the communities, and in relation to the current context in the region.

Secondly, we consider that today more than ever, the IDB requires a qualified leader capable of having a critical position for the role that the Institution plays in the face of the complex panorama that the region is experiencing. And who is predisposed and capable of promoting a different model of development with the objective of "achieving development in a sustainable and climate-friendly way." In this sense, we believe that the person appointed to the presidency of the IDB necessarily must meet a series of requirements that include, among others, the following: 1) a clear and express commitment to multilateralism, at a time when the legitimacy of international institutions is being questioned and attacked; 2) extensive experience and knowledge of the reality of the countries of the region and the challenges they face in the current context; 3) a clear commitment to transparency, accountability and the participation of communities, indigenous peoples and civil society in the actions of the Institution; 4) knowledge and experience in development agendas that reflect a commitment to public interest, the protection and promotion of human rights, gender equality, the need to face the effects of climate change immediately and to bet on a genuinely sustainable development model focused on communities and indigenous peoples.

Third, we express our concern and rejection of the United States government's decision to present a North American candidate to chair the Bank. This not only goes against the IDB's unwritten rule that a Latin American representative must always lead the Institution, but it also threatens the decision-making capacity of the Bank's borrowing countries, given that the United States has the highest percentage of capital and votes within the Institution. Additionally, bearing in mind the characteristics and multilateral actions of the United States' current administration, a large part of the requirements that we consider essential for the future presidency of the IDB would not be met.

Fourth, we ask the future IDB presidency to promote that the Institution has a more significant commitment to generating norms, policies, and actions aligned with international agreements on human rights, labor rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, climate change and the protection of human rights defenders and the environment. As well as treaties particularly relevant to the region that seek the protection of the environment and environmental democracy, such as the Escazú Agreement.

Fifth, we request that the Bank strengthen its accountability mechanisms and commit to attend, repair, and guarantee that the negative impacts generated by the projects financed by the Institution do not repeat.

Finally, we insist on the need for financial institutions like the IDB to transform their assessments of what development is, and the ways to achieve it. There are alternatives to the historically implemented models that have not generated the promised well-being. To advance on them and their results, it is necessary to know how to listen and make the communities of the region participate in decision-making.

We hope that the IDB will rise to the current circumstances and take advantage of this opportunity to ensure that whoever becomes president of the Bank is truly the most qualified and appropriate person to lead it in the face of the complex moment the region is going through.

Signatures

1. Abogados y abogadas del Noroeste argentino en Derechos Humanos y Estudios Sociales (ANDHES) - Argentina
2. ADECOR – Guatemala
3. Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad (AAS) – Colombia
4. Asociación Arariwa – Perú
5. Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente (AIDA) – Regional
6. Asociación Manuelita y Analy (Maw Lsp) – Perú
7. Asociación Peruana de Abogados con Discapacidad Visual – Perú
8. Asociación Psico Inclusiva Kipu Llaxta – Perú
9. Associação de Favelas de São José dos Campos sp – Brasil
10. Autismo Perú – Perú
11. Cáritas – Brasil
12. Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) – Estados Unidos
13. Centro de Desarrollo Humano (CDH) – Honduras
14. Centro Mocovi Ialek Lav'a – Argentina
15. Centro para el Desarrollo del indígena Amazónico (CEDIA) – Perú
16. CGTP – Perú
17. Ciudadanos por Municipios Transparentes (CIMTRA-Jalisco) – México
18. Comunidades Unidas – Colombia
19. CooperAcción – Perú
20. Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas (CONGCOOP) – Guatemala
21. Cultura Ecológica – México
22. Daniel Barragán (Adhesión Personal) – Ecuador
23. Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales – Perú
24. Ecoa - Ecologia e Ação – Brasil
25. Enlaces por la Sustentabilidad – El Salvador
26. Estudios combativos – México
27. Foro Social de la Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras (FOSDEH) – Honduras
28. Fórum Mudanças Climáticas e Justiça Socioambiental (FMCJS) – Brasil
29. Fraternidad Cristiana de Personas Enfermas y con Discapacidad – Perú
30. Fundación CAUCE - Cultura Ambiental Causa Ecologista – Argentina
31. Fundación Construir – Bolivia
32. Fundación Economía para el Desarrollo – Guatemala

33. Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano – Ecuador
34. Fundación para el Desarrollo de Políticas Sustentables (Fundeps) – Argentina
35. Greenway World Solutions – Ecuador
36. Iniciativa para las Inversiones Sustentables China-América Latina (IISCAL) – Ecuador
37. Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas (Ibase) – Brasil
38. Instituto Equit – Brasil
39. Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un Derecho Alternativos (ILSA) – Colombia
40. International Accountability Project (IAP) – Internacional
41. International Rivers – Brasil
42. Jasy Renyhê – Bolivia
43. LATINDADD – Perú
44. Mesa de Discapacidad y Derechos – Perú
45. Movimento Católico Global pelo Clima (GCCM) – Brasil
46. Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB) – Brasil
47. Mov. Nacional Fé e Política – Brasil
48. Oxfam
49. Paz y Esperanza – Perú
50. Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad – Guatemala
51. Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER) – México/América Latina
52. RedGE – Perú
53. Sociedad Peruana de Ingeniería Geográfica, Ecológica y Ambiental – Perú
54. Sociedad y Discapacidad (SODIS) – Perú
55. Sustentarse – Chile