

Manifesto

THE STRENGTH OF IBERO-AMERICA

TEN PROPOSALS TO TURN
POTENTIAL INTO GLOBAL
INFLUENCE



MAY 2026

PREAMBLE

A call to joint action

This is Ibero-America's moment: it is time to be ambitious and take giant steps. Because in a world marked by geopolitical instability, profound transformations -such as technological progress, the energy transition and the reordering of trade flows- and the need for new alliances, **our region has the opportunity to stop being solely a historical and cultural community and become a geopolitical community, from which to develop joint strategies.**

The strength of Ibero-America is born of that shift in perspective: the region has gone from being considered peripheral on the global map to occupying a place of growing geopolitical and geoeconomic relevance. The challenge is no longer to prove that Ibero-America matters, but to manage that renewed interest through more cooperation, more investment, more sustainable growth and greater capacity for independent decision-making.

That is why the Consejo Empresarial Alianza por Iberoamérica, CEAPI, which brings together more than 400 presidents of major companies and business families from the 22 countries it comprises and which, in barely a decade, has established itself as the largest business platform in its field, calls on all governments, multilateral organizations, public and private institutions, and civil society as a whole to step forward: **Ibero-America cannot limit itself to invoking what unites us; we must organize ourselves to build Ibero-America.**

The celebration of CEAPI's IX Ibero-American Congress, under the motto "The Strength of Ibero-America", represents an opportunity to formulate a common agenda from the business community, with a vocation for dialogue between the public and private spheres, and with **the aspiration to strengthen the sense of belonging to that reality and, above all, to take part in that shared future that is Ibero-America. Believing in Ibero-America and its potential means moving forward together in what we share, but also in what makes us different.** That convergence has a dual dimension: reducing inequalities within the region and gaining strength on the geostrategic map.

Gathered in Mexico City -a natural meeting point between Latin America, the United States and Europe- we wish to share our conviction that **the strength of Ibero-America** does not lie only in what it shares: language, culture, history, values and human bonds. **It lies, above all, in what it can build:** investment, formal employment, innovation, business integration, security, energy transition, talent, mobility, technological development, artificial intelligence, agricultural production, sustainability, institutional trust and global presence.

Therefore, just a few months before the XXX Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government is held in Madrid, and 35 years after the first such summit took place in 1991 in Guadalajara (Mexico), **CEAPI, from a constructive standpoint, shares with governments, institutions, the media and society as a whole this manifesto of 10 proposals to make The Strength of Ibero-America a reality.**

PROPOSALS

1. PLACE BUSINESS LEADERS AT THE CENTER OF THE SOLUTION

Ibero-America needs governments that trust their business leaders, as well as business leaders who are aware of their responsibility. The figure of the businessman and businesswoman is indispensable for generating investment, employment, equality, talent retention, innovation, productivity and social cohesion.

The region has strategic assets that the world demands: energy, food, critical minerals, biodiversity, water, talent and entrepreneurial capacity. But those assets only translate into well-being when there are business leaders and entrepreneurs capable of transforming them into projects, formal employment, value chains, technology, exports and territorial development.

CEAPI proposes strengthening a culture of collaboration between governments and companies based on trust, legal certainty, transparency and a vision for the future. The region cannot grow without its business leaders, but rather with and alongside them. And business leaders, in addition to calling for better regulatory frameworks, must demonstrate through action their social value and their commitment to formal employment, sustainability, innovation and social mobility.

2. PROMOTE MULTI-IBERO-AMERICAN COMPANIES TO GAIN COMPETITIVENESS IN THE GLOBAL MARKET

For years there was talk of multilatina companies. Today that category has become obsolete. The new business reality is no longer merely Latin American: it is Ibero-American, bidirectional and transatlantic.

CEAPI proposes promoting the concept and the reality of the **multiberoamericanas**: companies that operate on both sides of the Atlantic, integrating capital, talent, technology, value chains and strategic vision across Latin America, Spain, Portugal and Andorra, and projecting themselves from there to the rest of the world. Moreover, multi-Ibero-American companies foster the creation of **global value chains**, maximizing the region's potential and driving a sustainable industrial model.

Latin American internationalization toward Europe through the Iberian Peninsula, and the reverse movement of Iberian companies toward Latin America, must be read as part of a single strategy: building companies with scale, local knowledge, financial capacity, innovation and a global vocation. Recognition must also be given **to the value of Spain and Portugal as a bridge for investors between Latin America and the rest of the world**, particularly the Middle East and other emerging economies.

The strength of Ibero-America will become visible when its companies stop seeing themselves as isolated national players and recognize themselves as a shared business network with global capacity.

3. TRANSFORM IBERO-AMERICA'S STRATEGIC RESOURCES INTO SOLUTIONS FOR THE WORLD

Ibero-America has the resources, capabilities and key sectors to respond to some of the great challenges of the 21st century: food, water, energy, critical minerals, biodiversity, tourism, health, education, connectivity, sustainable finance and the creative industries.

Latin America and the Caribbean hold up to 935.5 million hectares of forests and jungles, approximately 46.4% of the region's surface, as well as a substantial share of the world's primary forest and 16% of the planet's agricultural land.

In critical minerals, the region concentrates close to 60% of the world's lithium reserves, around 40% of global copper reserves, and a leading position in silver, iron, gold, tin, bauxite, cobalt, rare earths and other strategic resources.

And, according to the Latin American Energy Organization, the regional market for critical minerals stands at around 180 billion dollars, roughly 25% of the world market.

All these indicators confirm that **Ibero-America has the capacity to be a decisive lever for clean industry, digitalization, electric vehicles and mobility, and the security of supply chains.**

CEAPI proposes **identifying and coordinating an agenda of strategic Ibero-American sectors, with joint projects, technology transfer, local partners and impact measurement.** All with a clear and legitimate ambition: ensuring that Ibero-America is not merely a supplier of resources, but a generator of added value, knowledge, technology, formal employment and global solutions.

4. MOVE TOWARD GREATER BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Ibero-America must abandon the logic of fragmentation. With separate markets, scattered regulations and unnecessary barriers, competitiveness and influence are lost. **With more compatible rules, shared standards and greater coordination, Ibero-America can become an economic space of global interest. An objective that can only be achieved if we are able to strengthen alliances in order to progress and align as a region.**

The reconfiguration of global value chains opens a historic opportunity. Nearshoring, the search for reliable suppliers and the need to bring production closer to major markets place countries such as Mexico, and the region as a whole, in a particularly relevant position. But that opportunity will only be seized if Ibero-America acts with more coordination and less dispersion. The trend toward greater union among Ibero-American countries is inevitable, and steps must be taken in that direction.

5. MAKE VISIBLE, STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF BUSINESS LEADERS

Business activity generates a profound and transformative social impact. On the one hand, companies contribute directly to the development of the communities in which they operate by creating jobs, opportunities, innovation, investment and economic growth. On the other, many business leaders —especially in Ibero-America— promote, through foundations and social initiatives, high-value projects that improve the living conditions and future prospects of broad sectors of the population.

The collective challenge is to **make that impact visible, strengthen it and expand it. To that end, CEAPI proposes promoting a broad alliance to establish a common methodology for evaluating, comparing and strengthening social projects in different fields** —education, culture, equality, health, inclusion and community development —, **identifying best practices** to generate more solid, sustainable and multiplying results.

This alliance must be grounded in a culture of collaboration and shared learning. An “open book” attitude, based on opening up information, sharing experiences and measuring results, will make it possible **to improve the effectiveness of projects, attract new allies and mobilize more resources.** Only in this way will it be possible to expand and strengthen the role of business leaders as key players in the economic and social development of our countries.

6. ACTIVATE TALENT, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH THROUGH MULTI-IBERO-AMERICAN COMPANIES

The region has talent, youth and entrepreneurial capacity. But it also faces structural challenges. According to a recent OIJ report, in absolute terms, 9.4 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed and 23 million are outside the education and labor systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. AI and robotization threaten to open new gaps; **it is essential to drive the creation of new jobs in emerging sectors.**

CEAPI calls on all the actors involved to ensure that **access to employment guarantees minimum conditions** that foster personal development and the building of life projects.

With close to 60% of young people working informally and without a regulated legal framework, possessing strategic resources is not enough. **Talent is needed that can manage them and turn them into sustainable prosperity.**

For example, a first step is to strengthen the relationship between universities and companies, an area that is weak across the region and that could be accelerated by linking it to multi-Ibero-American companies.

Because **the strength of Ibero-America will be incomplete if it does not translate into decent work, applied talent and real opportunities for young people and women.**

7. STEER TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOWARD INCLUSION AND GROWTH

Artificial intelligence (AI) will be one of the great frontiers of competitiveness in the coming decades. Ibero-America must take part in its creation, regulation, productive adaptation and social application. Artificial intelligence cannot be adopted without a strategic vision and an inclusive purpose.

CEAPI believes that all technological progress and AI applications must be directed, beyond economic growth and productivity gains, toward accelerating improvements in education, health, social inclusion, employability and the modernization of SMEs. All of this without neglecting the protection and strengthening of fundamental and social rights.

At the same time, we call for the various AI regulations, from both governments and institutional bodies, to help make it a useful instrument for reducing gaps, formalizing employment, improving services, training talent and increasing regional productivity.

The strength of Ibero-America will depend on the technological revolution not widening inequalities, but opening up opportunities.

8. TURN LANGUAGE INTO AN ECONOMIC STRENGTH FOR IBERO-AMERICA

Ibero-America has a competitive advantage: Spanish. More than 600 million people speak it around the world. But the key lies not in the number, but in being a **complete ecosystem: cultural, economic, social and institutional.**

Spanish is already the second language on social networks such as Instagram and on the main content platforms such as Spotify and YouTube, and 21% of Netflix premieres are now produced directly in Spanish.

Moreover, **it generates trust and gains influence.** Two strategic factors for facilitating business, accelerating the circulation of ideas, connecting talent and creating opportunities. However, the great challenge lies in the digital sphere. Translating content is not enough. It is essential to generate knowledge and technology directly in Spanish — technology that understands its nuances and respects its diversity.

Governments, business leaders, universities, the media and society as a whole must coordinate to strengthen its role in education, business and technology, and to train talent and innovate in Spanish.

Spanish is a bond with the capacity for global connection. And in a world where influence is measured by the capacity to connect, attract and persuade, Spanish is **one of Ibero-America's great strategic strengths.**

9. STRENGTHEN IBERO-AMERICA AS A REGION WITH STRATEGIC AUTONOMY IN THE WORLD

Ibero-America must engage with the world from a position of greater strategic autonomy. The United States will remain an essential partner for the region; China is already a strategic partner in trade, investment and infrastructure; Asia, the Middle East and Africa are opening new opportunities; while Europe represents a natural alliance of values, investment and cooperation, one that can also exert a degree of influence in the field of security. But Ibero-America must avoid being merely an object of dispute between blocs and instead become a subject with its own voice and decision-making capacity.

The world order is undergoing a profound transformation, which is why **CEAPI proposes a common Ibero-American policy that is open, pragmatic and multipolar, and that benefits its companies** while being capable of strengthening the relationship with the United States, maintaining a mature relationship with China, and deepening the alliance with Europe through multiple mechanisms. The Global Gateway agenda, which aims to mobilize up to 45 billion euros in energy, digital, education and mobility projects, together with the recent agreements between the EU and Mercosur and Mexico, points the way forward.

Diversification must also incorporate new geographies. Southeast Asia, India and Africa offer possibilities for South-South trade, connectivity, food security, energy, light manufacturing, digital services and the creation of more resilient value chains. The strength of Ibero-America lies in reducing dependencies and gaining relevance.

10. SUPPORT CEAPI AS THE LARGEST PLATFORM OF BUSINESS LEADERS COMMITTED TO IBERO-AMERICA

Ibero-America needs organizations capable of turning speeches into action, agendas into projects, and initiatives into impact. CEAPI must be recognized as the great Ibero-American business ecosystem: a platform of trust, knowledge, dialogue, influence and action.

At the same time, **CEAPI renews its commitment as an interlocutor between company presidents and business families and governments, multilateral organizations and civil society.** Likewise, it is strengthening its resources as a think tank to expand its capacity to generate knowledge, data and proposals through the Ibero-American Business Barometer and other analytical instruments.

Ibero-America's historic opportunity will not turn into a real possibility on its own. It needs an organized voice, a shared agenda, the capacity for dialogue, flagship projects, impact measurement and continuity. That is the role CEAPI can and must play from the business sphere so that Ibero-America becomes a community with global influence.

► CONCLUSIONS

Believing, creating and growing in Ibero-America: a shared responsibility

The strength of Ibero-America is not a slogan. It is a strategy and a way of being and acting in the world, accompanied by an economic policy that trusts business leaders and backs companies.

Ibero-America has the resources, the market, the biodiversity, the food, the energy, the critical minerals, the talent, the companies, the culture, the language and the shared values needed to be decisive in the new world order. But **we will only achieve it if we are able to act together.**

Because achieving all of these objectives requires Ibero-America to be aware of the problems affecting its security and of the place it deserves in global geopolitics, and to treat the needs arising from both as a priority.

Sharing history is not enough. **The challenge is to build a common future**, through connected institutions, companies, projects and markets that foster integration. The business leaders of CEAPI take on this commitment with loyalty and out of a deep conviction: together we are stronger.

Because, more than a motto, **believing, creating and growing in Ibero-America is a shared responsibility.**





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