Re: Disclose Final CODE Recommendations for Reforms to Inspection Panel

Dear Mr. Zattler:

We are writing to request that the final Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE) recommendations to the full Board of Directors on Inspection Panel reform be disclosed publicly prior to their adoption. Further, civil society should be consulted on any subsequent updates to the Panel’s Operating Procedures. As organizations that work to strengthen accountability within development finance and support communities when investments result in harmful impacts, we have followed the process with great interest and concern over the last two years, despite very limited opportunity for participation and almost no publicly available information about the proposed reforms. Now, as the process is drawing to conclusion, civil society must be in a position to discuss the final recommendations with our government representatives. The Inspection Panel was created in response to demands from communities and civil society worldwide. Changes to its mandate should not be made without public input on the actual proposals under consideration. It is too important to be done in the dark.

It is standard practice at development finance institutions (DFIs) to undertake public consultation processes before making any changes to their independent accountability mechanisms (IAMs). Just in the last year, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the European Investment Bank, the Green Climate Fund, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development concluded consultation processes on their IAMs. While they all varied in their approach—the EBRD held in-person regional consultations while the AIIB hosted online meetings and participated in civil society-organized events—each consultation process included the publication of the actual proposed reforms to the IAM with an opportunity to provide comments before the reforms were finalized. This has also been true of prior changes to the World Bank Group’s IAMs. The last revision of the Inspection Panel’s Operating Procedures in 2014 included a 60-day public comment period on the draft.1 Similarly, the 2013 revision of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman’s Operational Guidelines included a 90-day public comment period on its draft.2

This review started out with the intention of updating the Panel’s mandate to bring it in line with its peers by adding, in particular, monitoring and dispute resolution. Instead of taking a straightforward path to that end, CODE, as we understand it, is considering proposals that go far afield from what currently exists at the Panel or any other IAM. We do not believe that such a fundamental re-envisioning of accountability at the World Bank should be done quickly and without adequate opportunity for public input.

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1 [https://www.inspectionpanel.org/about-us/panel-mandate-and-procedures](https://www.inspectionpanel.org/about-us/panel-mandate-and-procedures)
At this point in the discussion, we are not seeking our ideal reforms. We are not even advocating for measures that build on best practice of other IAMs. We are fighting to ensure that the World Bank’s accountability framework is not undermined.

Sincerely,

Abibiman Foundation, Ghana
Accountability Counsel
AG Globale Verantwortung (Global Responsibility)
Alliance for Rural Democracy, Liberia
Alliance Sud
Arabwatch Coalition
Bank Information Center
Bank Information Center Europe
Both ENDS
Bretton Woods Project
Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO), Uganda
Center for International Environmental Law
Centre for Financial Accountability, India
Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)
CEE Bankwatch Network
Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ), Nepal
COMPPART Foundation for Justice and Peacebuilding, Nigeria
Enda Lead Afrique Francophone
European Network on Debt and Development (Eurodad)
Fundación para el Desarrollo de Políticas Sustentables
Gender Action
Green Advocates International
Green Advocates USA
International Accountability Project
International Rivers
Jamaa Resource Initiatives, Kenya
Joy for Children, Uganda
Leadership Initiative for Transformation and Empowerment (LITE-AFRICA)
Lumière Synergie pour le Développement
MiningWatch Canada
Montpelier Consulting
Natural Resources Women’s Platform
Urgewald

Cc: CODE members