Brazil, 19 June 2020.

To:

[Embaixada de cada um dos países da 15a constituency no BR] / [Chair of the Board of Governors of the World Bank] / [Talvez tb para embaixadas de países europeus aliados]

Dear […],

We write to you after receiving with perplexity the information that the Brazilian government wishes to appoint the country’s former Minister of Education, Mr. Abraham Weintraub, as the Executive-Director for your constituency.

We send this letter to **strongly advise against the nomination of Mr. Weintraub for this important position, and to inform you about the potential irreparable harms that he would cause to your country’s standing within the World Bank**.

First and foremost, **Mr. Weintraub’s dismissal from his position is the culmination of a destructive and poisonous environment he inflated in Brazil’s entire political system**. Since he took office, Mr. Weintraub has always responded with contempt, sarcasm, and aggressiveness to critiques or even recommendations coming from ordinary citizens, journalists, lawmakers, and even Supreme Court justices. In a tweet dated 16 November 2019, he called a follower’s mother an “itchy and toothless mare”.[[1]](#footnote-1) In a tape of a cabinet meeting released by the Brazilian Supreme Court on 22 May 2020, in the context of accusations of undue interference, by the President, with the federal police, Mr. Weintraub called the Supreme Court justices ‘vagabonds’, who he would lock in prison if he could.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Due to his odious behavior and lackluster performance as minister of Education, **there has been nearly unanimous calls for his resignation amongst all segments of Brazilian society**. On May 2020, the speaker of the Lower House said Mr. Weintraub is ‘disqualified’ for the job, adding that having him in the position is a “pity for Brazil”.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Mr. Weintraub’s term in the Ministry of Education was no more than disastrous. This has been well-documented in a report issued by the Committee on Educational Policy of the House of Representative, of December 2019, which concluded that:

“The most salient aspect in the diagnosis was the finding that **the planning and management of the Ministry of Education are far behind the expected**. Evidence of this is that the Ministry has not yet presented a Strategic Plan for year 2019, and the National Plan for Education targets are delayed without even a plan of action to achieve them”.[[4]](#footnote-4)

This excerpt of the report from the parliament encapsulates how **Mr. Weintraub is the antithesis of everything that the World Bank seeks to represent in development policy and in multilateralism**, including:

* **Ideology over evidence-based policy:** On his last day in office, Mr. Weintraub created obstacles for political support to the application of affirmative action in post-graduate courses that benefited social minorities, including indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, as well as race-based quotas. His attitude ignores the enormous available evidence on the positive effects of affirmative action in addressing the historic racial, social and economic inequalities of Brazilian society and in making access to university more inclusive.[[5]](#footnote-5) [Essa parte é forte para o Banco Mundial, vale adicionar outro exemplo – talvez a tentativa de nomear reitores na pandemia para exercer controle ideológico]. Mr. Weintraub is also being investigated by the Supreme Court for spreading *fake news*.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* **Poor management skills:** The same above-mentioned report by the congressional committee noted that the Ministry of Education was ‘paralised’ due to, *inter alia*, the fact that many key positions in the Ministry were vacant for almost a year, which revealed a ‘instability and lack of continuity in current management’. The report also noted that, compared to previous administrations, his administration has the lowest number of individuals with experience in public management and or themes related to education, whether in the public or private sector.[[7]](#footnote-7) Additionally, another example of his ineptitude to positions of high level of responsibility was the major problems which occurred during the application of the national university entry exam. Thousands of students were scored incorrectly and had to be reexamined. It is striking that this happened in an automated system where students choose an answer in multiple-choice questions.[[8]](#footnote-8)
* **Lack of understanding and capacity to address social and economic injustices through public policies:** Despite strong calls for the Ministry of Education to postpone the application of the 2020 exams for university admission, Mr. Weintraub advocated against such measure, arguing that the exam is to assess the merits of the candidates solely,
* **Disrespect for the values of multilateralism, such as tolerance and mutual respect:** Mr. Weintraub is responding to approximately 20 lawsuits at the Supreme Court.[[9]](#footnote-9) In one of the cases, he is being prosecuted at for the grave crime of racism. On 4 April 2020, he addressed the role of China in global politics and the Brazil-China bilateral relations in a social media post charged with prejudice. In a note, the Chinese Embassy in Brazil vehemently condemned Mr. Weintraub’s post, accusing his words of being “completely absurd and despicable, with a strong racist character”.[[10]](#footnote-10)
* **Conduct incompatible with ethical and professional integrity standards:** In view of Mr. Weintraub record of racist, disrespectful and aggressive statements, as well as his clear ineptitude as a policy-maker and public agent, Mr .Weintraub fails to meet several requirements and principles of the World Bank’s Code of Conduct for Board Officials. He does not treat others with courtesy and respect, and without discrimination (5(b)); he fails to *exercise adequate control and supervision over matters for which they are individually responsible and protect and preserve the resources with which they are entrusted in accordance with the budgetary standards and restrictions regarding their offices* (5(c)); and, as demonstrated, he systematically fails to *maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethics in their personal and professional conduct* (2(a)).[[11]](#footnote-11)

We are convinced that Mr. Abraham Weintraub does not possess the minimum ethical, professional, and moral qualifications to occupy the seat of the 15th Executive-Directorship of the World Bank.

We urge you to take all the appropriate measures to address the issues and concerns presented in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

1. <https://www.poder360.com.br/governo/egua-sarnenta-e-desdentada-diz-weintraub-sobre-mae-de-seguidor/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2020/05/22/eu-por-mim-botava-esses-vagabundos-todos-na-cadeia-comecando-no-stf-diz-ministro-da-educacao-em-reuniao.ghtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2020/05/maia-diz-que-weintraub-e-desqualificado-e-nao-poderia-ter-assumido-ministerio-da-educacao.shtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The final evaluation report issued on December 2019 by a commission of the Lower House on educational policy can be found at: < <https://www.camara.leg.br/proposicoesWeb/prop_mostrarintegra;jsessionid=881AF437A4D40E498DDEA3496D1790A3.proposicoesWeb1?codteor=1843764&filename=REL+2/2019+CEXMEC>>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Adicionar estudo]. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2020/06/stf-forma-maioria-para-manter-weintraub-em-inquerito-das-fake-news.shtml> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. P. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://educacao.uol.com.br/noticias/2020/01/20/o-que-se-sabe-sobre-o-erro-na-correcao-do-enem-2019.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.metropoles.com/brasil/justica/na-corda-bamba-no-mec-weintraub-e-alvo-de-20-acoes-no-stf-veja-quais-sao> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.poder360.com.br/coronavirus/embaixada-da-china-diz-que-weintraub-e-racista-e-repudia-postagem-do-ministro/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/786861541011483695/pdf/131464-BR-PUBLIC-after-11-01-18-Code-of-Conduct-for-Board-Officials.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)