

A Message to the President and the Board of Executive Directors

As members of the drafting and implementation team for the World Bank Group's Governance and Anticorruption (GAC) strategy, both from Washington and country offices, and of the Public Sector Governance Board, we represent a large group of Bank staff, who have been working on the governance agenda for well over a decade. We are strongly committed to advancing this work through the implementation of the GAC strategy, after the unanimous endorsement of the GAC by the Bank's Board of Executive Directors, following an unprecedented consultation with thousands of stakeholders in 47 countries. The GAC carries forward many years of effort within and outside the Bank, recognizing the critical impact of good governance and anticorruption in poverty reduction. We believe that the GAC is an essential part of the Bank's overall mission to reduce poverty.

However, to implement the GAC effectively, the Bank needs to be recognized by all stakeholders as an institution maintaining the highest standards of integrity and governance. Therefore, we are deeply concerned by the impact of the current leadership crisis on the Bank's credibility and authority to engage with governments, non-government stakeholders, and donor partners on the GAC agenda. As is known, there are reports from the field offices of concrete cases where the Bank's policy dialogue and operational work on governance and anticorruption are being undermined. The credibility of our front line staff is eroding in the face of legitimate questions from our clients about the Bank's ability to "practice what it preaches" on governance. In these circumstances, we cannot credibly implement the GAC strategy.

Therefore, the present crisis is a critical test of the Bank's own commitment to the principles of sound corporate governance. Our own governance standards must be upheld and enforced impartially and without exception by both the Bank's Senior Management and the Board of Executive Directors, even when they touch the highest levels of this institution. We call upon the Board of Executive Directors and the President to take clear and decisive actions to resolve this crisis quickly in a way that demonstrates to all our stakeholders the Bank's commitment to the highest standards of integrity in leadership and accountability. This is essential for restoring the legitimacy and trust we need to work together with our partners on implementing the GAC agenda.

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... and other members of the Public Sector Governance Board and the Field-based GAC Advisory Group.

The Public Sector Governance Board oversees the World Bank's operational practice on governance and includes directors and managers of public sector governance groups in all six regions, DEC, IEG, LEG, OPCS, PREM, SD, WBI, and the Field-based GAC Advisory Group. The Field-based Advisory Group is a group of development practitioners based in World Bank country offices throughout the world brought together at the request of the Bank's Senior Management to provide advice from their field experience on the drafting and implementation of the World Bank Group's Governance and Anticorruption Strategy.

We have received significant support from colleagues in response to this letter, with many requesting the opportunity to be signatories as well. To accommodate this request, we circulated the letter to many staff associated with work on governance and anticorruption, with an option to add their names to the signature list. All signatures received by Friday, May 11, 2007, from staff are listed below.

In addition, the email was forwarded by staff to others not on the original distribution list. A number of these signatories are associated with work on governance and anticorruption, but their names did not appear on the original (incomplete) distribution list. Others may not be associated with work on governance and anticorruption, but signed to express their support of the letter. Staff who signed, but were not on the original distribution list, are listed separately below.

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