



October 2019

Board of Executive Directors
Inter-American Development Bank
1300 New York Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20577

Dear Board of Executive Directors of the Inter-American Development Bank:

We the undersigned organizations and individuals urge you to approve the investigation of IDB Invest's involvement in financing the controversial Ituango Hydroelectric Project (Hidroituango) in Colombia. Since day one, this project has advanced despite a weak impact assessment, inaccurate surveys of affected people, and deficient environmental implementation and monitoring. Nevertheless, the IDB has continued to invest in it.

Set to be the largest hydroelectric dam in Colombia, Hidroituango affects thousands of people, undermining their livelihoods, forcing them from their homes, and destroying the ecosystems that they depend on for sustenance. It has also endangered the lives of thousands of people, who had to be evacuated after a construction failure at the dam caused an avalanche. Amid ongoing uncertainty about whether the dam itself may collapse, many of these people remain displaced well over a year later, which has resulted in a serious humanitarian crisis.

Meanwhile, this ill-advised project is being advanced in the middle of a still-active conflict zone in Antioquia, Colombia, where paramilitary groups maintain a violent presence to this day. This volatile situation has exacerbated the threats, violent attacks, and assassinations targeting members of Movimiento Ríos Vivos, who have expressed opposition to Hidroituango and who represent the more than 400 people in affected communities who filed the complaint at the IDB's accountability mechanism. In addition, requests by affected communities to delay the dam's construction to exhume mass graves — left by the armed conflict in the area that is being flooded by the dam — have gone ignored.

Despite the IDB's clear role in financing Hidroituango, you decided in August not to investigate the public side of the IDB for its role in laying the crucial groundwork for this project. This decision disregards affected communities' concerns about the acute and far-reaching harms caused by the project.

What is the value of having environmental and social policies at the IDB, when they are ignored and dismissed precisely when they are most needed to protect people's lives?

We implore you not to repeat this mistake. Rather than washing your hands of responsibility for the environmental damage and human rights violations caused by the Hidroituango project, we urge you to provide some measure of justice to affected communities by approving the investigation of IDB Invest's role in Hidroituango and the damage it has caused.

Sincerely,