

A call for the postponement of the election of the president of the Inter-American Development Bank

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We, the undersigned, Members of World Leadership Alliance – Club de Madrid, all democratic former Heads of State and Government from Inter- American Development Bank member countries, call for the postponement of the appointment of the next president of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), scheduled for September 12th. We thus join the call made by the High Representative and Vice President of the European Union, several Latin American governments, former presidents, foreign ministers, members of Parliament and scholars from the region.

The world is going through one of the most dramatic chapters in its recent history, given the devastating health, economic and social consequences produced by the COVID19 pandemic. Latin America and the Caribbean has been one of the regions hardest hit by the pandemic. With only 8% of the global population, it accounts for over 25% of the infections and 28% of the deaths caused by the new coronavirus worldwide – more than five million infections and over 200.000 deaths. Moreover, according to the IMF, it will be one of the regions most severely affected by the economic and social impact of the pandemic.

The multilateral system and its regional organizations will be called upon to play a fundamental role in supporting the growth and development of regions such as Latin America. The IDB is one of the most important multilateral institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean and a fundamental partner of each and every one of its borrowing countries in terms of financing and development, channelling around 12 billion U\$S a year in loans funding infrastructure, social and state modernization projects in LAC countries, more than any other multilateral development bank, including the World Bank. The decision on who is to lead the organization for the next five years will, therefore, be one of the most relevant for the present and future of the region.

The election comes at a time when the region is not only at the peak of an unprecedented pandemic, but in the middle of the sharpest economic downturn of any developing region, and major social upheavals exacerbated by the growing frustration of middle classes seeing their efforts at growth U-turned towards poverty and precariousness – another lost decade. Conditions are far from favourable for the deep and thoughtful debate that such an important decision demands. A hasty decision could end up weakening the institution when LAC needs it most.

It is for this reason that we propose postponing the election until March of 2021 and, in much the same manner as the World Trade Organization, name an acting chief, giving member countries time for an in-depth discussion on the role of the IDB and its leadership and the appropriate institutional response to the post-COVID-19 recovery.

Jan Peter Balkenende	Prime Minister of the Netherlands (2002-2010)
Carl Bildt	Prime Minister of Sweden (1991-1994)
Felipe Calderón	President of Mexico (2006-2012)
Micheline Calmy-Rey	President of Switzerland (2007 and 2011)
Kim Campbell	Prime Minister of Canada (1993)
Fernando Henrique Cardoso	President of Brazil (1995-2003)
Laura Chinchilla	President of Costa Rica (2010-2014)
Vicente Fox	President of Mexico (2000-2006)
Yasuo Fukuda	Prime Minister of Japan (2007-2008)
Felipe González	President of the Government of Spain (1982-1996)
Alfred Gusenbauer	Chancellor of Austria (2007-2008)
Han Seung-Soo	Prime Minister of the Rep. of Korea (2008-2009)
Oswaldo Hurtado	President of Ecuador (1981-1984)
Ivo Josipovic	President of Croatia (2010-2015)
Ricardo Lagos	President of Chile (2000-2006)
Yves Leterme	Prime Minister of Belgium (2008; 2009-2011)
Carlos Mesa	President of Bolivia (2003-2005)
PJ Patterson	Prime Minister of Jamaica (1992-2006)
Julio María Sanguinetti	President of Uruguay (1985-1990; 1995-2000)
Danilo Türk	President of Slovenia (2007-2012) and WLA-CdM President
Herman Van Rompuy	Prime Minister of Belgium (2008-2009)
Ernesto Zedillo	President of Mexico (1994-2000)