

Civil Society FfD Group's Response to Final 2021 FfD Outcome Document

This document has been collectively developed by the Civil Society Financing for Development (FfD) Group, a broad platform of over 800 civil society organizations, networks and federations from around the world, including the Women's Working Group on FfD. The Group followed closely the FfD process since its origins, facilitated civil society's contribution to the Third International Conference on FfD, and continues to provide a facilitation mechanism for the collective expression of civil society in the FfD Follow-up process. For more information, please visit the Civil Society FfD Group's website: <https://csoforffd.org/>

As the FfD Forum comes to a close, in the midst of an unprecedented global crisis, it is unconscionable that the world's governments have agreed to adopt an [FfD outcome document](#) filled with rhetoric and no action, sticking to business as usual. This status quo threatens the wellbeing of billions of people and makes the possibility of realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and to respond to the expanding climate emergency more remote than ever.

The scope and gravity of the current crisis requires an ambitious multilateral response under the auspices, leadership and coordination of the United Nations, but the FfD outcome document failed to deliver it. Inequalities within and between countries have been magnified, while unpaid domestic and care work have once again augmented their already significant subsidy to the global economy, acting as a primary shock absorber. The crisis has further exposed the lack of implementation of universal social protection floors and lack of access to decent work.

We would like to reaffirm that the FfD process cannot be locked into agreed calendar dates when the world is still facing an unprecedented and unpredictable crisis. We call on governments to step up and demonstrate much-needed leadership in the following weeks within ECOSOC and UNGA to ensure progress on key systemic reforms:

- **Organising the next UN Summit on Financing for Development**: The lack of a decision on organising the next FfD conference is a disappointing, missed opportunity. There should be no more debate on whether such a conference is needed. It is clear that existing mechanisms and mandates are failing to address the crisis. There is an urgent need for a new global consensus on an economic system that works for people and the planet. **We call on member states to work in solidarity and table a resolution at the UNGA to organise the next UN Summit on FfD in 2022 or 2023.**
- **Follow-up on the decision to strengthen inclusive mechanisms on sovereign debt**: Para 68 of the outcome document calls for the need to “*strengthen inclusive dialogues and mechanisms on sovereign debt to advance the discussion on debt transparency and responsible lending and borrowing and the rules of engagement, including with the private sector*”. **We call on the ECOSOC President and Bureau to organise a series of intergovernmental meetings in the lead-up to the UNGA to follow-up on this decision and aim to build consensus on the reform of the international debt architecture. At the UNGA, we call on member states to establish an open-ended intergovernmental working group to work towards a binding and multilateral**

framework for debt crisis prevention and resolution. This would be in line with the resolution A/RES/69/319 [adopted](#) by the General Assembly where it was decided to further define modalities to consider improved approaches to restructuring sovereign debt, taking into account the Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes.

- **Follow-up on international tax cooperation:** We now have a high number of recommendations for global action to address illicit financial flows, which have been put forward through the [High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa](#), the recent [FACTI Panel report](#), [Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development](#) of UNCTAD, the UNCTAD report [Tackling Illicit Financial Flows for Sustainable Development in Africa](#), the official [summary](#) of the 2019 High-level Dialogue on FfD and the [discussion group](#) on illicit financial flows part of the initiative on 'FfD in the Era of COVID-19 and beyond' convened by Jamaica, Canada and the UN Secretary General. **The issue that has been repeatedly highlighted is that while policy areas such as corruption are addressed through a global inclusive intergovernmental forum (UNCAC), this is not the case for international tax cooperation. We call on the ECOSOC President & Bureau to organise a series of intergovernmental meetings to build consensus towards establishing a universal, intergovernmental UN tax commission and negotiate a UN Tax Convention** to comprehensively address tax havens, tax abuse by multinational corporations and other illicit financial flows through a truly universal, intergovernmental process at the UN, with broad rights holders' participation.
- **A moratorium on Investor-State-Dispute-Settlement (ISDS) cases through UNGA resolution:** There are now threats of ISDS cases for governments taking Covid measures, for example in Chile, where COVID-related restrictions on flight routes and sanitary measures in airports were challenged. Governments are also paying huge amounts as damages in various cases, resources that could have been used for fighting the pandemic and buying vaccines. **We call on member states to agree on an immediate moratorium on all trade and investment agreements that compromise governments' policy space to address the pandemic through a UNGA resolution.**
- **Development Cooperation Forum 2021:** ODA is a vital resource for supporting those most in need to help counter the negative trends coming from the pandemic, compounded by the climate emergency and persisting conflicts and fragility. ODA levels must be adequate to ensure the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including meeting the 0.7% target for ODA and the 0.15% to 0.2% target for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), prioritising unconditional grants and technical support. **The UN must assert its place in the governance of this vital resource to ensure its quality, effectiveness and integrity. Towards this end, we believe that the UN Development Cooperation Forum must be revitalized and resourced. UN must take on a central and leading role on matters related to international development cooperation and to ensure that all development actors deliver on their commitments.**
- **Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum 2021 & ECOSOC Commission on Science, Technology and Development (CSTD):** Broad societal deliberation on frontier technologies and their potential environmental, health, economic and social impacts must be a prerequisite for their development and deployment. **Participatory mechanisms for evaluation of new and emerging technologies need to be established at the global, regional and local levels. In this context, the establishment of a Global Technology Assessment**

Mechanism at the UN should be a priority. As the digital gap widens and worsens during the pandemic, the world in both sides of the Divide have to deal with the consequences and issues around digitalization - ranging from violation of basic rights especially of women, girls and young people, racial and gender discrimination, and breach of privacy, to political repression and manipulation and disproportional power and influence of technology platforms and companies. Investments alone cannot address these widening gaps. Structural issues around governance of digital technologies are equally crucial and need to be tackled head on. **At the upcoming STI Forum and CSTD meetings, we call on member states to address the huge vacuum in governance of digital technologies with a sense of urgency to protect human rights and assert the mandate of democratic institutions over corporate interests.**

- **LDC5 Conference:** The upcoming LDC5 Conference and its preparatory committee meetings are key opportunities to reaffirm the importance of addressing these critical FfD issues. We look forward to constructively engaging in the LDC5 preparatory process to ensure these systemic solutions are represented in the deliberations.

The people and the planet cannot afford further delays and rhetorical statements. We need the UN to take leadership in galvanizing the political ambition required to address the scope of the multidimensional crises facing us all. The world needs action now.

Detailed inputs of the CS FfD Group to the 2021 FfD Forum can be accessed here:

<https://csoforffd.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/cs-ffd-group-letter-2021-ffd-forum.pdf>