

**EMBARGOED FOR DELIVERY**

**Statement of Mark E. Lopes  
Nominee for United States Executive Director of the  
Inter-American Development Bank  
U. S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
November 19, 2013**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

Thank you, Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Barrasso, and distinguished Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is an honor to have been nominated by President Obama for the position of United States Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank, and I look forward to answering your questions.

I am particularly honored to be considered for confirmation by this committee. Prior to my current appointment as Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at the U.S. Agency for International Development, I served as Senator Menendez's staff representative on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. That experience taught me the critical role of the U.S. Congress in foreign affairs. This Committee has a wellspring of talent and expertise that has been an invaluable resource for me over many years. If confirmed, I intend to continue to seek guidance from you and your staff.

I am joined today by my parents Pam and Phil Lopes, and many friends and colleagues, as well as my brother Tobin, sister-in-law Brenda, and niece and nephew, Zack and Ezri, who unfortunately were not able to be here today. I am grateful for their support, encouragement and sense of humor – all of which were instrumental to my being able to appear before you today.

My parents planted the seed of public service through their work in the Peace Corps. My father was part of the first group of volunteers to travel to Colombia in 1961, and my mother served shortly thereafter in Brazil. As a family, we lived in Ecuador and Brazil when my parents were on the staff of the Peace Corps. It was the memories of these childhood years that embedded in me the spirit of international adventure and public service.

After nearly a decade studying music, I too transitioned to an internationally focused career and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in rural Paraguay. Through graduate school and in the decade since, my work has focused on foreign policy and international development, primarily in the western hemisphere. This work has allowed me to travel throughout the region and around the world. From health clinics in rural Paraguay to emergency feeding centers in Darfur, I have seen the good work of the United States up close. If confirmed, I will bring to this position not only a clear-eyed understanding of the challenges of economic growth and development, but also a keen recognition of its value - both for its importance in advancing U.S. interests and for advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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The Latin America and Caribbean region has improved significantly since my father landed in Colombia over 50 years ago. In addition to improvements in health and increased access to education, many economies are now global powerhouses. Today, the United States exports over \$500 billion in goods and services annually to the region, which is an amount equivalent to our exports to Europe. As of 2011, U.S. investors put over \$800 billion into the region. Although there has been progress overall, U.S. engagement is still the best way to continue to build market-based economies in the most strategic and responsible way possible and to grow U.S. business opportunities. The Bank is increasingly working with the private sector and, if confirmed, I would advocate for sustaining a proactive approach in this area. In addition, I would use my voice and vote to help the Bank identify where it is uniquely capable and deepen its work in those areas. Lastly, I would encourage the Bank to support new and emerging donors in the region.

My grandfather, Ed Lopes, from whom I get my middle name, was the son of Portuguese immigrants in the San Joaquin Valley of California. With a seventh grade education, eight acres of land, and only nine fingers, he built a small business there in the 1930s. He was a truck driver and a welder, and he was able to provide for his family and send his kids to school. My father was the first one in his family to go to college. The opportunities that my grandfather was able to create for his family are the same opportunities the United States is advancing through the work of the Inter-American Development Bank. If confirmed, I will be honored to serve President Obama in this role and help make possible for others what was made possible for me.

I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

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