Statement by Kristalina Georgieva

Out of respect for due process, I have refrained from addressing many of the questions that have been raised about the 2018 Doing Business report at the World Bank and will continue to do so until I meet with the board of directors at the International Monetary Fund. It is important, however, to at least elaborate for the public and for the sake of the staff of the IMF why I disagree with the investigative report’s conclusions with respect to my role in the Doing Business 2018 report.

Let me be clear: the conclusions are wrong. I did not pressure anyone to alter any reports. There was absolutely no quid pro quo related to funding for the World Bank of any kind. Reviewing the integrity of these reports was within my professional responsibilities at that time, and, unlike what has been reported, I followed all protocols for editing the report. The methodology used in the Doing Business report has been the subject of concerns over many years. Like others in the World Bank before and since, I fundamentally viewed my role as overseeing the protection of the integrity of the report’s methodology, not its technical implementation.

The senior director of the 2018 report has come forward to make clear that I did not pressure him to change the report or its rankings and that the investigative report failed to include much of what he told them. The truth is, I asked the team to triple check its findings to ensure accuracy – period. Data integrity is core to the institutions that I have led over my public service career, and I would never be party to any alteration of data for political purposes.

I stand by my years of experience in promoting good governance and advancing integrity and equity in international institutions. I have a 40-year track record as an economist and I have always approached my work and my colleagues with integrity—in academia, at the World Bank, and the IMF. As the world faces an urgent and complex set of challenges, from COVID to inclusive growth, from climate change to gender and racial equality, our work at the IMF has never been more vital. I will continue to focus on delivering on our mandate for our partners in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America.

As much as I have strived to be open and inclusive, I was very sorry to learn that some staffers felt their concerns were not heard. Moving forward, I will make sure to be even more attentive to hearing staff views. And I will make sure we have accessible channels for our colleagues to express those views. A robust exchange of ideas and opinions is essential to a strong work environment.

I look forward to briefing the IMF Board about these issues soon.

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