

## **The CSO Financing for Development Group**

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### ***Basic principles and operating procedures***

#### **Background**

The CSO Financing for Development (FfD) Group is an open group with the single criterion for membership being representation of a public-benefit civil society organization. The Group has a fundamentally thematic focus, bringing together civil society organizations, networks and federations that are interested and active in the Financing for Development Process and its interrelated domains. In various conformations, the CSO FfD Group's engagement dates back to the Preparatory Committee process leading up to the first International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey (March 2002), and then continues through the preparation and follow-up of the Financing for Development Conference in Doha (November 2008) and the Third Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa (July 2015). In particular, the Group has been active in its present format (Global Social Economy Group – GSEG) since the Doha FfD Review Conference in 2008.

During the entire FfD process, the CSO FfD Group promoted, catalysed and facilitated engagement of civil society in the formal UN process and related spaces. Consistently with the FfD modalities that explicitly provide for the participation of civil society and the private sector, the CSO FfD Group is officially acknowledged by the UN FfD Office as the mechanism for civil society engagement in the process and so referred on the UN FfD website. As per paragraph 132 of the outcome document of the Third Financing for Development Conference, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the CSO FfD group understands its mandate to not only address the expanded Financing for Development agenda but also the interlinkages between Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### **Participating organizations**

The core of the Group is an open virtual list containing more than 800 participating organizations (with more than 950 individuals). The CSO FfD Group includes the [Women's Working Group on FfD](#). As a mechanism for civil society's engagement in FfD, the CSO FfD Group does not have "formal membership", but it rather is an open space where interested organizations can engage and coordinate their common action, advocacy and engagement. Participating organizations can join the Group by subscribing to the Group's online list (GSEG's list). Joining the list is a simple process in which applicants provide some basic information to confirm their status as public-benefit civil society organization.

Participating organizations includes movements, networks, federations and coalitions among various constituencies (both those formally recognised within the current structure of the Major Groups, such as NGOs, women, children and youth, and trade unions, but also people living with disabilities, aging and others) as well as regional and thematic groupings.

## **Decision making process: Civil society speaking with one voice**

The core principle of the CSO FfD Group is that of ensuring that civil society can speak with one collective voice throughout its engagement in the FfD process. All letters, positions, interventions and statements on behalf of the CSO FfD group are discussed and decided on Global Social Economy Group list. If when interventions are prepared in short time, they are still submitted to the Global Social Economy Group list for at least one round of comments (in extremis) if not two before they are officially adopted in the name of the group. Since the Addis preparatory process, all past positions and statements are posted on the CSO FfD Group's website and therefore offer the basis of the collective memory of the Group for future reference. Whenever an intervention or statement may need to be prepared in limited time (as it often happens in the context of negotiations or sessions), the selected speakers are invited to refer to the past statements to ensure adherence to and consistency with the agreed line of the CSO FfD Group.

## **Working procedures**

Most of the Group's preparations are advanced by subgroups corresponding to the FfD thematic pillars (though some groups are more structured than others are) or by designated task teams created for a specific occasion (i.e. drafting team, communication team). Whenever work is advanced within a thematic working group or a task team, any decisions or approvals of draft statements or positions are still submitted to the GSEG list for final review and approval. Even the two coordinating groups (the Addis Ababa Coordinating Group and the Rapid Response Group - later described) are intended to be facilitating groups and do not have decision-making authority in the name of the CSO FfD Group.

Selection of speakers and funded participants is undertaken through the establishment of small task team (normally drawing from members of the two coordinating groups) that rank candidates and propose a decision to the GSEG list for final review and approval. Candidates apply through an open process in which interested individuals are requested to fill in a simple online form to collect the necessary information to allow the selection committee to make an informed decision. The full list of applicants and their responses (with the exception of any sensitive private information) are transparently shared with the GSEG list alongside with the proposed slate of nominees.

Whenever possible, side events and working sessions are organized, after due process on the GSEG list, in the name of the CSO FfD Group, including the Women's Working Group on FfD.

## **Coordination and Governance Structures**

The CSO FfD group has two main coordination structures:

1. **The Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group (ACG):** The mandate of the group is to facilitate and coordinate broad civil society participation in all dimensions of the FfD process. It does

so by ensuring dissemination of information across CSO networks and platforms, organizing the democratic and transparent selection of CSO speakers, coordinating civil society messages and responses through an inclusive process, and most recently, promoting common fundraising efforts to ensure strong participation of Southern civil society in FfD Conferences and the preparatory and follow-up processes. The Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group is now facilitating the CSO FfD Group's engagement in the FfD follow-up process, including the Annual FfD Follow-up Forum and its interlinkages with the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development as well as other interrelated policy processes. The composition of the Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group is the following:

- Soren Ambrose, ActionAid
- Martin Tsounkeu, Africa Development Interchange Network
- Josephine Kamel, African Women Economic Policy Network
- Fanwell Bokosi, Afrodad
- Jean Saldanha, CIDSE
- Jesse Griffith, Eurodad
- Jennifer del Rosario-Malonzo, IBON International
- Matt Simonds, ITUC
- Lidy Nacpil, Jubilee South Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development
- Eric LeCompte, Jubilee USA
- Carlos Bedoya, Latindadd
- Aashish Khullar, MGCY- IMCS Pax Romana
- Daniel LeBlanc, NGO Committee on FfD
- Vitalice Meja, Reality of Aid Africa
- Catharina Bu, Save the Children
- Roberto Bissio, Social Watch
- Stefano Prato, Society for International Development
- David Hillman, Stamp Out Poverty
- Bhumika Muchhala, Third World Network
- Luisa Emilia Reyes and Rosa Lizarde, Women's Working Group on FfD

2. **The Rapid Response Group (RRG):** The mandate of the group is to facilitate the elaboration of joint substantive positions by the CSO FfD Group on policy-related issues that are part of the FfD agenda, such as collective positions on negotiating text, key reports and other substantive documents. The group is composed by volunteering members of the ACG and the co-facilitators of the thematic working groups corresponding to the FfD pillars (Domestic Resource Mobilisation; International Public Finance; Private Finance; Debt and Debt Sustainability; Trade; Systemic Issues; Data, Monitoring and Follow-up). The RRG does not have decision-making authority and can only draft positions and statements for the final review of the GSEG list.

## **Appointment of the members of the Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group**

The Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group was formed in October 2014 through an open, inclusive and transparent process within the CSO FfD Group, taking into full consideration regional, gender and constituency balance (including the Major Groups' constituencies). The process was based on the following criteria as developed by an initial sub-committee (building on the Doha experience).

Contribution to the ACG was open to all CSOs provided that they had the following profile:

- Be able to delegate knowledgeable and competent resource persons who can voluntarily allocate the time demanded for the efficient functioning of the group. While nominating resource persons CSOs to keep in mind the need for a gender balanced group;
- Can show evidence of having substantially contributed (past or present) to CSO coordination in terms of process management, outreach and facilitation in FfD or similar UN processes;
- Have adequate knowledge and experience of the FfD process;
- Represent a known and relevant constituency (gender/women's groups; Unions; Grass-roots organisations; international and regional networks with relevant technical/thematic expertise).

## **Financial Accountability**

On the occasion of the Addis Ababa Conference, the ACG solicited funds in the name of the CSO FfD Group in order to organize the CSO FfD Forum and then further confirmed some limited support for the first months of the FfD Follow-up process (also as a result of a positive balance from the CSO FfD Forum organization). In order to ensure proper management of the financial resources developed and managed in the name of the Group, the ACG selected a fiscal agent and established a sub-committee of the ACG to ensure financial oversight. All budgets and financial reports were – and continue to be - reviewed by the ACG, which is responsible for the overall reporting to GSEG. The Society for International Development was identified as Fiscal Agent prior to the CSO FfD Forum, while the current members of the Finance Oversight Committee are the following (the composition was reassessed after the financial reporting of the CSO Forum was completed):

- Martin Tsounkeu, Africa Development Interchange Network
- Josephine Kamel, African Women Economic Policy Network
- Jean Saldanha, CIDSE
- TBD, Women's Working Group on FfD

Stefano Prato, Society for International Development, supports the Committee as representative of the Fiscal Agent. All financial reports will be posted on the CSO FfD Group's website after their review and approval.