

# United States Senate

October 20, 2020

Mr. David Malpass  
President  
The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC

Dear President Malpass:

We are writing to convey our concern with the selection process for the next Vice President of the Office of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO), and to urge you to ensure independence and diversity in this appointment.

For more than 20 years, the CAO has been the primary defender of human and environmental rights at the IFC. While the IFC's Performance Standards serve as an international benchmark for managing social and environmental risk associated with its projects, the CAO is responsible for holding the IFC accountable when those standards are not met. As an independent accountability mechanism, the CAO has built trust among communities and civil society around the world due to its transparency and willingness to take on difficult issues. The CAO has also built credibility and competence in factfinding and evaluating projects against technical policy requirements.

The selection of a new Vice President to lead the Office of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman is an important and unique process at the World Bank Group. The inclusion of an external, multi-stakeholder selection committee reflects not only the independence of the CAO, but also the need to include input from various constituencies. The process also calls for soliciting applications from "candidates that represent gender, cultural, and regional diversity". Consistent with the World Bank's recent commitments toward increasing diversity and inclusion and to be representative of the people in the countries it serves, it is also important that this Vice Presidency be led by someone from a developing country.

This appointment comes at a time when the IFC is undergoing an unprecedented review of its approach to environmental and social risk management, and we applaud the IFC for implementing several structural changes to improve its internal systems. However, the World Bank Group must also demonstrate its commitment to strengthening its independent mechanisms, like the CAO, which serve as the last line of defense for local people and the environment that too often receive inadequate attention in the development process. Selecting a candidate that has demonstrable experience and a personal commitment to carrying out the mandate of the CAO is not only essential for the achievement of the World Bank's goals, but also for maintaining bipartisan congressional support for the World Bank.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator



CHRISTOPHER A. COONS  
United States Senator



TOM UDALL  
United States Senator