Civil Society FfD Group’s Statement - General Debate of the 2019 ECOSOC FfD Follow-up Forum

18 April 2019

As the 2019 FfD Forum comes to a close, we, participating organizations, networks and movements of the Civil Society FfD Group (including the Women’s Working Group on FfD), are deeply concerned that after four FfD follow-up Forums, the world remains completely off track to reach the 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement and the ambition in all the FfD outcomes.

The process is still missing the fundamental contextualisation that the systemic issues we see today are a result of the financialisation of economies which has allowed for the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few. At the bottom, women bear the burdens of unpaid domestic and care work where unequal gender roles and power relations continue to refrain the enjoyment of women and girls’ human rights. We reject the approach of instrumentalising of women towards increasing economic growth and profitability, a dangerous departure from recognizing women’s human rights.

We are deeply concerned that the main focus of this process is on using public funds to leverage and de-risk private investments without recognizing that the wave of debt crises is the other side of the same coin. The narrative continues to be about incentivising major corporations to invest instead of addressing large scale tax dodging by these corporations, bleeding public resources from all countries. Tax avoidance is not separate from illicit financial flows, it is the central issue of illicit financial flows. The implementation focus is now already shifting to the national level, without making progress on an enabling global environment which allows developing countries to preserve their national fiscal and policy space. This is all unfolding in a context where ODA continues to decline and commitment to new and additional climate finance by developed countries has not been delivered.

Far from making progress, this empty exercise in rhetoric barely even makes sense.

We reject the cynical actions by countries professing to continue to believe in multilateralism, then blocking progress on multilateral solutions such as a global debt workout mechanism or a development focused multilateral trading system or UN intergovernmental tax commission. It is time for Member States who claim to still support multilateralism to start moving forward.

We therefore call for the establishment of workstreams co-chaired by Member States or other similar mechanisms to generate policy convergence on key issues, through multi-year plans. We also call for a new heads of state FfD summit to be held to mark the 20 year anniversary of the Monterrey Consensus, with the aim of reviewing implementation of all major outcomes of the Financing for Development process, and identifying any needs for further action. In this spirit, we expect the upcoming High Level Dialogue on FfD in September 2019 to generate the necessary political will to move beyond the current stalemates and address the urgent issues in front of us.

Without meaningful progress on FfD, the world will stay off track in achieving sustainable development. It is time to move with urgency and intent.