

To the kind attention of:

H.E. Mr. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava  
President of the Economic and Social Council

H.E. Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Jerry Matthews Matjila, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations

Co-Facilitators for the 2017 ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum

Cc:

Mr. Alex Trepelkov, Director, UNDESA Financing for Development Office

Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations in New York

23 April 2017

**RE: Draft Programme and Modalities of the 2017 ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum**

We, the CSO Financing for Development Group<sup>i</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 feedbacks and requests concerning the programme and modalities of the 2017 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD) Follow-up (or “the Forum”).

This letter primarily conveys three key concerns and proposals:

- The need to expand the planning horizon of the FfD follow-up process beyond the single FfD Forum and explore the opportunities potentially offered by a multi-year programme of work. Civil society proposes to devote an additional “fifth” FfD day in the fall to explore this possibility;
- The inclusion and substantive challenge of initiating and completing the Forum outcome negotiations before the Forum itself in the absence of such multiyear process. Civil society calls for negotiating modalities that would allow for its meaningful participation and substantive contribution to the process, while fully respecting the intergovernmental nature of the negotiations;
- The urgency to design the FfD Forum in a manner to would allow, facilitate and value the contribution of civil society. We therefore call on your good offices to ensure adequate modalities, as below detailed, and attach to this letter some concrete suggestions on the vision and format of the Forum.

**Call for multi-year programme of work and proposal to an additional FfD day in the Fall**

As you may be aware, we actively participated – many of us travelling on our own resources – to the first ECOSOC FfD Forum. Our participation was born out of our deep commitment to the FfD agenda, encompassing all three (Monterrey, Doha and Addis Ababa) FfD 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. Furthermore, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) assigned to the FfD Forum the additional task of considering the interlinkages between Financing for Development and the Agenda 2030 (the Means of Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals”, art. 132 of the AAAA). In view of this expanded mandate, we have been extremely vocal in advancing the reasons why we believe the FfD Forum should make best use of all 5 days which have been potentially assigned to it by the AAAA. However, even more than the Forum’s length, we believe the critical success factor of the FfD follow-up process to be a robust multiyear programme of work that could ensure adequate preparations and consultations of the Forum’s discussions and deliberation. We would therefore like to propose that a ‘fifth day’, additional to this year’s four-day Forum, could be scheduled in the fall to provide adequate space for an assessment by Member States, in active consultation with all other FfD stakeholders, on the effectiveness of the 2017 Forum process and for a dialogue on the opportunity and modalities for the establishment of multi-year programme of work for the FfD Follow-up process.

### **Civil society vision and programme for the 2017 Forum**

With respect to the upcoming 2017 Session, we are pleased to attach to this communication a short document outlining the CSO FfD Group’s vision on the Forum (Annex 1) as well as some key comments and suggestions on the draft programme (Annex 2). In a nutshell, we believe that the programme of the Forum should respond to four basic functions:

- 1) Proper contextualization of its discussion within the critical and emerging issues that affect or are closely related to the financing for development agenda, therefore ensuring the relevance and alignment of the Forum with today’s challenges and events;
- 2) Monitoring of the implementation of all three FfD Conference Outcomes, including space for interrogating the methodology and outcomes of the Inter-Agency Task Force Report;
- 3) Follow-up and advance the FfD normative agenda, including the development of the global policy guidelines and safeguards which are called for by the conference outcomes and are required to build coherence with sustainable development objectives;
- 4) Advancing the institutional developments that the FfD outcomes initiated or committed to initiate, such as the Global Infrastructure Forum and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, among others.

### **Civil society participation to the FfD Outcome negotiations**

We wish to congratulate the two Co-Facilitators for their appointment and look forward to a trustful, transparent and effective working relations in the lead up to the Forum’s outcome. We would however like to express some concern for the stated intention to conclude the outcome negotiations prior to the actual Forum, particularly given the above-mentioned absence of an articulated pathway that can generate continuity in the follow-up process and bridge between the annual sessions. The pre-Forum negotiations may also significantly limit the opportunities of contribution of civil society and other

constituencies. To counter such risk, we would like to advance the following requests in line with past and emerging practice:

- All negotiating documents to be systematically shared with civil society, starting with the first draft of the Outcome, in accordance to the past practice of including one designated focal point of the Civil Society FfD Group within the email distribution list;
- 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 of the Outcome document and, at the discretion of the Co-Facilitators, be allowed to provide comments during the negotiations, in the moments to be considered most appropriate. This would require that time and rooms where all sessions relevant to the negotiations will be held be previously and timely announced and webcasting opportunities be maximized; and,
- Co-facilitators to grant periodic meetings with civil society, including via remote connection to allow adequate representation in these dialogues.

### **Civil society active participation to the FfD 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 therefore call for civil society to be enabled to fully participate in all segments of the Forum. In our view this requires that:

- Civil society be given the right to contribute, intervene and respond –and consequently granted a number of civil society 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 civil society 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 to such panels and the self-organizing capacity of civil society be respected in the designation of its speakers;
- 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 civil society be granted adequate spaces to hold its briefings, preparatory sessions and side events; and,
- The Trust Fund or any other resource facility be well-resourced to enable meaningful, gender-balanced and consistent civil society attendance, particularly from the South as well as from regularly not included and commonly marginalized groups.

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,

Civil Society 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/>