



Concept Note

The Recovery We Want: For People and Planet

A virtual working breakfast briefing and interactive discussion in preparation for the 2021 FfD Forum

Organizer: NGO Committee on Financing for Development, A substantive committee of CoNGO

Date: January 15, 2021; Time: 8:30 am - 10 am

Location: By Zoom

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZA1cOupqDoiGNRiGPRwu64Ms2zLUMzcg-bx>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Our proposed meeting

The United Nations will begin a new cycle of meetings in 2021 on Financing for Development (FfD) and other key concerns of the sustainable development agenda. As many members of the NGO Committee on FfD directly provide services, especially to people living in poverty in poorly integrated and often isolated communities we are deeply concerned that policies meant to protect the lives, livelihoods, and health of people, are not translating effectively to the ground, as evidenced by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. In light of this, we propose this virtual working breakfast meeting for an informal conversation on how to better confront challenges in front of us and to advocate for policies at home and internationally that will hasten the end of growing inequality and the effects of the pandemic in all corners of the world. The coming report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on FfD gives a starting point for the stock taking, but we are acutely aware that it is governments that will have to act together to put the world on a green and sustainable recovery protecting people and planet. We look for allies with whom we can work to make that happen.

Who we are

The NGO Committee on FfD was established in 2004 to facilitate NGO advocacy on FfD matters by its membership, composed of NGOs affiliated to the UN (through ECOSOC, DGC, and FfD) and other civil society organizations. It is a substantive committee of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO). The Committee supports the goal to “end poverty and hunger and to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions through promoting inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment, and promoting social inclusion,” as outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Monterrey Consensus. The Committees advocates on FfD matters from the lens of Leaving No One Behind with special focus on social protection, financial and digital inclusion, and climate finance. Since 2018, the Committee has been holding similar meetings with delegations, which offered, in addition to a briefing on the FfD Forum, an opportunity for an open and interactive dialogue between attendees.

Our concerns

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said, “COVID recovery and our planet’s repair must be the two sides of the same coin.”¹. The 2020 Human Development Report stated, “Our economies and public policy solutions are skewed against human development precisely because of the way we tend to understand ‘value,’ giving GDP growth a central role, discounting the future and

¹ The UN Secretary General’s State of the Planet Speech at Columbia University, 4 December 2020

any social and environmental harm. This misguided view of value, which considers activities harmful to people and to the environment as creating value, also fails to account for the true value of social services, social protection mechanisms or public goods" (Human Development Report, 2020, p. 114).

The COVID-19 pandemic and growing economic crisis are leading to a six-year reversal in human development.² The same economic system that values exponential linear growth has perpetuated inequalities in the social and economic well-being of humankind and an extractive mentality which is depleting Earth's resources. As many of the members of the NGO Committee on Financing for Development directly provide services to people living in poverty in poorly integrated and often isolated communities, we see the drastic impact the pandemic is having on these communities and have stepped up to help where governments are unable to provide social protection services.

We share the concern highlighted in the OECD policy brief "For the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis to be durable and resilient, a return to 'business as usual' and environmentally destructive investment patterns and activities must be avoided."³ In our opinion, what does not happen at the local level does not happen at the national level. The pandemic, which has further exacerbated the already existing gaps in social protection, financial and digital inclusion, and climate action, offers a unique opportunity to assess the gaps and take measures to reverse the wealth and income inequalities and the widespread social, economic, and technological challenges and to meaningfully ensure "finance is not an end in itself – it is a means to improve people's lives and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" (2020 FSDR). We call for a paradigm shift in global health and climate finance governance processes and for transformative and decisive actions to enact and implement social protection and financial and digital inclusion measures, and systemic reforms of the international financial architecture that prioritizes long term economic resilience over short term economic growth to make building forward better and greener a reality.

The following questions might help guide the interactive discussion:

1. As domestic and international, public, and private resources are channeled to address the fallout from the pandemic, there do not seem to be any globally coordinated processes to ensure that resources are effectively transmitted to the local level. What measures are being taken to ensure there is effective monitoring, accountability and reporting mechanisms in place that will ensure a just transition and allocation of resources to reach where it is needed most? How can civil society organizations assist in this area?
2. As developed countries face challenges in mobilizing domestic resources to address the impacts of the pandemic, what measures are being taken to ensure the resources including vaccines are being equitably distributed to reach the most vulnerable?
3. During the pandemic, many civil society organizations, as equal partners, are stepping up to provide social protection measures where governments have not been able to provide this support. However, such contributions by civil organizations are not considered in the national reporting of social protection initiatives. How can governments ensure the efforts are recorded, adequate funds are allocated to underserved communities, and civil society organizations are at the table when decisions regarding these allocations are made?
4. In the name of building forward, we note countries are implementing austerity measures that are undermining the existing social protection measures. How can we ensure that we "recover better - stand up for human rights"?⁴

² <http://hdr.undp.org/en/hdp-covid>

³ <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/building-back-better-a-sustainable-resilient-recovery-after-covid-19-52b869f5/>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

5. Addressing the risk of countries most vulnerable from the impacts of sudden and slow onset of climate change, building better and greener is the pathway we must concertedly take. However, we note with concern that G20 countries continue to subsidize fossil fuels, instead of sufficiently investing in renewable and nature-based solutions. According to a recent report from the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and advocacy group Oil Change International, between 2017 and 2019, G20 countries spent \$584 billion annually to support fossil fuels, 9% less than the 2014-2016 period.⁵ Stopping fossil fuel subsidies can open up funds to finance green solutions to climate action. Also, the Green Climate Fund must ensure funding is shared 50-50 for adaptation and mitigation. What are examples of greening finance that countries can pursue? {UNDESA PB # 88 - Financing sustainable forest management- a key component of sustainable COVID-19 recovery}
6. Biodiversity is fundamental to planetary and human life. OECD and UNEP highlight the importance of protection of biodiversity into the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.⁶ How can both financing and implementation of recovery measures from the pandemic make sure that biodiversity is protected?
7. Digital and financial inclusion are necessary components to ensuring the economic empowerment of women and girls. Gaps in global data coverage and lack of disaggregated data, especially gender disaggregated data, makes it difficult to show that investments meet targets in advancing the economic empowerment of women and girls and meeting universal financial inclusion. Additionally, the 9% gap in financial inclusion for women has continued to persist since 2004. What measures are being taken to close the gaps?
8. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) are the engine of growth in many emerging economies and collectively represent more than 70% of global employment and 50% of GDP. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit them hard, especially women-run MSMEs. What measures can be taken to ensure the necessary regulatory reforms, reliable finance and credit, and digital transformation are in place to help them overcome the impact of the pandemic and withstand future shocks?
9. Refugees face major challenges in accessing mobile and digital resources which are crucial for people to stay connected to the outside world, receive health alerts, and manage their day to day living and finance during the crisis. According to UNHCR, refugees are 50% less likely than the general population to have an Internet enabled phone, and 29% of refugee households have no phone at all. What measures can be taken to ensure marginalized communities are digitally and financially included in a meaningful and effective manner?
10. Inequalities in access to internet and technology have exacerbated the ability of those in marginalized communities to receive social benefits and ensure their children have access to classrooms and educational activities during COVID-19. What steps should be taken to ensure last-mile coverage to bridge the digital gap?

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-g20-climatechange-energy-trfn/g20-countries-still-backing-fossil-fuels-through-covid-19response-idUSKBN27Q00Q>

⁶ <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/biodiversity-and-the-economic-response-to-covid-19-ensuring-a-green-andresilient-recovery-d98b5a09/>

Tentative Program

8:15 - 8:30 am	Arrival of participants
8:30 am	Welcome- Ms. Anita Thomas, Chair, NGO Committee on Financing for Development
8:35 am	Preparations for the 2021 ECOSOC FFD forum and SDG Investment Fair: Opportunities for civil society engagement: Mr. Navid Hanif, Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Office (FSDO)
8:45 am	A briefing on the 2021 Inter Agency Taskforce Report and proposed measures to tackle the impact of COVID-19: Ms. Shari Spiegel, Chief, Policy Analysis and Development Branch, FSDO Updates on contribution to the Inter Agency Taskforce Report on Financing for Development and areas for strengthened advocacy in the aftermath of COVID-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Beate Andrees, Special Representative and Director of the ILO Office for the UN • Mr. Robert Powell, Special Representative to the United Nations, International Monetary Fund • Ms. Audrey Liounis, Senior External Affairs Officer, The World Bank Group
9:10 am	Responses from Member States Participating Member States <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, President of the Economic and Social Council • H.E. Mr. E. Courtenay Rattray, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations • H.E. Mr. Robert Keith Rae, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations • H.E. Mr. Satyendra Prasad, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Fiji to the United Nations • H.E. Mr. Rodrigo A. Carazo, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations • H.E. Mr. Magnus Lennartsson, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations • Ms. Leila C. Lora-Santos, Minister and Second Committee Expert Philippine Permanent Mission to the United Nations • Ms. Leticia Zamora Zumbado, Minister Counsellor, Sustainable Development and Economic Affairs, Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations • Ms. Kaarina Airas, Minister Counsellor, Head of Unit for Sustainable Development and Human Rights, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations • Mr. Erich Crompton, Second Secretary, Principal Adviser to the Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations • Ms. Sara E. Eriksson, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations
9:30 am	Interactive discussion
9:55 am- 10:00 am	Closing Remarks: Mr. Liberato Bautista, President, Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) & Wrap- up