

To the attention of:

Office of the President of the General Assembly
Non-Governmental Liaison Service of the United Nations

Cc:

Co-Facilitators for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development
Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York
UNDESA Financing for Development Office

16 March 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

We, the 21 members of the Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group (ACG) representing a wide range of networks from diverse regions and constituencies, would like to express our appreciation for the efforts made by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) and the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA) to ensure open, transparent and inclusive participation of civil society in the upcoming UNGA Hearings on Financing for Development (9-10 April). Indeed, broad and effective participation from civil society, reflecting its diversity in terms of sectors, constituencies and thematic expertise, will be critical to ensure a successful event in April and, more importantly, an ambitious outcome in Addis Ababa. This lies at the heart of ACG's mandate.

It is equally essential to highlight the critical importance of civil society's independence, autonomy and ability to self-organize. In this regard, we would like to draw attention to the letter with civil society's recommendations on the modalities for the organisation of the preparatory process and the Third Financing for Development Conference dated 15 October 2014 (appended here for easier reference). We would like to strongly re-affirm the right of civil society to self-organize autonomously and independently from governmental and intergovernmental processes. We would therefore respectfully request that, in the organization of the rest of the preparatory process and related events and the CSO Forum in Addis Ababa, such right to operate free from interference and intrusion be respected. We consider the CSO Forum to be our own space to be organized in our own terms, as it happened on past occasions and continues to happen in other UN instances.

We would also like to express our concern with regard to the proposed "Steering Committee" for the April Hearings, to be coordinated by NGLS and the OPGA, and the stated functions it is foreseen to fulfil. We believe that setting up that committee means ignoring and circumventing the extensive coordination that has been ongoing within civil society since the beginning of the FfD process in Monterrey, and that was rearticulated in mid-2014, to ensure vibrant engagement and a coordinated contribution to the upcoming Addis Ababa Conference and its preparatory process. We believe the role that NGLS and OPGA have claimed in this case may set a negative precedent by interfering with the autonomous self-organizing efforts of civil society. A more helpful role and better suited to their capacities and responsibilities, would be generating a constructive and effective interaction between various sectors and actors, including facilitating greater civil society interaction with representatives of Member States and intergovernmental organizations.

The Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group was formed in October 2014 through an open, inclusive and transparent process on the Civil Society FfD List*. The composition of the group takes into full consideration regional, gender and constituency balance (including the Major Groups' constituencies). The ACG, as per its widely accepted ToR among global civil society, has been functioning fully and effectively to facilitate broad CSO participation in all FfD meetings which have taken place up until now. It has done 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 the lead up to, as well as at the actual Addis Conference in July 2015. It is particularly remarkable that, thanks to effective coordination, a collective “CSO Response to the FfD Elements Papers” was produced in record time in late January 2015.

Both the Financing for Development Office and NGLS are fully aware of ACG’s role as well as the one that its predecessor CSO self-organized platforms have played until now, as they closely coordinated with them in order to facilitate civil society participation in the FfD process, including the Monterrey and Doha FfD conferences and intermediate meetings. Terms of Reference for the ACG were shared with NGLS in November 2014 and with the FfD Office in January 2015.

Independently from the outcome of the Steering Committee selection process, that we shall be monitoring closely, in going forward, we would request and be grateful that NGLS and OPGA work together with the Addis Ababa CSO Coordinating Group rather than create parallel processes that would effectively undermine civil society’s capacity and right to organize and coordinate itself.

With warmest regards,

The Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group

Martin Hojsik, Action Aid
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
Eva Friedlander, International Women's Anthropology Conference
Matt Simonds, ITUC
Lidy Nacpil, Jubilee South Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Dev
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
Nerea Craviotto, Women's Working Group on FfD

*The CS FfD List has been active since the Doha review conference in 2008. It is an open virtual list containing upwards of 300 organizations (500 individual members) with the single criterion for membership being representation of a Civil Society Organization. Note that NGLS and UN DESA have circulated on more than one occasion information on how to join this list and information is publicly available on the UN FfD website.

Annex

To the attention of:

H.E. Mr. George Talbot, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Guyana to the UN

H.E. Mr. Geir O. Pederson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN

Mr. Alex Trepelkov, Director, FfD Office, UN-DESA

Ms Susan Alzner, Officer in Charge, UN NGLS

15 October 2014

Re: Modalities for CSO participation in Third Financing for Development Conference and preparatory process

We, undersigned members of the Addis Ababa CSO Coordinating Group, write this letter setting out our input into the current discussion to determine modalities to facilitate wide, timely, inclusive and effective civil society engagement in the Third Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) and its preparatory process.

We are convinced that the role civil society has played in the Financing for Development process, including the previous two conferences, has been an important determinant of its success. We have lobbied governments - particularly in the North - to participate at the highest levels in the process, and have consistently lobbied for the engagement of other multilateral economic organizations in a process that we believe should be the coordination point on matters of international finance and development. Through side events, interventions during sessions, engagement with governments in country and Member State delegations to the UN, "innovative sessions" such as informal retreats and through oral and written expert input, civil society in its own diversity has also made valuable substantive contributions to FfD.

We welcome the emphasis placed on including civil society in the preparatory process in Resolution 68/279 of 10 July 2014 on modalities for the Third FfD Conference in Addis Ababa in July 2015. We look forward to collaborate with you to set the modalities for civil society engagement in a way that ensures effective, broad and balanced participation by region and by type of civil society organization; optimizes civil society's contribution and meaningful participation on the road to Addis Ababa and during the conference. These modalities must reflect existing best practice of multi-stakeholder engagement from the FfD process as well as in other processes such as the recent Open Working Group. As members of the International CSO FfD Coordinating Group, the under-signed have been mandated to put forward the following specific recommendations:

1. As was the practice in Monterrey and building on the modalities agreed in General Assembly Resolution 67/290 (Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, Paras 14 and 15), civil society organizations should be allowed to attend all meetings and negotiation sessions of the Financing for Development process including the informal consultations, drafting sessions on the outcome document in January 2015, April 2015 and June 2015; to have access to all official information and documents; to intervene in official meetings; to submit documents and present written and oral contributions; to make recommendations; to organize side events and round tables, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat; to access financial support for participation. Member States should be encouraged to include CSO representative in their official delegations.
2. Dynamic discussions in which civil society participate, going to the crux of the matter in the form of round tables, panel discussions, discussions structured around thematic questions and open discussions (the formal and informal approach) are very fruitful. These modalities have been tried

and tested in the preparatory processes for Monterrey and Doha. We strongly ask for a similar format in the preparation of and at the third FfD Conference.

3. There should be time and space allotted for regular interactions with civil society through daily interactions at the start of formal sessions and agreed slots for civil society intervention alongside interventions made by UN Member States and observers. This practice has added great value to the Open Working Group's deliberations and should be carried on in the preparations for the third FfD Conference.

4. Civil society should be invited to nominate expert speakers to input into substantive thematic discussions during the preparatory process and during the Conference itself. Civil society expert speakers have been acknowledged to bring succinct and innovative proposals for consideration right through the FfD process and this practice should continue to inform the discussions for Addis Ababa.

5. Information regarding the preparations of sessions and relevant documentation should be shared with civil society in a timely and transparent manner. To optimize civil society's participation, prior consultation with the Addis Ababa NGO Coordinating Group from the earliest stage of preparation would be preferable. As has been experienced time and again, early engagement with civil society in the preparations of the official sessions maximizes civil society's input and saves financial resources.

6. Pay particular attention to the specific needs of civil society from the global South to enable them to participate in a meaningful way in the preparatory process. Financial resources should be provided for civil society actors from the global South not only to participate in Prepcoms in New York and the Conference itself but also to participate in preparatory events at regional or sub-regional levels. Member States should be also encouraged to invite civil society to any national consultations prior to the Conference. Timely information sharing, nomination and transparent selection processes handled by civil society are also crucial to prevent unnecessary wasting of time and expense for travel, visa etc.

The undersigned members of the Addis Ababa CSO Coordinating Group remain at your disposal to discuss these recommendations and other issues to facilitate our meaningful and full engagement in the preparatory process and at the Conference itself.

Yours sincerely,

The Addis Ababa CSO Coordinating Group

Martin Hojsik, Action Aid
Martin Tsounkeu, Africa Development Interchange Network
Josephine Kamel, African Women Economic Policy Network
Momodou Touray, Afrodad
Jean Saldanha, CIDSE
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