

07 January 2015

H.E. Mr. Geir O. Pedersen, and H.E Mr. George Talbot, Co-Facilitators for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

Your Excellencies,

Re: Feedback on the organisation of Informal Substantive Sessions and inputs on Modalities of Negotiation Sessions and CSO Forum in Addis

We, members of Civil Society from around the world would first of all like to thank you for efforts made to include members of civil society in all the informal substantive. We also acknowledge the support provided by UN-NGLS and the Financing for Development Office.

We appreciate the exchanges of views at the meetings organised with civil society and the private sector. This letter builds upon the letter of the Addis CSO Coordination Group addressed to you on 15 October 2014 on modalities for CSO participation in the Third Financing for Development Conference and issues raised at the meeting with civil society and the private sector on 10 December 2014. It sets out our evaluation of the organisation of the Informal Substantive Sessions in November and December 2014. We would also like to provide our input into the discussion on modalities of the negotiation sessions and the organisation of the CSO Forum in Addis Ababa.

1. Comments on the Informal Substantive Process.

- CSOs invested considerably to travel to New York through their own budgets or through donor support. There was an extensive internal process to ensure coherence and coordination of our messages. It is discouraging that in many sessions civil society speakers were only invited to raise a question or comments oftentimes at the end. In many of these cases, it prevented effective panel engagement and panelists were not able to respond to questions CSOs raised. For example, the limited time allotted to the CSO speaker in Session 2 on 9 December on "International Tax Cooperation" prevented him from clarifying inaccuracies in the statements made by the panelist from the OECD. It was also unclear whether civil society would be given the opportunity to speak during all sessions in which space was dedicated to the reading of statements.
- We were also concerned by the lack of systematic civil society representation in the panels during many of the informal substantive sessions in December. While we did point out that panels during the informal substantive sessions in November were too long and prevented meaningful interaction, we did not expect this remark to be considered as a recommendation to drop civil society representation from the panels. The December sessions continued to have very long panels and in most sessions without civil society representatives at all or with a single speaker from civil society in panels with speakers who in many cases were explicitly biased towards their institutional perspective..
- In addition, we would like to highlight the fact that gender equality and inequalities were issues hardly brought to the discussions by the selected panelists. Gender inequity is the most persistent form of social and economic inequality and it is therefore regrettable that most panelists did not speak about them.

- We welcome moderated discussions, particularly when the moderator is able to effectively balance panel discussion and engagement from the floor. We believe that a principle criterion for the selection of the moderator must be a degree of neutrality with respect to Member States and other stakeholders. Failure to ensure such a profile resulted in moderation that revealed a bias in the selection of stakeholder speakers from the floor in the first session on 11 December "Closing data gaps and strengthening statistical capabilities."
- We are concerned that the time-management and the ordering of sessions reflected a lack of perspective of desired result. Organising three very significant substantive themes on one day (9 November) and the lack of adequate time for statements resulted in sessions where important substantive issues could only be named without being discussed in more detail.

2. Modalities for further engagement in negotiation sessions and the CSO forum

- We support the scheduling of the Civil Society Informal Interactive Session on 4-5 March 2015.
- We call for CSOs to continue to be given speaking slots in each session during the negotiation process. Given the different configuration and dynamic exchanges we can expect to take place during such a process, and the fact that this is an intergovernmental negotiation, we understand that it is at the discretion of the chair to determine how many times CSOs will be able to intervene in a given session. We request that CSO interventions not be limited beforehand to less than three and, to the extent possible, be based on CSO speaker requests for the floor. To make interventions targeted and relevant, civil society should be allowed to be present in the room during the negotiations and generally all sessions held. The Biodiversity Conference and its preparatory process represent good practice which should be followed in this regard.
- We request support in our efforts to reach out to civil society at large, particularly in the South, to actively engage in the process. A well-resourced Trust Fund will be critical to enable meaningful and consistent CSO engagement, particularly from the South. We request a transparent dialogue on the composition of the Trust Fund and the allocation of finance for CSO participation in the preparatory process and in Addis Ababa.
- We call for adequate guarantees that all documents prepared will be simultaneously and systematically shared with civil society, starting with the draft of the "FfD elements" paper.
- We call for civil society to continue to be given at least three speaking slots in each session during the negotiation process. Civil society should be allowed to be present in the room during the negotiations. The Biodiversity Conference and its preparatory process represent good practice which should be followed in this regard. Other UN conferences, such as the Rio+20 prep coms held in NY from January-June 2012, were also open and transparent to civil society.
- We support the scheduling of the Civil Society Informal Interactive Session on 4-5 March.
- Civil Society accreditation for the negotiation sessions and the Addis Ababa Conference should be open and not restricted to only ECOSOC accredited organisations.
- Civil Society should have full ownership, through self-organized leadership, in shaping all aspects of the CSO Forum, from agenda to scheduling, speakers, events, logistics and so on. The CSO Forum should be a central part of the Addis conference. We look forward to working with all necessary parties to ensure that member states, policymakers and UN and

other International Organisation officials attend the Forum. Adequate funding should be made available for the CSO Forum.

Civil Society is deeply committed to ensure that the Third Financing for Development Conference maintains the ambition that led up to the Monterrey Consensus: to ensure a truly inclusive, transparent and participatory forum within the UN, where significant and systemic issues of financing for development can be dealt with, engaging all stakeholders. We are convinced that the role that we play, both in New York and at country level, inside and outside the formal and informal spaces are equally critical to this success. Indeed, we are the actors responsible for ensuring that the voices, priorities and outcries of the global grassroots, social movements and the world's citizens are not only heard and respected, but also integrated into the Third Financing for Development Conference with integrity. We look forward to being fully and effectively engaged in this process. In this regard, we specifically request your feedback to this letter.

Sincerely yours,