

To the kind attention of:

H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King  
President of the Economic and Social Council

H.E. Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations  
H.E. Ms. Maria Angela Zappia, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations  
Co-Facilitators for the 2019 ECOSOC FfD Follow-up Forum Outcome Negotiations

Cc:

Mr. Navid Hanif, Director, UNDESA Financing for Sustainable Development Office  
Members of the ECOSOC Bureau for the 2019 Cycle  
Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations in New York

**RE: Programme and Modalities of 2019 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up**

26 February 2019

Your Excellencies,

We, the Civil Society Financing for Development Group, 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 feedback and requests concerning the programme and modalities of the 2019 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD) Follow-up (or "the Forum").

This letter primarily conveys the following 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;
- The inclusion and substantive challenge of initiating and completing the Forum outcome negotiations before the Forum itself in the absence of such multi-year 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 that would allow, facilitate and value the contribution of civil society. We therefore call on your good offices to ensure adequate modalities, as below detailed.

#### **Call for multi-year programme of work**

The FfD outcome documents (Monterrey Consensus, Doha Declaration and Addis Ababa Action Agenda) call for the development of global policy guidelines and safeguards to build coherence and convergence with sustainable development objectives and advance the FfD agenda. We believe these normative developments to be a critical dimension of the follow-up process. However, they require appropriate multi-year planning and a clear preparatory pathway, that includes adequate knowledge generation preceding the political negotiations. While the IATF Report could contribute to this process, the political dialogue needs to be based on the leadership of Member States. We therefore call for the establishment of "workstreams" co-chaired by Member States, or other similar mechanisms, to generate policy convergence on key issues, over multi-year schedules. This would allow the intergovernmental outcome negotiations to build on such political dialogue and possibly become more ambitious in substance and scope.

## **Comments on Draft Programme for the 2019 ECOSOC Forum on FfD Follow-up**

Consistently with our past positions, we believe that the programme of any FfD Follow-up Forum should respond to four basic functions:

- Proper contextualization within the critical and emerging issues, therefore ensuring the relevance and alignment of the Forum with today's challenges and events;
- 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;
- 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;
- Advancing the institutional developments that the FfD outcomes initiated or committed to initiate.

With respect to the draft programme, we would like to respectfully share the following comments:

- While we appreciate the emphasis to identify emerging trends and risks in the first session, the actual timing allotted would allow neither a proper assessment nor an adequate political discussion. Furthermore, we remain concerned with the ability of the Forum to meaningfully accommodate the outcome of the discussions if the negotiations are already closed before the week begins. We would therefore encourage to keep the negotiations open and maintain place holders for this and other critical discussions;
- The severity of the emerging debt crises and the numerous episodes of currency instability over the past 12 months are not adequately reflected in the Forum agenda. While these challenges would certainly be mentioned in several sessions, no adequate space seems to exist in the Ministerial Segment for the thorough political discussions these challenges deserve;
- We are also seriously concerned with the continued conflation of the debt and systemic issues into one combined session. Considering the current context and the challenges encountered, two separate sessions should be planned. This also exposes, once again, the need to make use of the full 5-day programme provision included in the AAAA;
- While we fully support the notion that climate finance should be considered as another, and additional, form of development finance, we are unconvinced that the FfD Forum provides the best possible context for its discussion, given that other intergovernmental negotiating spaces exist for this purpose;
- We take note that the stakeholder dialogue session is not included in the Forum programme. While we have often suggested that civil society participation should be mainstreamed throughout the programme rather than relegated to a dedicated session, we would like the received firm assurance that this will actually be the case. We therefore aim to engage constructively with all parties to ensure that civil society is adequately represented in all roundtables and discussions.

### **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 with the current practice of stating the 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 any necessary 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 ([www.csoforffd.org](http://www.csoforffd.org))  
(including the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development)