

Center for Strategic and International Studies

Online Event

“An Armchair Conversation with Mauricio Claver-Carone, President of the Inter-American Development Bank”

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FEATURING:

Mauricio Claver-Carone,
President,
Inter-American Development Bank

CSIS EXPERTS:

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Daniel F. Runde: I'm Dan Runde. I'm a senior vice president at CSIS. Thank you for joining me for a conversation with the President of the Inter-American Development Bank, Mauricio Claver-Carone.

The Inter-American Development Bank is the most important development institution in the western hemisphere. It's been known as the most important vehicle of collective action for big problems in the hemisphere for more than six decades. The leadership of the Inter-American Development Bank is seeking a capital increase from its shareholders, including the United States.

The argument is that the Covid-19 has been a unique crisis for the region, which I think it has, and that there are going to be a series of consequences following in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis – whether it's sort of greater digitalization, tectonic shifts in global supply chains and trade that Latin America could be an enormous beneficiary of, rethinking the world of work, reimagining quality infrastructure and power, and beyond digital.

There's a whole series of challenges that the Inter-American Development Bank is well-suited to take on. Historically it's been the most trusted institution. More than 50 percent of its shares are held by borrowing countries in the region. In some ways it's sort of a cooperative bank, if you can describe it that way. And the culture and the DNA reflects the shareholdings in this way.

Mauricio Claver-Carone was elected in the fall of 2020. He's an American citizen. He's the first U.S. citizen to be president of the Inter-American Development Bank. I don't think it's a secret that it generated significant controversy, and I think we'll have a chance to talk about all these issues with him today. Mauricio, thanks for being with us today.

Mauricio Claver-Carone: Hey, thanks, Dan. I really appreciate the opportunity to be here with you.

Mr. Runde: So, Mauricio, talk about – talk about – you ran on a platform, on five issues. Talk about what was the – what were the issues that you ran on when you ran for president of the Inter-American Development Bank?

Mr. Claver-Carone: Yeah, I appreciate it. Thank you, Dan.

So, I mean, first and foremost, let me just say, you know, I was elected. I'm known for running 100 miles per hour, and that's what I do. You know, when I came to the bank I actually wondered when I was going to have to slow down or the bank was going to slow me down, you know, how it was going to work. Let me tell you, the first thing I learned – because I like to always start this way – this bank has the greatest staff of any multilateral institution. I mean, the talent here is out of sight. And what I learned right across the board, like, right from day one was that they wanted to run 100

miles per hour as well. And that was great. And so we met a match and it was wonderful.

And they're running 100 miles per hour. They want it to be unleashed. They wanted to have their innovation unleashed, their creativity unleashed. They wanted to go out there to take risks, which is something that's really important and that's not been part of the culture of this bank, but to take risk and to – and to do so. And we're doing that. And we've been running 100 miles per hour since day one. And by the way, it merits no less because we are facing – you know, when I ran – (laughs) – I'm proud of the fact that clearly we had the foresight to know that this was going to become the worst socioeconomic crisis in the 61-year history of this bank. Just last week, the ECLAC – the CEPAL – said it was the worst socioeconomic crisis in the last 120 years in the region.

So what we're facing here is extraordinary, and therefore it's going to take extraordinary efforts. When I ran, I ran on the issue of a capital increase, amongst other things – which we can talk about those five issues now, which are now kind of part of our Vision 2025 – precisely because of the needs of the region. And I'm proud of the fact that we had the foresight to put that.

Today, we are talking about a capital increase and it's a real thing because we put it on the table. You have today we presented a capital note to the board of directors, part of our Vision 2025 strategy, and those five issues are the priorities that we're going to set forth for a conversation in Barranquilla, and for the first time ever the cart is before the horse. You have in the United States Senate bipartisan legislation – bipartisan legislation asking for a historic capital increase of the IDB, \$80 billion, before the Congress in a bipartisan manner, Republicans and Democrats were kicking and screaming not to do any capital increase. We saw it in 2009, we saw zero participation in the merge out of IDB Invest in 2015, and we saw the consequences of both of those, which we can talk about as well.

But now we actually have legislation and, by the way, there's nothing bipartisan nowadays in Congress, but now we actually have a bipartisan will in order to do so and I'm very proud of that. So we, within a hundred days, have really come a long way.

Now, what are those five opportunities which we ran on and I was elected? And by the way, I know that, you know, we keep talking about controversy and kind of in my election. But my election was not that controversial. I was elected with the support of 23 out of 28 member countries in the Western Hemisphere. That's more than Luis Alberto Moreno was elected when he first ran in 2005. He had 21. So, actually, we had actually one of the least controversial in regards to voting.

And the reason these countries voted for me is because they agree with this agenda, and we've now put this forward to put pen to paper and it's called our Vision 2025. But now we've actually added. It's been enriched by the feedback from the board and from the different countries and what they see as priority, and let me tell you what those opportunities are.

One, digitalization. I mean, look, that's game changer. These are opportunities for the region. And let me actually take one step back. We've called this Reinvest in the Americas: A Decade of Opportunity, and I've done that precisely because I do not want – part of this new IDB is for us not to be an institution that's caught in diagnostics and caught in crying and caught in – you know, there's enough institutions out there that could tell us how bad things are in the region. We know how bad things are. We need to be out there to provide solutions, results, and to have performance metrics to measure our success, and that's what we've been doing since day one.

So in these hundred days we put out Vision 2025. Digitalization. I call it the “tele tres,” right? The tele three. There's tele-education, telework, and tele-employment. Those are huge opportunities for the region. Digitalization is a game changer, but there's still 250 million people in the region that do not have connectivity. There's 35 million kids that did not have access to education during the pandemic because they did not have connectivity.

We're working across the board, and public-private partnerships are going to be key to this, and we can talk more about what we launched yesterday in the partnership with the private sector in this regard. But digitalization.

Two, the strengthening of value chains, of integration, obviously, and we call it, you know, near shoring. So near shoring, and that's become my obsession. But it's become my obsession because it's real. I mean, this is something that's really happening in the world. You know, there's a recent Gartner survey that said, you know, 260 – a third of the 260 leading companies, global companies that are in China, are looking to reorient their manufacturing plants and their services companies to other places in the world.

I don't want them anywhere that's not Latin America and the Caribbean. And by the way, that's nothing – it has nothing to do with China, which is an important shareholder, and, obviously, we want to work with. But that's about us loving Latin America and the Caribbean first and foremost and wanting them to benefit and generate employment in Latin America and the Caribbean first as a priority. That opportunity we can't miss. It's happening and we're working on it.

Three, look, climate. Climate finance is super important. When I came in here, you know, we saw that the rhetoric was great in regards to climate and, yes, it's a transversal issue here. Everything we do has a climate angle to it. But we don't have our own business line in regards to climate.

We actually don't have our own fund in regards to climate. We actually have to crutch off some of the global funds for it, and it takes forever. And yet, we are the most innovative and have the best inroads in each of these countries in order to execute climate projects, which is why we're going to launch now at the annual meeting in Barranquilla the Amazon Initiative, which is part of the DISA PAC. Seven countries of the Amazon working together, and there we can do a whole bunch of stuff on from – on the bioeconomy, on agribusiness, on the agriculture – sustainable farming, on the – on human capital in regards – in those regions, on the infrastructure. By the way, connectivity, hugely important. We can do all of that and we're going to do that, but we can do so more effectively if we have our own funds to do it with.

Small- and medium-sized business is number four. Small- and medium-sized enterprises are, at the end of the day, the backbone to the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean. In countries like Mexico, it's 60 percent of their GDP. But – it's 60 percent of their – of their employment, but yet it's less than 20 percent of their GDP. You know, here in the United States, obviously, the backbone of our economy, small- and medium-sized businesses. We need to strengthen them. But the financing, that's a huge issue. Latin America and the Caribbean has the largest financing gap for small- and medium-sized businesses in the world. It's over \$85 billion. We need to strengthen that. That's where most of the jobs were lost, but that's where most of the jobs can be quickly gained, by working on financing on that side.

And then, finally, gender. Hey, look, you know, we also – there's a lot of rhetoric here about gender, and that's great. But again, we do not have our own gender framework and we do not have our own business line. We're doing that and we're creating it. We're leading by example in that sense. The most successful businesses in – small- and medium-sized businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean are those led by women. They have 10 percent greater income, yet they have 50 percent less access to financing. Seventy percent of the applications for financing that women have in the region get denied, and yet they're the most successful. Now, that's a no-brainer. And yet, we know that nothing can have a greater impact on GDP – a 10 percent impact on GDP. Ten percent growth in GDP if, simply, women were not only given access to financing, but being incorporated into the workplace. We're doing so.

We're working all those issues. Those are the priorities. We've set out business lines. We can work on each of those five things and I think we're going to be successful. That's what I was elected for, that's what I'm doing, and that's what we've been running at 100 miles per hour.

Mr. Runde:

One of the things I'm – I am buying this agenda. I think if you said to me, like, what are the five most important things a president of the IDB ought to

be putting forward, these are the five. So I think it's – you've picked the right five. I also think you should be able to get a broad support – and I think you're getting broad support in many quarters – for this agenda, whether it's gender, climate, SMEs, the value chains issue in digital in particular. I'm particularly seized with the first two that you talked about because I've done 500 Zoom calls since March the 12th, 2020, and one of my big takeaways is, is that to have modernity in the future you're just going to need digital. Former Governor Vidal told me one time, the former governor of the province of Buenos Aires, said digital's the new electricity, and she's right.

And I think that the other thing is, on this issue of value chains and nurturing, I completely agree with you. I think there's a historic – there's a historic opportunity for Mexico and a number of countries, especially in the Northern Triangle in Central America, that if they – you know, if they make themselves attractive with the right policies, and with the right advice from an institution like the IDB, and perhaps the right assistance from the IDB, they have a generational opportunity to lock in some global gains because there are tectonic shifts in global supply chains because of Covid. I completely agree with you. So I'm very – I'm very comfortable with the agenda you're putting forward, and I suspect you're getting a lot of interest in this agenda.

One of the things I wanted to talk about is oftentimes –

Mr. Claver-Carone: May I add something there, though? Can I, real quick? I'm sorry. Like, we're both dynamic and I agree with you 100 percent.

Look, by the way, one other aspect that I'd add to it is the private sector. You know, one of the things that I felt, and I ran on this, that the private sector had stopped really looking at the IDB as a leader or as a guide in regards to the region. You know, one of the things we've done from day one is strengthen our relationship with the private sector.

And just yesterday we had – we signed a historic partnership with 40 of the leading global companies – U.S., European, and regional, and everyone from Walmart to JPMorgan to Banco Santander, Telefónica; you name it, they were there. And what we agreed upon was – is no more rhetoric, but to take action. We're incorporating them into our work streams. We're creating working groups on each of these sectors. They're now going to be – not one-offs to take, hey, we took a picture here, we're on Twitter, no, no, no. We are actually working within these work streams to find those opportunities.

I have – chief investment officers from a major insurance company called the other day, said, hey, we want to invest \$1 billion in the region, can you help us find those opportunities of sustainable investments in the region, and we said absolutely. That's what we want to do. We want to be the best

salespeople for the region. There is a market for it. You know, we're the – we are, I believe, the gold standard on ESG investments, which there's a huge market for right now, and so we can help guide those. PIMCO yesterday was just talking about. They were saying, hey, we need to take more risk. We need to – we need to not be shy. Great opportunities, we're doing that. This partnership was an action call. So all these companies that signed on are – have actually now – not only volunteer, but are committed to increasing their investments on the region.

And by the way, it was like singing off the same sheet. It was those five priorities of Vision 2025 all on the same sheet, focused on it, and creating workstreams to increase those investments. So it's not just about what we can do with our capital, it's about scaling it as well with private-sector capital. And that's a huge value add that we're bringing to the institution.

Mr. Runde: I agree with that. One of the things I'm struck by, Mauricio, is having worked at the International Finance Corporation at the World Bank in another life, that one of the things that's most important about these institutions are the experts. I'm not going to name all of the folks that are kind of – I'm the president of their fan clubs. You have many fabulous technical experts who are the world's experts on specific issues – infrastructure, the world of work, emergencies – I'm not going to list all of them because I'm going to embarrass them. But they have very, very strong experts that your country clients look to.

Tell me about what your experience has been – obviously, you said earlier that you have some really – you have a really fabulous workforce. Talk about that, because it strikes me as more important oftentimes than the money is the access to your experts that's so valuable to your clients.

Mr. Claver-Carone: It's unbelievable. Look, we have offices in all 26 borrowing nations. The teams we have there have – are the greatest confidence within – across the board, within every ministry, et cetera. That technical know-how is invaluable. And people don't look to us just for the financing. They look for us for the knowledge, they look for us for that technical assistance. Let me tell you, I remember when I was in my – in my previous – in my previous job. I wanted to create – I wanted to create an initiative called Back to the Americas, which was a near-shoring initiative.

And I asked the Commerce Department, I asked everyone else, hey, let's find – what are the comparative advantages in each country in the region so that we can have a near-shoring initiative. It didn't work out because I ran into all kinds of political obstacles about prioritizing reshoring. And, anyway, you can – you can imagine what the problem there was. I don't have that limitation here at the IDB. So we are now the flagship for near shoring. And we do so shamelessly. But guess what? I asked the team – I asked our sectors team. I said, hey, what are the comparative advantages – the same

question I had posed in the U.S. government which I couldn't get an answer to. What are the comparative advantages in each of these countries?

Hey, within 30 days not only did I have, like, all the data that we wanted, but we actually now have – which we're going to launch in Barranquilla as well – a comprehensive near-shoring toolkit. And we have the opportunities. And, by the way, sector by sector, side by side. And one of the things that, for me, which I stuck – and I repeated this a lot, and I think it's important to repeat. One of the things that we were able to discover in doing these side by sides is that if we simply took 10 percent of current exports from China to the United States in industries that already Latin America exports to United States on, and literally just swap out that 10 percent – so it's not creating new industries, et cetera, it's just swapping out that 10 percent. That's \$70 billion in additional yearly exports from Latin America and the Caribbean here to the United States.

Imagine the game changer that that would be for the region. So that's not about new exports from the region, that's not about new imports for the United States. They're already doing it. It's simply about swapping out \$70 billion additional per year for the region. Imagine the amount of jobs that is. And by the way, I think it's important to note as well that an import to the United States from China is not the same as an import from Latin America and the Caribbean. An import from China has about 5 percent U.S. content. One from, let's say Mexico, has about 40 percent U.S. content. So you scale that up in regards to the content, and the impact, and the positive impact for the United States as well.

By the way, you've written a piece – and I'm a huge fan – what a game changer for that it would be having a Caribbean Basin Initiative part 2. So you already have this swapping out that could be huge. If we add to that we're talking over \$100 billion per year in new exports from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States, which already exists, so it's not even new. It's a game changer. That creates jobs. Nothing has greater social development impact than job creation for health care, for fiscal measures, et cetera, across the board. It's there. It's there for us to take action upon. And I think we have a unique opportunity to do so.

And ironically, I think the pandemic created a unique opportunity to do so because even though we've always had the political rhetoric about integration, et cetera, the corporate world wasn't there because they were headed out to China, Asia, et cetera. Now they want to come back. They want – near shoring is now a value-add for companies. And we need to take advantage for us. If we don't take advantage of this opportunity, we're going to lose it. And it is going to be another lost decade for the region.

Mr. Runde:

I actually very much agree with that. I think it's very important that our listeners understand that you're absolutely right on this issue. And I think that – I think that there's a unique role for the IDB to play. And I'm so glad

that, you know, you're able to leverage the – I mean, there's enormous – as you've mentioned – enormous depth of expertise. And I think it's what – they don't need – oftentimes – they need the money sometimes, but what they really want are your experts.

The other thing I just want to flag is –

Mr. Claver-Carone: By the way, with countries – like, right now we are actually just lining up our new envelope with Peru, for example, right? So Peru is a country that's, you know, kind of in the middle income scale. One of the things that – one of the challenges we've had is, so, how do we create innovative products and attractive products and other technical assistance, knowledge, et cetera, for a country like Peru, for a country like Chile? We're doing that. We actually are putting together the best altogether envelope for Peru since the year 2000, because we're being innovative. We're being innovative in our products. We're being innovative in regards to the knowledge base of assets that we have. And I think that that is also going to be part of our success moving forward, particularly in dealing with the middle-income countries like that.

Mr. Runde: One of the things I note, you know, both you and I spend a lot of time in Washington. I don't think it's fully appreciated in Washington the moral authority, the brand power, the influence that the Inter-American Development Bank has in the region. I was in Miami for a meeting five or six years ago with senior leaders from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. And your predecessor was convening a meeting.

And across the political spectrum in those three countries the president of the Inter-American Development Bank was able to convene a broad set of stakeholders across the political spectrum – the private sector, the public sector – to help deal with a problem at the time, which was the issue of why were people leaving and coming to the United States, and let me describe it as uncontrolled migration, through something called the Alliance for Prosperity.

Could we – so talk a little bit about sort of the convening power of the IDB. And then I want you to talk about Central America, because I think there's an enormous opportunity for Central America, and for you to play a role and the IDB to play a role in Central America. But talk about this convening power.

Mr. Claver-Carone: Yeah. It's unique. But here's the reality, and you and I know this, obviously the IDB would not exist were it not for the United States back in 1959 – fact. But since then, probably with the exception of maybe the late '80s due to geopolitics, the United States really has not paid attention to the IDB. In the last 20 years Republicans and Democrats. This is a bipartisan consensus. There was a bipartisan consensus to do nothing in regards to the IDB. Even the 2010 capital increase, it was essentially earmarked, which didn't really

add any type of financing value to the IDB because it was essentially earmarked and it was essentially, OK, just get it off the table.

In 2015, when IDB was merged out, the United States did not participate. It actually just – it sat back because Republicans and Democrats said: Hey, we don't want to participate in IDB Invest. But guess what happened? We got – our shareholding decreased in IDB Invest. Spain's decreased. Japan's decreased. And guess who came in? China. And by the way, there's an opportunity. So we can't have those vacuums take place anymore. The IDB has a unique not only convening power but has a unique ability to help countries in the region in a cooperative nature. You know, so we are working with them in what their needs are, and we tailor it to their needs. And in that regards it's a unique opportunity for that.

Look, the United States does not do sovereign lending. You know, China does sovereign lending across the board, but the United States doesn't do that. We stopped doing that when we did sovereign loan guarantees. And you know, I think there's still the Jordan one, but nobody wants in on their balance sheet, so it doesn't even exist. We are the only game in town in regards to being able to help. And by the way, we are the lender of choice to the region as well, because we are a cooperative. It's part of their money as well.

And that's a unique opportunity there. But if the United States does not practice its leadership – and I think one of – I think one of the positive things regardless – and I don't have 100 percent popularity rating. And nobody does, right? So surely there are people that dislike me, and I hope I can win them over, right? I think on the merits we can make an argument of why the IDB needs to be a priority for the United States in regards to its relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean. I ran on that. I think we've brought a lot more interest. I say that – you know – (laughs) – we brought more interest during this campaign and during this presidency from the United States.

Mr. Runde: You got a lot of attention.

Mr. Claver-Carone: Yeah. So, by the way, and hopefully in a good way because I want everybody to know the human capital that exists in the bank, the ability to have impact that we have in the region. And I really – I truly – the private-sector consensus. I think yesterday we saw it, with those 40 business leaders, and more, by the way, because we've gotten already phone calls. Hey, when are you doing this again? We want to come in. And hopefully on Capitol Hill now with this capital increase we have for the first time preceding the Treasury Department, a bipartisan bill out there for a historic capital increase to the bank. I hope – I think we're going to grow that. I think there's a lot of momentum. I get calls from Republicans and Democrats all the time interested, wanting to know more, because they see this as a historic opportunity.

So if we leave not only a more transparent institution – because, look, the Obama administration’s Treasury Department was absolutely right on some things in regards to the bank. And not only – you know, in 2010 it earmarked the capital increase for a specific reason. There was transparency issues. They didn’t think it helped small countries enough, et cetera. And in 2015, it almost walked out of Busan for those same issues. And then, of course, then, you know, China took this opportunity.

Look, we are doing – we’re dealing with all of those issues. We are creating compliance standards, barriers. I named as our executive vice president, who’s the number two which used to be – historically was the U.S. position, Reina Mejía. She was the CEO of Citibank in Central America. Let me tell you, she’s amazing, and her job is to be what was supposed to be the EVP but had not been. And we had some magnificent people as EVP, but their job was supposed to be – to be the chief operating officer of the bank. She is the chief operating officer of this bank now. Her job is to create performance metrics for results, to create compliance standards. Not only do we want to leave a more transparent institution, we want to leave a more effective and more efficient institution, and one with a greater U.S. commitment – hopefully, U.S. bipartisan commitment – to its impact, because the impact we can have is across the board.

And one of those things, Central America. So, look, in Central America I think we have a unique opportunity. Within my hundred days, Central America got hit by two hurricanes within two weeks, Eta and Iota. By the way, this is the region in the world where four out of the five countries most effected by hurricanes in the entire world are right here in Central America and the Caribbean, so add that to the – you know, to the – to the –

Mr. Runde: The climate conversation, yeah.

Mr. Claver-Carone: Add that – and add that to the – to the – add that to Covid. Add that to the largest migration crisis in the world today, Venezuela. Add all of those things. I mean, this is a –

Mr. Runde: (Inaudible.)

Mr. Claver-Carone: This is making the case. It’s easy to make the case for this capital increase because this region faces particularities unlike any other.

So you had those two hurricanes hit. I was very proud to lead on the immediate response that we had to the – to the countries in Central America that were hit by Eta and Iota, along with the World Bank, the Central American Bank for Integration, CEPAL as well. We did the assessments, we provided immediate, and we’re actually going to assume now long because usually these things get forgotten. You know, it happened two months ago so everyone has forgotten. No. We’re actually

now looking – we will be in the next couple of weeks launching a reconstruction effort now for the impact that those – that those hurricanes had. So a huge opportunity there.

Now, moving forward, hey, look, there's a great opportunity with the new – with President Biden and his administration to really do something significant here. The Alliance for Prosperity, we've been working on this. From 2015 to 2020, we have put about \$3.5 billion in regards to the Alliance for Prosperity and its measures from here, from the bank. I think we can really do a 2.0 that not only takes all the good things from the public side that the Alliance for Prosperity had, but also add a lot of the private-sector things.

You know, when the – when the International Development Finance Corporation was created, it has since left three agreements with each of the three Central American countries for \$1 billion each for co-financing for guarantees for private-sector investment. I think if we bring the private-sector side, we can really create something great here in an Alliance for Prosperity 2.0 with a public-private partnership here. We can scale all of that and we can make a huge difference.

By the way, the capital increase, all the more argument for it. You know, President Biden said that he wants to commit \$3 billion or \$4 billion over four years to the region. Hey, we can help with that. And by the way, for a fraction of the cost – you know, you made a great – you guys made a great argument in the – in the recent paper you put out that for a fraction of the cost for taxpayers, we can help out with that. We can do – we can put the money down for, you know, 5, 10 percent of that, right? So it's a great value proposition for U.S. taxpayers as well.

I think this is a unique opportunity there. I think that all of the groundwork is there. And I think that that is one of things that we can work on. But there's other things.

And by the way, you know, I want to – I want to set – you know, just say from the get-go, I mean, my conversations – every conversation I've had with the – with the new administration has been extraordinarily positive and collaborative, and I think there's some real great things we can do together. You mentioned Central America, but not only that.

Look, vaccines. On the vaccines, one of the things within the hundred days, as well, that we did is I told our team – and partly because we've broken the silos. You know, it used to be unheard of that the vice presidency for countries would work with the vice presidency for sectors and actually collaborate and find financing and opportunities. I said, hey, we need to get involved on the vaccines. We need to help specifically on the vaccines. The teams came together, broke silos, and we put \$1 billion to work on the vaccines for acquisition, distribution, storage, and equitable distribution,

which is something that concerns me. We're working now with eight countries in particular that needed the extra help, and we're going to be able to do a lot more and create those contingencies. We can help a lot with the new administration in that regard.

Climate. Hey, on the Amazon Initiative, that's unique. We really – it's the only existing structure that's out there for it – and we're going to announce it in Barranquilla – where all seven Amazon countries are together, work together, and are committed – and are committed to increased projects on biodiversity, all the things that we mentioned before. And we can do so, and we can provide the financing for it. And if we have our own fund to do so – and by the way, our European shareholders are super excited about it, and we're actually calling this opportunity a green capital increase because this capital increase can be a green capital increase. It fits within Vision 2025. This Vision 2025 is the perfect inroads for a green capital increase. Amazon Initiative is a huge opportunity in that regard.

And then the fourth thing is the Summit of the Americas. When President Biden decides to have the Summit of the Americas, which the U.S. is going to host, when they decide on the date, look, we play a big – a big role in the American Business Dialogue. We're strengthening the American Business Dialogue. The number-one ask that I got from the private sector is please strengthen the American Business Dialogue – add more staff, do – absolutely. We're strengthening it. There's more companies coming in. We're doing a lot more. And it's a unique opportunity to bring because the growth in the region and the recovery in the region is going to be private-sector-led. It's going to be a unique opportunity to really bring that in. And we're ready and willing to help, and I think we can do some great things together and create that bipartisan.

Those issues – Central America, including migration; vaccines; climate; and, obviously, U.S. investment, to not leave any vacuums in Latin America and the Caribbean – are bipartisan issues. So we can bring people together on this unique opportunity.

Mr. Runde: Mauricio, talk about the Caribbean. We've put out a – we're going to be putting out a larger paper on a second Caribbean Basin Initiative. I had an article in The Hill saying you ought to consider a CBI 2.0. It's not original material. One of my colleagues, Georges Fauriol, came up with the concept of a CBI 2.0 a couple years ago at CSIS. The Caribbean's an important region for the IDB. You have many member states that are – that are borrowing nations in the Caribbean. Could you talk about how you see the Caribbean and its relationship with the IDB?

Mr. Claver-Carone: Yeah, huge. And by the way, look, you know, I talked about before a lot of concerns that even, you know, President Obama's Treasury Department had in 2010, 2015. It included, obviously, what we do in regards to small countries and island states in particular.

Hey, look, I'm very proud that all of – you know, I mentioned the 23 out of the 28 countries that supported me in the presidency. Nineteen of those countries are small countries, and all of those supported my presidency precisely because we want to make sure that this is a cooperative and that they are getting the attention that they merit, because they need it. You know, so not only are these countries in the Caribbean dealing with Covid, but they're also dealing with essentially a dependency on tourism – which was the most impacted by Covid; which has destroyed, obviously, their economies – they're also the most vulnerable to the hurricanes, and we had the worst hurricane season in 50 years. So add the worst socioeconomic crisis to the worst hurricane season in 50 years. They're super exposed. And by the way, the migration crisis from Venezuela has affected them as well, particularly the eastern Caribbean states in large proportion. So we really have here, like, quite a unique mix in that regard.

I think what we have been doing on the vaccines, of those eight countries that I mentioned that we've been working on, most of them have been in the Caribbean because they've needed a lot of that support. We're doing some really innovative stuff in regards to energy and clean energy, and also bringing prices down so that we have that opportunity with the Bahamas. We actually did our first – we did a hedge, an energy hedge, with the Bahamas to help them, particularly during this time of crisis. So we're being extraordinarily innovative, but we have to be looking forward.

And there, you know, it's all about scale. We all know – we all know the challenges. That's why the opportunity, obviously. Sign me up on CBI 2. I think it's a great opportunity. Like I mentioned before, I read that piece and I – and I agree a hundred percent. It's a game changer.

The talent in the Caribbean is extraordinary. And look, and we also need to help to move away not just from the tourism – and I think tourism is extraordinarily important, and we are helping on tourism. We have an entire tourism sector. It needs to – we need to beef it up, it needs to be a lot better, and that's one of the things that we're improving to be able to help in that knowledge that we discussed, to help these countries in regards to developing their tourism economies. But other service issues in that regard are extraordinarily important.

There should not be – and again, this has nothing to do with India. And I saw in your piece, and I agree a hundred percent, that we should – and we actually are talking to India about potentially joining the bank. But more importantly, I don't think there should be a single call center in India. I want them all in the Caribbean. There is no call center that is in India today that should not be in the Caribbean. I mean – I mean, it's common sense. And we're working with these companies to do so, as well.

But you know, we're doing the matchmaking. We're working. We're being proactive. We're pulling up our sleeves. We're making the phone calls. And I think that we have a unique opportunity here to do so and we have a unique opportunity to work.

I am actually working in regards to this Vision 2025 reinvest in the Americas. There's two subsections, I would say – two subregions, whereby we're going to do kind of a deeper dive on because I think they merit it due to the need. And that's, obviously, northern Central America, the three countries that we discussed and obviously a priority for President Biden and his administration; but also the Caribbean, because I think that has – there are special circumstances that merit some attention, and doing a deeper dive on all five of these issues and how it affects them. I just literally spoke yesterday to the – to our Caribbean constituency in regards about to doing that deeper dive because we have – and by the way, that's where we can have the greatest impact.

You know, a \$10 million investment in Mexico is – you know, is probably – is not going to be felt very much. But you know, a \$10 million investment in the Bahamas has an impact, in Barbados has an impact. That's huge. And by the way, and then add that even more – you know, scale that even more. A billion-dollar investment in any of these countries is a game changer. So we want to be able to focus on it. We're doing a lot more of that. My commitment to the small countries was precisely to make sure that we are functioning like a cooperative, that they are getting the attention that they merit, and I think that we're doing that. It's been a bumpy road at times because, obviously, you know, there's been a culture here, as well, that we've had to break through.

And so I think one of the things culturally that we're trying to do here at the bank as well is that it's not a zero-sum game. We can focus on – we can give the small countries, which are 19 out of the 28, the attention they merit without having to take away from the big countries, right? Which is why we want to increase the pie, so that at the end of the day it's not about taking from one to give to the other. It's not a zero-sum game. If it's a cooperative, there needs to be not only financing cooperative, but it needs to be a power-sharing cooperative, et cetera.

And I'm also really proud of, look, you know, the – this is the first time our three vice presidents – whether it's Reina Mejía, who as I said was the CEO of Citibank in Central America; she's from Honduras. Our vice president for countries is Richard Martinez, who is the finance minister for Ecuador, also from a small country, and our – and an extraordinary – really led an extraordinary – negotiations across the board there, and we can talk a lot about Richard. And then our vice president for sectors is Benigno López, who is the finance minister for Paraguay who was, you know, the head of Itaipú, head of the Social Security Institute there, minister of finance, and the central bank. I mean, so we've – also are empowering them in order –

and that's the first time that's ever happened here in its history, and I think it's a great opportunity.

And it doesn't mean that the bigger countries are not going to, again, have that opportunity. And by the way, we're going to incorporate others and more. But you know, it's just about if we are a cooperative, we have to be a cooperative in the full sense of the word. And I'm very proud of being able to for the first time, frankly, in 61 years empower some of those smaller countries that have not had the opportunity.

Mr. Runde: Let's talk about expanding the – you talked about India. I've called for looking at Australia, Singapore, India, the Gulf countries in the Middle East such as Qatar, Kuwait, or the UAE. I've also – I'm strongly in favor of considering Taiwan as a shareholder – as a shareholder, based as an economy. For those who don't follow this, Taiwan has been a shareholder since the 1960s in the Asian Development Bank as an economy. Taiwan is a member of the WTO as an economy. So there's no reason in my mind, when nine out of the 28 countries in the hemisphere recognize Taiwan, that Taiwan ought not to be a member of the IDB.

Let me just say one other thing. I was very unhappy with the fact that mainland China ruined the 60th anniversary. And people don't like talking about it because there's a culture of politeness in the IDB. No one wants to say it, but let's all be frank: Mainland China ruined the 60th anniversary because they refused to seat the Venezuelan delegation that represented the Guaidó government because they support the authoritarian Maduro regime. I won't ask you to comment on politics on one of your shareholder members, but I will say that.

So I would – maybe you don't have to necessarily respond to my proposal about Taiwan, but why don't you just respond more broadly about the issue of could you imagine an additional set of shareholders joining the IDB, including Australia or India, as part of, say, a capital increase?

Mr. Claver-Carone: So the answer is yes. And as I mentioned before, we already are talking to India on this.

But I will talk – I will answer about Taiwan. Look, you know, yes, nine countries in the region recognize Taiwan. Six of our shareholders recognize Taiwan. So we're somehow punishing those six countries by not having Taiwan involved in the bank, and they've been involved in the bank for decades. And they – you know, we've had several funds and projects and things of that sort. And so, therefore, they should participate with the bank because we would be punishing six of our shareholders by not doing so, and I think that makes absolutely no sense.

Mr. Runde: I 100 percent agree. You just made my day. That's all I wanted.

Mr. Claver-Carone: I mean – I mean, it's just – and by the way, and again, it doesn't – it shouldn't affect our relationship with China in any way because China is a shareholder and we will continue to work with them as a shareholder in that regard. But it goes to the point I made about the merge-out of IDB Invest in 2015, where China took – where China came in with a greater share there and the United States was scaled down, as was Spain, as was Japan, which is – there's no reason to, to the contrary.

I will say just real quick, then, I think, as open as I am to adding other countries and bringing them in, I think that really, you know, remember, the shareholding of the bank was really a product of, like, the '60s, and it doesn't reflect the realities today of the bank. And I think there's another discussion here to be had is – is where that shareholding reflects what the region looks like today. For example, you know, Spain in the 1960s, you know, obviously, had a very different economic situation, still under the dictatorship, than it does today and its role in the region is very different than it is today. It shouldn't be a 2, 3 percent shareholder. It should be a larger shareholder and it wants to be a larger shareholder. The problem is, you know, this was a product of the '60s.

Mexico is a 6, 7 percent shareholder. It's not representative of the scale of its economy, which is the second largest economy in Latin America and the Caribbean after Brazil. Colombia, Peru, Chile, all underrepresented share wise compared to the scale of their economies today.

So I think there's a conversation that should be had as well as in regards to, you know, does the shareholding structure today truly represent, you know, these economies as they look like today in these countries and the heft of these countries today, and that's an important conversation to have.

And by the way, there's other shareholders that we currently have and, you know, I mentioned Spain and others, but there's other shareholders that we have that want to increase their shareholding. So, you know, I think this is also a great process that, you know, if we can move forward on it and I think it's a great opportunity, we can actually look at having an increased shareholding by some of these, as opposed to creating vacuums.

Mr. Runde: I'd love to see Japan buy – add more shares. And as somebody who was –

Mr. Claver-Carone: Japan remains our largest nonregional shareholder at 5 percent and is one of the most valuable partners that we have here, and I think that its role is only to increase here in the bank.

Mr. Runde: Both Japan and Spain are such great partners to the hemisphere. So glad you referenced that. Let me –

Mr. Claver-Carone: And, by the way, which is why – which is why – I'm sorry, Dan – which is why, you know, our nonregional offices – you know, so we have offices in

the 26 borrowing nations and our nonregional offices are in Tokyo; in Asia; and then our European one was to be in Brussels, but I committed – it was part of my campaign to move that office back to Madrid and we have done so. We executed that. That was a promise I kept. We have moved our European headquarters back to Madrid. We kept a satellite office in Brazil with one person there, but our headquarters are back in Madrid precisely because of that important role it plays.

Mr. Runde: I want you to talk about IDB Invest and IDB Lab, because I think they're really important parts of your tools in your toolkit, if I can describe them. They're, like, really important forces of good in the hemisphere. Talk about each one separately

Mr. Claver-Carone: Yeah. So, look, IDB Invest is, obviously, our private-sector arm and then IDB Lab is our innovation arm. One of the things that we've actually – one of the – so there's a bunch of priorities that we wanted to do here but, first and foremost, is to send a message culturally here.

Believe it or not, before I came here, IDB Invest and IDB Lab was not considered part of the executive leadership team of the bank. So in the executive leadership meetings they weren't even participating. Now they are. They are a full part of the executive leadership of this team and they are fully incorporated into Vision 2025. IDB Invest, IDB Lab, are fully incorporated.

The capital increase that we're talking about and seeking is a group wide one. Now, granted, IDB Lab already has. There's going to be a meeting in that regards because its replenishment is coming up, so it has to one way or another. But this is a unique opportunity and IDB Lab is our innovation laboratory, right, as we call it. So think of it in the scale of investments as Series A, Series B.

Mr. Runde: It's got very flexible money. I know the MDB system really well, Mauricio. You're very fortunate to have the IDB Lab. There's nothing like it at the World Bank. There's nothing like it at the EBRD. There's nothing like it at the Asian Development Bank. A number of shareholders, including the United States, but Spain and other – Japan as well, a number of other countries were visionary in the early '90s in trying to launch that, and I know that, you know, both IDB Invest and IDB Lab are very ably led by – you have really strong leaders in each one. But also you've had a lot of support from a number of your shareholders as well.

Mr. Claver-Carone: Absolutely, and all those you mentioned, Spain and Japan, key. And look, and we need the United States to be more involved. You know, that's one of the things I'm pitching. Unfortunately, the United States has not been, in a bipartisan manner – (laughs) – committed to either IDB Invest or IDB Lab, and we need to really step it up. And so that's one of the challenges we have there.

And one of the things that we have to do and one of the things that we want to do is really create the full scale of investment, right? So think of, like, IDB Lab as Series A, Series B, and then kind of the projects get bigger they go to IDB Invest. There's kind of a gap there in the middle. We're trying to fill that gap there in the middle so that we can really take companies and projects and, like, you know, some of these, like, startup, hugely impactful telecom, like internet companies, et cetera, to really take them through the full scale. And if we can do that, it's going to have a huge impact.

And by the way, the other thing – and if we don't have capital we can't do it, particularly if we don't have paid-in capital – take larger equity shares. Well, we're already doing so. One of the things that I told our IDB Invest team is I want to do more equity, because when you do equity you also then help with governance. You know, it has even more development impact. And there are limits in that regards but, look, we just – we just did one, a big – a successful called Pharma LatAm, which is essentially an online pharmacy that's in Colombia, but also increasingly Peru, Mexico, and different parts of the region. And we did an equity stake in that. We need to do a lot more of that, because then we also provide an ability to create governance standards. And that has kind of a greater effect as well. But for that, you need paid-in capital. So we're – another reason to do – to do more.

Mr. Runde:

Mauricio, I want to give – there are journalists watching this. This is on the record. I think let me just say what I'm going to say, but you know – you know, I want to give you a chance to say the following. So, you're the first American president in the Inter-American Development Bank. The election created some controversy, as I mentioned at the beginning. And there were a number of American voices and some regional voices who were unhappy about you being named president of the IDB. I've looked at this. I wrote an article in Foreign Policy about this. We've written this major report that came out yesterday. I timed both of these in the runup to the Barranquilla meeting, which is your board of governors meeting.

My message to shareholders and doubters of you is we should work with you and your leadership, because either we do this or we're going to hurt the bank and we're going to hurt – we're going to hurt the region, which we've just spent the last 45 minutes talking about, is getting whacked hard. And any attempt to sort of upend your leadership, in my view, will take up to a year. So if we're going to delay a capital increase and delay helping the region because of personal animus, I think it's a disservice to the region and I think it's a disservice to global development. And so if we want to delay this by two or two and a half years, go down the path of trying to have a fight with you and your team, I think it's a mistake after having looked at this hard and talking to a lot of people. I think the best path is to work with you.

So I want to give you a chance to make the case to the doubters – there are doubters out there, and maybe it's a vocal minority, maybe it's a larger than vocal minority. I want to give you a chance, both in the U.S. context and in the non-U.S. context, to make the case about what would you say to those folks. What is your case to them about why they need to work with you?

Mr. Claver-Carone: Yeah. Well, thank you for that, Dan. And to be – to be frank, you know, like I said, all of my discussions with the administration have been very positive. Like I said, we're getting more and more interest across the board. We have the first bipartisan legislation – proactive legislation – on a historic capital increase we've ever seen in history. And I'm getting more Democrats and Republicans that are calling and asking more how they can help out. And I think that the momentum is clearly on our side because it's the worst socioeconomic crisis in 120 years, let alone the 61 years of the bank.

I think our vision is clear, as I mentioned earlier. I won't go through all five sectors of our Vision 2025, reinvest in the Americas. I think that's clear. But look, here's the reality. And I know we're here in Washington. And in Washington, there's always, you know, kind of political parlor games that go on, and the rumor mills, and things of this sort. And again, you know, no one has a 100 percent approval rating. But I think at the end of the day I've been able to support a lot of support across the board.

I was elected with the support of 23 out of 28 members in the region. I think it's important I was duly elected – (laughs) – by 23 out of the 28. And I was nominated by six countries in the region, duly elected by 23 out of 28 countries in the region. And frankly, I think if the election were held again today and with what we know, I think if I didn't have all 28 I would have at least 26 or 27 of those 28, because I think we've really done a lot of work.

In regards here to kind of how we worked with the board, I think I'm most accessible president in the history of this bank. I talk constantly with our executive directors. I talk constantly with these countries to see what their needs are to help fit what we're doing within their needs. But again, let me – let me make a point. Obviously, we are in Washington and there's obviously this talk about politics. And political intrigue is always going to be. And I know it's very tempting to do stories about political intrigue.

But we are not a political organization. We are a bank. We're a development bank. Keep politics out of the bank, because here's an important issue and something that I would add to even things that you've written. We're a AAA-rated institution. If you inject political intrigue, and political speculation and politics into this bank, you're going to hurt our AAA credit rating. And guess what happens if you hurt our AAA credit rating? That's less vaccines for the region. That's less climate financing. That's less financing for small and medium enterprises for women. That's less development impact across the region.

Right now we're talking about a capital increase. And I'm very confident that we're going to get this capital increase. And I'm going to work tirelessly to get it, because the region needs it. I ran on it. I had the foresight on it. And we're – and we're going to get this. But let me say this, even if we do that's not going to come in till 2023, 2024, 2025. So at the end of the day, we – and we're already doing a whole lot right now to optimize our balance sheet. We just did an exposure exchange agreement with the Asian Development Bank. I'm talking to the president of the European Investment Bank next week about doing certain things to mitigate risk, to kind of create more space.

So we are out there doing all sorts of creative things to be able to have more money available to us to help the region during its worst socioeconomic crisis. We need to focus on making more resources available to the bank, and on all the creative things that we're doing right now to answer this crisis. Political intrigue, political conversations will only diminish that, will hurt the region, and there will be another lost decade. I said it, and I said it, you know, from day one and then I repeat it now at every event.

The success of the region to recover from this crisis and not have another lost decade is going to be based on the right or wrong PPPs. If we focus on public-private partnerships the region is not only going to not have another lost decade, but it's going to have opportunities and it's going to be a successful decade. If we focus on power, politics and patronage, everybody loses – everybody loses. There's no way out. I am committed. I think we have – we are creating a bipartisan consensus here in the United States on these issues, where there should be consensus. I think we're doing so in the region.

And I think that, you know, whatever skeptics were out there, I think that the merits – I've won them over on the merits and on my work ethic within these 100 days. I mean, in just over 100 days all the things that we've done I think have been historic. And we're going to do a lot more. In 2020, the bank lent \$21.6 billion to the region – not just lent, overall provided. Not just financing, but overall. Next – this year it's going to be 12,14. That's going to be a one-off. The region can't afford that. So we're being creative in order to fill a gap this year, but we have to be forward-looking as well. And that's going to be really important.

But here's the good news – here's the good news: We're doing a lot of good work. And investors are seeing that. And we just had a couple of weeks ago our 10-year bond offering. And we had the most successful 10-year bond offering in the history of this bank – in the 61-year history of this bank. We thought we were going to raise \$1 billion. We had demand for \$5 billion. And we settled on \$4 billion. Because people like what we're doing. And if you hear yesterday in the private sector partnership that we launched, those companies, they're excited. They're putting – they want to put their money where their mouth is. They want to do it with the IDB, because we

are the gold standard, and we're creating that gold standard, and we're being the flagship, and we have a unique opportunity.

And by the time I walk out of the door of this bank in 2025, as I said, we're going to have a more transparent institution, we're going to have a more efficient and effective institution, one with bipartisan U.S. commitment to it, and the region's going to look back and say: We did not lose another decade. And guess what? That's going to be success. And that's going to leave a better bank for the future.

Mr. Runde: Thank you. That's great. Thank you, Mauricio. I agree. And my message to folks who have concerns is: If you care about the region and you care about global development, and if you believe that Covid-19 is a unique crisis and perhaps creates unique opportunities, then we need to work with the current management team at the IDB and stop the intrigues. That is my view. So I think – and that's what – the article we did and that's the report we put out, is to deliver that message. So I understand and I support your presidency, and I support what you're trying to do.

Mr. Claver-Carone: I appreciate that, Dan. I appreciate that. And look, you are an extremely knowledgeable voice in this sphere, and a trusted voice. And we look forward to our continued partnership in this regard. I really do think we have a unique opportunity here. I think we have a unique opportunity to ensure that the vacuums that – due to having a bipartisan, you know, sweeping under the rug of the IDB and other institutions for decades here in the United States, have created vacuums which now, in a bipartisan way, the United States regrets.

Let's not repeat those same mistakes of the past. We have a unique opportunity to do something big here. We are the lender, we are the partner of choice. We are cooperative with the region. Let's make it bigger, let's make it make it stronger, let's make it more transparent, more efficient, more effective. And I think that the United States and the region will win as a result.

Mr. Runde: All right. Mauricio, let me – I want to just cover – I got a couple of questions from the audience. First start with one about vaccines. You talked earlier about vaccines and what you've been doing. Could you talk about what your hopes are over the next six months, because I think there's both an economic component – a lot of these countries – many of our countries in the region, including the United States, are in a Covid-induced economic coma. And some worse than others, because of the tourism issue that you've talked about. So talk about how both on the vaccine side and on the economic side you see the IDB helping to respond to sort of the Covid challenge over the next six to 12 months, please.

Mr. Claver-Carone: Yeah. So for 2020 the IDB put about \$1.2 billion specifically to help countries deal with the health-related issues of Covid. I did not think that

was enough. On the vaccine, obviously when we saw – thanks to public-private partnership, which is obviously, again, important – that the vaccine was created in that regards, and then we began talking about acquisition, distribution, et cetera. Then I told our teams: We need to make sure, because we started seeing a lot of the troubles that some countries were having. Some – six in particular – had asked us for additional help. And then since then, just about all of them have in that regard.

So I wanted to make sure that there was no excuses, because there is a direct correlation between economic recovery and the vaccine distribution. We're seeing that more and more. So we wanted to make sure that we helped and we – that there was no excuses. Again, we put aside these billion dollars. That was not easy to identify and reassign, but we did it. So \$1.2-plus of billion, just for the vaccines. Acquisition, distribution, very important on the distribution side. One of the things that we were worried about, and I think that we're seeing in some countries, is this whole notion of political elites – you know, people using for patronage purposes the vaccines.

And we need to be careful with that. And so we wanted to be able to help with our knowledge and our assistance to make sure that vulnerable populations and others are having equitable access to the vaccine, which is going to be really important. Obviously, storage concerns in that regards. And, hey, look, we've been working closely, and we've been also working with Citibank closely – which is the financial advisor to Gavi – with the COVAX facility. And I take my hat off and kudos to President Biden for rejoining – for joining the COVAX facility. That's a game changer. And that's going to be a game changer for the region.

We had also been helping when that wasn't as clear in the bilateral negotiations that countries had been having with the different pharmaceutical companies. We've been working here with pharma. We actually created a task force and have been working with pharma and the pharmaceutical companies to see how we can help. Again, for us being a matchmaker, guide, you know, something that I truly believe that the IDB should play an important role on in that regards. And we're creating and helping, you know, break some of the logjams that were being had in some of these bilateral contexts. But now with the COVAX facility, it's going to be a big deal.

We're working directly – I just had a call last week with the director of the Pan-American Health Organization. Obviously, they're the procurement agent and we're the financing arm. And I think that we're doing – I want to make sure that all contingencies are met for, that there's no excuse moving on, because we need this distribution to be successful. Otherwise, the economic recovery is going to be at a slower pace.

Mr. Runde: I'm dying to get back to the region. I want to go to Brazil. I want to go on vacation in the Caribbean. I want to go skiing –

Mr. Claver-Carone: We want you there. (Laughs.)

Mr. Runde: I'm going crazy. I'm ready to get on a plane. But, you know, until all this is solved – and you guys have a real role to play in helping make that happen. So I'm anxious to get on the road and get back to the –

Mr. Claver-Carone: And look – and look – and across the board in all these things, you know, look, we're financing agents in this regards. We're providing assistance in these regards. But you know, public private partnerships are going to be key. That's what we're seeing. We're seeing it with the vaccines. On the digital side, look, we talked about it yesterday with these companies, the IDB – you know, this whole new IDB I talk about – you know, when you ask people in the region how do they think about the IDB, they talk about, you know, the large infrastructure project – the bridge, the road, the hydroelectric. You know, and then they talk about, you know, like, these ex-officials, et cetera.

We need a new IDB for new generations that know how it impacts their life. And I think digitalization is going to be key in that regards. And look, you know, I think right now in the recovery, you know, we need to be focused on these digital bridges as opposed to these concrete bridges. You know, it takes three to five years to build a concrete bridge, which is important and we're going to do it, and things of the sort. But it only takes three to five weeks to connect via satellite, you know, a community that doesn't have access to the internet. And we can do that. And we're partnering up with all these companies that were yesterday there. You know, Google, Microsoft, Millicom, others were there. And we're talking about how we can expedite that, to give those 250 million people the connectivity.

One of the things we're going to announce in Barranquilla are some pretty ambitious connectivity goals. And then, of course, it's not just connectivity. It's pricing. It's quality. Yes, we get all that. But we need to have that connectivity. We're going to have some ambitious goals for 2025, which I think includes universal connectivity at some range, and then obviously 70 percent or so from a broadband range. That's a game changer in the region. That has a huge impact. And we're focused on it.

Mr. Runde: Mauricio, we've come to 10:00. Thanks for your time. Good luck going into the Board of Governor's meeting in Barranquilla next month. And I wish you luck in achieving your capital increase. And we stand ready to help you here at CSIS.

Mr. Claver-Carone: Thank you, Dan. I appreciate it. Thank you for your leadership.

Mr. Runde: Thanks a lot.

(END)