

Via electronic email

August 31, 2023

Ilan Goldfajn, President
Inter-American Development Bank
1300 New York Avenue
NW Washington, D.C. 20577

Dear Mr. Ilan Goldfajn,

As a coalition of civil society organizations who have engaged for years with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and actively advocated for strengthening [its relationship with civil society](#), we are writing to convey concerns about the relationship between the IDB and civil society and project-impacted communities.

We celebrate that the IDB has opened a space for civil society to participate and engage in the 2024 IDB Annual Meetings. We also appreciate how your administration has [shown openness](#) to strengthening the relationship with civil society, recognizing the importance for civil society to access different instances of dialogue and add value through their knowledge and experience. However, we are concerned that the IDB's dialogue and relationship with civil society and impacted communities continues to be weak compared to peer institutions.

As a group, we have [repeatedly called attention](#) to these issues in [previous instances](#) but have seen little or no change in practice. The last [letter](#) sent in this regard expressed concerns about the consultation process for revising the access to information policy (AIP). Although changes were made to the AIP consultation process, in the recent consultations on the IDB Group institutional strategy, we see again the same problems we have been underscoring. For example, the consultations are not meaningful, robust, accessible, diverse, or inclusive, nor are they organized on the basis of participatory agendas. Furthermore, the substantive information for engagement is not shared in due time. We did not see improvements or receptivity to change when we raised concerns about the process. In measuring the “success” and “inclusivity” of a consultative process, the IDB cannot simply count the number of organizations engaged or the regional diversity of those who participated. Instead, for a consultative process to be deemed successful and inclusive, those participating must be given the necessary information and lead time to participate meaningfully, and their input should make a measurable difference in the final outcomes. Also, outreach needs to include critical and independent civil society, marginalized groups, and people affected by IDB Group projects (including MICI requesters).

We call for the IDB to improve the quality of the consultation processes by considering the recommendations we have been sharing in the letters above. In addition, we urge the IDB to develop strong and robust institutional channels so that civil society and project-affected groups

can genuinely engage with IDB management at different levels when they need to. Currently, when civil society requests that the civil society team at the IDB facilitate meetings with different units in the IDB, those meetings rarely materialize. It is unclear why those meetings fail to happen, whether certain units are unwilling to meet civil society, or whether the problem is with the civil society office. However, because civil society cannot meet directly with key decision-makers, they cannot share messages about critical issues they see in project implementation, nor can they share lessons learned to improve IDB operations in the future. It is critical that senior management send the message to all units of the Bank that civil society engagement is a core function for all levels of management, and the civil society team at the IDB should be prepared to facilitate these meetings and connections.

Given our concerns and your administration's expressed willingness to work on the relationship between the IDB and CSOs, we request a meeting with you and your team to discuss how we can collaborate in the future. We hope that the IDB Group can foster an institutional culture in which the Bank is more receptive to the interactions, recommendations, and concerns of civil society and communities impacted by IDB projects.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with the IDB to strengthen the IDB's relationship with civil society. We believe there is a great opportunity to promote cultural change, allowing for greater transparency, openness, and accountability for IDB.

Sincerely,

Accountability Counsel (United States/Internacional)

Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad (Colombia)

Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente -AIDA (Regional)

Bank Information Center (United States)

Center for International Environmental Law -CIEL (United States/Internacional)

Coalition for Human Rights in Development

Cohesion Comunitaria e Innovacion Social - CCIS (Mexico)

Conectas Direitos Humanos (Brazil)

Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales -DAR (Peru)

Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales -FARN (Argentina)

Fundación CAUCE: Cultura Ambiental - Causa Ecologista (Argentina)

Fundeps (Argentina)

Instituto Maíra (Brazil)

International Accountability Project -IAP (International)

International Rivers (Brazil)

Mesa de Discapacidad y Derechos (Peru)

Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad (Guatemala)

Sociedad y Discapacidad - SODIS (Peru)

Sustentarse (Chile)