

## **Overarching Comments by Civil Society on Draft Outcome of the ECOSOC FfD Forum 2017**

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*This document has been collectively developed by the Civil Society Financing for Development (FfD) Group, a very broad platform of civil society organizations, networks and federations from around the world, that followed closely the Financing for Development since its origins, facilitated civil society's contribution to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and continues to provide a facilitation mechanism for the collective expression of civil society in the FfD Follow-up process. More information can be found on the CSO FfD Group's website: <https://csoforFfD.org/about/> While the group is diverse and positions might differ on specific issues, this document expresses the elements of common concern.*

- **Shared understanding of FfD Follow-up:** While appreciating the effort towards a more substantive outcome document, the negotiations continue to expose the lack of shared understanding and adequate planning of the FfD Follow-up process. The follow-up should include monitoring the implementation of concrete commitments that require action by member states and multilateral institutions, advancing a consensual normative agenda as called upon by the FfD conference outcomes as well as a continued contextualization of the process within the evolving socio-economic and political conjuncture. Unfortunately, the draft outcome document fails short in all these objectives;
- **Multiyear planning horizon:** If restating previously agreed formulations is the maximum ambition of the negotiations, the FfD outcome will remain an exercise of rhetoric. On the other hand, it is obviously difficult to advance the FfD agenda without a clear preparatory process and multiyear planning. We therefore reiterate the call for a fifth additional day to this year's 4-day Forum in the last quarter of 2017 to explore the opportunities and feasibility of a multiyear planning horizon with respect to themes and key areas of focus for future editions of the ECOSOC FfD Forum, for deliberation at the 2018 ECOSOC FfD Forum;
- **Guidance to IATF process:** The IATF Report offers an important, though not always consistent nor adequate, evidence-base for the policy discussions, but it requires greater guidance by Member States on which issues they want to focus on, considering that tackling some may require longer preparatory process than others. A clear multiyear agenda would therefore allow earlier and adequate preparation by all constituencies as well as greater focus of the IATF efforts. It must also be clear that normative proposals are not the domain of the IATF, also given its polyphonic composition that should be invited to offer diverse perspectives from different angles rather than consensual and reductive positions. The IATF should however offer the necessary evidence to inform policy-making in accordance to the agreed agenda;
- **Human rights, women's rights, people with disabilities and youth agency:** The outcome document continues to lack proper contextualization within the human rights framework and appears to be overconcerned with investors' rights, possibly exposing a covert attempt to establish a normative hierarchy that favours investors over people. This should be unambiguously rejected. Furthermore, women's human rights and gender equality are fundamental principles per se and any formulations that appear to subordinate them as means to the pursuit of an economic end should be strongly resisted. Similarly, there is no recognition of youth rights or the human rights of young people and the agency and leadership of young people. Instead, the only framing is that of commodifying young people being a means to economic outcomes. The challenges confronted by people with disabilities continue to remain hidden and therefore unaddressed by policy interventions;

- **Private sector bias:** The conventional growth narrative and the overreliance on the private sector continue to permeate the outcome document, despite the increasing evidence of the unsustainable social and environmental implications of the current business model. The draft focuses on promoting an “enabling environment for private sector business and investment” without emphasising the need for strong policy measure to regulate private sector activities and promote the realignment of corporate practises to the imperatives of sustainable development. It also fails to unpack the private sector by promoting virtuous and innovative models, such as agroecological approaches, circular economies and social solidarity frameworks. The narrative on blended finance and public-private partnerships does not reflect the points raised by the IATF report and, even more importantly, it is highly inconsistent with the AAAA’s commitment to developing principles and standards, in an inclusive and transparent manner, in order to safeguard the public interest;
- **Underestimation of the systemic risk:** Despite some initial rhetoric, there is no sense of urgency on the need to take concrete and immediate measures to counter the risk of another financial crisis and to actively promote policy coherence with human rights and the re-alignment of the economic, monetary and financial frameworks to the sustainable development agenda, therefore moving away from the economic paradigm that prioritises growth and the financialisation of the economy and proved all its failures when the last economic crisis exploded. Furthermore, there is no recognition that the migration crisis and climate change increasingly pose systemic risks that can hinder the implementation of the development agenda;
- **SDGs’ Means of Implementation remains unaddressed:** The document barely touches on the role of the FfD Follow-up, including the Forum, as one of the central pillars for reviewing efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. In fact, the 2030 Agenda is hardly mentioned and little emphasis is put on how to remove the structural obstacles that often relegate developing countries within commodity traps at the lower end of the global division of labour. While the draft notes that “the current global trajectory will not deliver the goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions by 2030”, no concrete and immediate action is proposed to counter this trajectory. The contribution of the FfD Forum to the HLPF process therefore remains profoundly inadequate to the mandate it was assigned. In fact, we increasingly experience the paradox of a 2030 Agenda process that pushes for national implementation of development objectives while the FfD process does not enable the policy and fiscal space to really advance the pursuit of the SDGs;
- **Democratization of global economic governance:** One fundamental dimension of the FfD process since its inception was the overt attempt to strengthen the role of the United Nations - with its universal membership, inclusive nature and human rights foundations - in global economic governance. This would increase and rebalance the role of developing countries, promoting a more democratic global system. To ensure international tax cooperation, one of the most important priorities of developing countries, the FfD outcome should therefore not include any encouragement for countries to invest in strengthening existing not-inclusive institutions as opposed to establishing institutions that are better fit for purpose, including an intergovernmental UN tax body with universal membership. Similarly, the Global Infrastructure Forum should be clearly accountable to and guided by the FfD Follow-up process. Against this, the reference to “adequate voice of developing countries” is a regressive expression if compared to the AAAA commitment “to increasing the voice of developing countries” in the reform of IFIs.