

Open letter to the World Bank Group Board of Executive Directors

13 February, 2019

Appointment of the new World Bank Group President

The selection of the new World Bank president takes place amid a crisis of multilateralism reflected in the ascent of anti-establishment and nationalist parties and increased trade tensions. These arise from persistent challenges to the world economy ranging from the growing [inequality crisis](#), the increasing importance of finance, financial markets, and financial institutions in the economy, a looming debt crisis and increased corporate capture that is resulting in the erosion of states' sovereignty and their ability to meet their human rights obligations. These trends are exacerbated by the quickly evolving climate change crisis, which threatens the livelihoods of the poorest around the globe.

The World Bank requires a leader able and willing to critically assess the role the Bank can play in challenging the failed model that has led us here. The next president must ensure the institution leads by example and uses its privileged position to articulate the need for radical change. More than ever the World Bank requires a president who is qualified to lead what is still the world's principal public development bank.

It is therefore imperative that the selection process results in the appointment of the best candidate, chosen from a wide-ranging pool of people with the background and experience required.

One thing is certain, at a time when the legitimacy of international institutions is increasingly under attack, reliance on the previous process, where the US and its European allies work behind closed doors to ensure the selection of a US World Bank president in exchange for the European leadership of the IMF will only further erode confidence in the multilateral system. It is of vital importance therefore that the next president has the support of the majority of low and middle-income countries, to which World Bank lending is restricted.

We are pleased that the Board has already affirmed its [commitment](#) to an "open, merit-based and transparent process", and that it has outlined some broad job requirement [criteria](#). The application of these principles in practice during the present selection process is made more relevant by the World Bank's stated commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, which call for "effective, accountable and transparent institutions" and "responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels."

We think, however, that these must be significantly strengthened by including five main points:

- Candidates must have proven knowledge of - and experience working on - development issues and a commitment to the public interest. This includes a demonstrated understanding of, and experience in working to address, the challenges to transformational change faced by developing countries.
- Candidates must commit to ensuring that the World Bank engages, at all levels, with a wide variety of parties of divergent views – including critical academics, social movements and civil society organisations in World Bank programme countries – to consider approaches anchored in existing human rights law.
- Candidates must be committed to a multilateral system explicitly designed to support the poor and marginalised to avail themselves of their human rights. They must be able to articulate how they would address increasing inequality, corporate capture, erosion of policy space and related social polarisation and disenfranchisement.

- Candidates must be required to outline their strategies for ensuring the World Bank takes – as a matter of utmost urgency – immediate steps to align all aspects of its lending and activities with the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Finally, the selection process must also require candidates to detail how they would address the increasing exclusion of civil society from decision-making, violation of human rights, violence against environmental and human rights defenders and the ongoing erosion of social and environmental standards by states and institutions, which is exacerbated by competition for private sector finance.

The Board must ensure that the next World Bank president assumes leadership in ensuring the end of the current revolving door between World Bank staff and the private sector and related conflicts of interest.

Recognising that this process is already underway and that the US has officially announced its nominee, we strongly urge the Board to encourage and consider other nominees, particularly from the Global South.

In that regard we also reiterate the calls made by civil society organisations during the [2012 selection process](#) and demand:

1. A process that actively encourages applicants from the Global South and borrower countries in particular;
2. A process that allows sufficient time for robust deliberations and includes an opportunity for an open discussion between nominees and members of civil society;
3. Contrary to the requirement that candidates be nominated by executive directors, the process should be open to any applicant;
4. A process that ensures the selection of the candidate who receives a double majority of votes, that is, the support from a majority of voting shares [AND member states](#); and
5. A transparent vote by member states (rather than constituencies), including a public declaration of member state preferences.

We note that the demands above reflect some of the calls made by the World Bank’s own Staff Association, which recorded its disapproval of Dr. Kim’s selection process and insisted in an [open letter](#) on January 10 that this time the Board implement “a truly open, merit-based, and transparent process—in line with calls from Governors and staff alike—with sufficient time to get the job done right.”

The world urgently needs the World Bank to assume its global responsibility and lead by example. This means supporting a transformative global development agenda rooted in international human rights law that addresses growing inequality, climate change, and social justice challenges.

We look forward to discussing the proposal above in more depth and await an opportunity to do so as soon as possible.

Signatories

Civil Society Organisations

80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World	Ireland
ActionAid International	South Africa
Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN)	Cameroon
African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEPON).	Uganda
African Monitor	Uganda
AFRODAD	Zimbabwe
All Win Network	Netherlands
Alliance Sud, the Swiss Coalition of Development Organisations	Switzerland
Amis des Étrangers	Togo
Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)	Lebanon
Arab Watch Coalition	Morocco
Association of World Citizens	USA
Association for Promotion Sustainable Development	India
Association pour l'Integration et le Developpement Durable au Burundi (AIDB)	Burundi
Bank Information Center - BIC - Europe	Netherlands
Bond	UK
BothENDs	Netherlands
BRAC	Bangladesh
Bretton Woods Project	UK
Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO)	Uganda
CAFSO-WRAG for Development	Nigeria
CEKOR	Serbia
Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability	India
Centre for Human Rights and Climate Change Research	Nigeria
Centre for Human Rights and Development	Mongolia
Centre national de coopération au développement, CNCD-11.11.11	Belgium
Centro Latino Americano de Ecología Social (CLAES)	Uruguay
Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales (CDES)	Ecuador
Cesta Friends of the Earth	El Salvador
Christian Aid	UK
Church Action for Tax Justice	UK
CIDSE	Belgium
Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development	Nigeria
Coalition of Civil Society Organizations of Liberia (NACCSOL)	Liberia

Commons Cluster of the NGO Major Group	
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd	France
Corporate Accountability	USA
Crude Accountability	USA
CUTS International	India
Debt Free Greece	Greece
Debt Justice Norway	Norway
Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR)	Peru
Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)	Fiji
Diakonia	Sweden
EarthRights	USA
Ecumenical Academy	Czech Republic
Entwicklung braucht Entschuldung (Jubilee Germany)	Germany
Eurodad	Belgium
Federation of Environmental and Ecological Diversity for Agricultural Revampment and Human Rights (FEEDAR & HR)	Cameroon
FENASSEP	Togo
Financial Justice Ireland	Ireland
Forest Peoples Programme	UK
Friends of the Earth	USA
Friends with Environment in Development (FED)	Uganda
Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar	Mexico
Gender Action	USA
Gestos, Brazilian CS Working Group for the 2030 Agenda	Brazil
Greenpeace International	International
Grupo Regional Sobre Financiamento e Infraestructura (GREFI)	Latin America
Initiative Citoyenne pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable- ICED	Burundi
Institute for Ecology and Action Anthropology - INFOE	Germany
Institute for Economic Justice	South Africa
Institute for Planetary Synthesis and the Association of World Citizens	Switzerland
Institute of Global Responsibility (IGO)	Poland
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary	USA
International Labor Rights Forum	USA
Jamaa Resource Initiatives	Kenya
Jawaharlal Nehru University	India
Jubilee Debt Campaign	UK
KULU-Women and Development	Denmark

Latindadd	Peru
LDC Watch	India
Lumiere Synergie pour le Developpement	Senegal
Maria Ebum Foundation	Nigeria
Medicus Mundi	Spain
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	USA
National Coalition of Civil Society Organizations of Liberia (NACCSOL)	Liberia
National Society of Conservationists - Friends of the Earth	Hungary
Norwegian Churh Aid	Norway
Oikos – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento	Portugal
Oxfam International	International
Public Services International (PSI)	France
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary NGO	USA
Radha Paudel Foundation	Nepal
Rural Area Development Programme (RADP)	Nepal
Sisters of Charity Federation	USA
Society for International Development (SID)	Italy
Stamp Out Poverty	UK
Tax Justice Network	UK
Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA)	Kenya
The Equality Trust	UK
Tearfund and Tearfund Nigeria	UK/ Nigeria
UndebtedWorld	Greece
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights	USA
Urgewald	Germany
Wemos	Netherlands
Women Engage for a Common Future	Netherlands
World Economy, Ecology & Development	Germany
Zimbabwe United Nations Association	Zimbabwe

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Freund Eugen	Member of the European parliament	Austria
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Thomas Pogge	Yale University	USA
Tom Kruse		USA
Vera Mshana		USA
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Zita Gurmai	Member of Parliament	Hungary