

To the attention of:

Office of the President of the Economic and Social Council  
Co-Facilitators for the 2016 ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum

Cc:

UNDESA Financing for Development Office  
Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York

March 30 2016

## **RE: Feedback on Modalities for the 2016 ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum**

We, the CSO Financing for Development Group<sup>1</sup>, representing a wide range of organizations, federations and networks from diverse regions and constituencies around the world (including the Women’s Working Group on Financing for Development), respectfully submit some requests concerning the modalities of the upcoming 2016 ECOSOC Financing for Development (FFD) Forum (or “the Forum”).

We are deeply committed to the FFD agenda, encompassing all three (Monterrey, Doha and Addis Ababa) FFD Conference outcomes. We believe that the follow up process, of which the Forum is a critical part, should live up to the responsibilities set out in the three conferences. The Forum should further grow as a space where significant and systemic issues of financing for development can be dealt with, using existing modalities for stakeholder engagement in the FFD process. Based on the effective participation in the three FFD Conferences and the most recent and very well attended CSO FFD Forum in Addis Ababa we are convinced that open, transparent and inclusive participation of civil society in the upcoming Forum is an essential element of the follow-up and look forward to being fully and effectively engaged in this process.

For this purpose, we would like to convey the following requests:

### **Length of the Forum**

The Outcome of the Third Financing for Development Conference (the Addis Ababa Action Agenda or “AAAA”), has tasked the FFD Forum not only with consideration of an expanded Financing for Development agenda, but also with the additional consideration of the interlinkages between Financing for Development and the Agenda 2030 (the “Means of Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals”, art. 132 of the AAAA). Its tasks now include a robust process for negotiations towards the “intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations” the Forum is supposed to reach. The task includes also follow up – not just monitoring and review—of commitments, that is, the normative developments that Monterrey, Doha and Addis Ababa outcomes required on a range of issues.

We continue to believe that the AAAA’s mandate that the Forum consists of “up to five days” does not allow sufficient time for the substantive completion of such an enlarged task. Therefore, we deeply regret that the recent ECOSOC decision (E/2016/L.9) has failed to make use even of such limited time. While we call for the Forum in the future to last 5 consecutive days, we request that, as an exceptional arrangement this year in light of the nature of this first forum, **two additional days of ECOSOC’s schedule are allocated to complete the Forum this Fall**. This arrangement should not affect finalization of the Forum’s outcome

by the first three days that will take place in April, so it can be delivered on time to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). There are plenty of follow up items that quite likely will be sidelined in the short time dedicated in April, and could benefit from two additional days of Forum in the Fall.

## **Negotiations**

In light of the initiation of negotiations towards achieving the outcome of the Forum, we take note of the appointment of two co-facilitators and request that negotiations be open and transparent:

- All negotiating documents to be systematically shared with civil society, starting with the first draft of the Outcome;
- Time and rooms where all sessions relevant to the negotiations will be held be previously and timely announced;
- Civil society be allowed to be present in the room during the negotiations and generally all sessions held in the lead up to the agreement on an Outcome;
- Co-facilitators grant periodic meetings with civil society; and,
- Civil society be granted adequate spaces to hold side-events.

## **Participation at the Forum**

In accordance with Monterrey modalities, civil society and the private sector are, in addition to governments and institutional stakeholders, an integral part of the Forum. We call for CSOs to be enabled to participate in all segments of the Forum. In our view this requires that:

- CSOs be given the right to contribute, intervene and respond –and consequently granted a number of CSO speaker seats --at the Roundtables, the High Level Segment, dialogue between UN ambassadors and the Bretton Woods Institutions and any other portions of the meeting. At the same time, we understand that in order to preserve the intergovernmental nature of the meeting it is at the discretion of the chair to determine how many times CSOs will be able to intervene in a given session (as long as the same treatment is given to all actors that are not governments);
- To the extent that panels will be appointed to offer initial remarks in roundtables and plenary discussions, civil society, as a stakeholder in the Forum, be allowed to nominate at least one representative for such panels;
- Civil society be consulted by the relevant UN staff on the decision of themes, sub-themes and guiding questions or objectives of the sessions, including roundtables and high-level segments, given that these themes and questions frame the content of the meetings;
- Participation in the forum be accessible to all registered civil society representatives, including persons with disabilities (considering e.g. physical access, accessible communications); and,
- The Trust Fund be well-resourced in order to enable meaningful and consistent CSO attendance, particularly from the South, as well as from regularly not included and commonly marginalized groups and ensuring gender balance.

We remain at your disposal for further elaboration or clarifications on these requests, and look forward to constructively engaging in the upcoming FFD Forum and other instances of the FFD follow up process.

Sincerely yours,

CSO Financing for Development Group (including the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development)

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<sup>i</sup> For more information about the CSO FfD Group, see here: <https://csoforffd.wordpress.com/about/>