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Upcoming Events

Fit for whose purpose?

The post 2015 development agenda is being shaped at a time of challenge for multilateralism. Multi-stakeholder partnerships and deeper engagement with the business sector are being positioned as central pillars for implementation as well as for mobilizing and leveraging the trillions of dollars needed.

Yet this direction is not taking into account the recent pattern of UN development funding, this pattern has been characterized by increased earmarking of funding from donors, public and private, spurring in turn increased competition amongst the institutions and programmes of the UN system and undermining inter-governmental oversight. A continuation of this pattern will undermine the integration of economic, social and environmental policies and programmes – the essence of the agenda for the next 15 years.

The side event will discuss the challenge of shaping of the Post-2015 Agenda building on findings of a recently completed comprehensive study undertaken by Global Policy Forum on the practices and consequences of private funding of the UN system.

Speakers

- Barbara Adams and Jens Martens, Global Policy Forum
- H.E. Guilherme Patriota (Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN)
- Manuel Montes, South Centre
- Noelene Nabulivou, DAWN
- Alessandro Motter, IPU

Fit for whose purpose?

Private funding and corporate influence in the United Nations

27 July 2015, 1:15-2:45pm | Conference Room 7 | UN Headquarters, New York

This side event is open to all UN ground pass holders.

Global Policy Watch

FFD 3 Outcome: Fishing for crumbs of hope in a sea of lost ambition

On July 16th, governments adopted the Outcome of the Third Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), called the “Action Ababa Action Agenda” (AAAA or the “Outcome”). In a collective and sharp statement in response, civil society said that the conference “lost the opportunity to tackle the structural injustices in the current global economic system and ensure that development finance is people-centered and protects the environment.”

The lack of ambition of the adopted text, though not a surprise to observers of the negotiations leading up to it, is very striking for it contradicts hyped-up rhetoric from different sources in the UN and governments about the link between this conference and the upcoming ones this year. Ambitious outcomes in the conferences on the post-2015 development agenda (New York, September) and the Conference of Parties (COP) 21 on Climate (Paris, December) were expected to depend on success of FFD 3. But in its final form, the AAAA does not offer the hoped-for strong financial means of implementation for such other commitments. The reality is that negotiations saw a systematic action by Northern countries to deprive the outcome of any ambition.

by Aldo Caliari, Center of Concern

Civil Society Response to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development

We, members of hundreds of civil society organizations and networks from around the world engaged in the Third FfD Conference, would like to express our deepest concerns and reservations on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, based on both our ongoing contributions to the process and the deliberations of the CSO FfD Forum (Addis Ababa, 10-12 July 2015). The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) lost the opportunity to tackle the structural injustices in the current global economic system and ensure that development finance is people-centred and protects the environment.

A Low Bar for Business

Is business good for SDGs and /or are SDGs good for business? Just out from the Business Sector Steering Committee is the “Financing for Development Business Compendium.” It highlights 33 efforts aimed at mobilizing the private sector capital, claiming these provide “a strong indication of the broad scope of ongoing initiatives and the potential for scaling up to achieve the demands of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Financing for Development is ‘Preserving’ the Status Quo

“We started from an optimistic viewpoint on FfD3 and now ending with so much disappointment over what seems like retrogression from old agreements. There is no mention at all of peace dividends generated from the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons, and the reduction in defense spending. Debt relief and condonation are treated marginally. The emerging document suggests business as usual. It doesn’t explain the fundamental reasons for why there is lack of financing sustainable development,” lamented Isagani Serrano, co-convener of Social Watch Philippines.

Frozen in diplomacy

The debt crisis in Greece dominates the news in Europe but a significant related event lacks public attention – the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD3). This is being held in Ethiopia from 13 to 16 July and is designed to come up with proposals on how to shape international financial relations more equally and to finance efforts to advance sustainable development. FFD3 deals with vital issues such as the mobilization of domestic resources and reform of tax policies, the role of private finance, debt and debt sustainability, trade, and reforms in the international financial system.

by Jens Martens, Global Policy Forum

Why is the “North” shying away from global collaboration on tax?

One of the more contested issues at the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development, currently underway in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is how to improve/ensure global cooperation in tax matters. During preparatory negotiations in New York, a proposal surfaced that would upgrade a UN expert committee on the issue into a full-fledged political, and more importantly universal, commission. The commission could deal with issues like fighting tax evasion and avoidance, could set standards for double taxation agreements and for how to deal with transnational corporations. This proposal, however was rejected with force by most OECD governments.

by Wolfgang Obenland, Global Policy Forum

What's new

Revolving doors between business & politics: greasing the wheels of the TTIP lobby



The prospective EU-US trade deal TTIP could be the world's biggest such treaty. While there are disagreements and divergences, in many areas of the negotiations the European Commission is singing from the corporate hymn-sheet. The revolving door between the public and private sectors is helping to grease the wheels of the TTIP corporate lobby. Some of the EU's most senior decision-makers and officials, alongside those from the member state levels, spin through the revolving door into corporate advisor roles; others go in the other direction, from corporate jobs into the public sector. These revolving door cases cover some of the biggest EU corporate lobby sectors, including telecoms and IT issues; food and agriculture; finance; investor-state dispute settlement; pharmaceuticals; regulatory cooperation; and others. This phenomenon creates great potential for conflicts of interest, and demonstrates the synergies between business interests and the European Commission, the UK government, and others when it comes to TTIP and trade negotiations. CEO documents a variety of revolving door cases including a commissioner, MEPs and officials with links or interests in TTIP.

Reactions to the Addis Ababa Outcome Document



The Third International Conference on Financing for Development is coming to an end. Yesterday, the countries reached an agreement in Addis Ababa on the final outcome document. The Conference on Financing for Development has reportedly seen the presence of 27 heads of government and many more senior government representatives from the capitals. Representatives of UN Agencies, civil society from across the globe and the business community were also taking part in the conference. While the UN reports that the “groundbreaking agreement” forms the “foundation of a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development that will leave no one behind”, civil society organizations are expressing disappointment. Particularly the fact that the final outcome rejects the proposal of establishing an intergovernmental UN body on tax matters is seen as a failure. But the criticism of the outcome document is not limited to the missing global tax body.

UN experts: Corporations must contribute to sustainable development by respecting human rights



The United Nations Working Group on business and human rights this week urged Governments across the world to ensure that corporations do not undermine sustainable development, and called for greater transparency and accountability for how businesses address human rights risks and impacts. “States must set a clear vision for connecting the increasing role of the private sector and businesses in development with accountability and agreed standards for business practices aligned with human rights,” the independent expert group said in a letter to lead negotiators as they enter the final stages of negotiating the ‘Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.’ In their letter, the experts highlight that the draft outcome documents stress the critical importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders, including business and the private sector, in implementation of the new Agenda. However, they caution that business activities can also undermine respect for human rights if not properly regulated.

Addis Ababa CSO FfD Forum Declaration



The coordination group for the civil society participation for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, July 13-16 2015) has convened a forum for civil society in advance of the conference. One outcome of this forum was a declaration with reflections and recommendations to the Member States of the United Nations and the international community. Furthermore, the CSO FfD group published a statement, expressing the concerns and demands they have regarding the draft outcome document of the Conference on Financing for Development.

A critical assessment of PPPs and their impact on sustainable development





Public-private partnerships (often referred to as PPPs) are increasingly promoted as a way to finance development projects. Donor governments and financial institutions, such as the World Bank, have set up multiple donor initiatives to promote changes in national regulatory frameworks to allow for PPPs, as well as provide advice and finance to PPP projects. PPPs also feature prominently in the discussions around the post-2015 and the financing for development agendas. Currently, there is a strong push to increase the involvement of the private sector in the development arena and to promote PPPs as key tool to reach the soon to be agreed sustainable development goals. This report published by eurodad critically assesses whether PPPs deliver on the promises of their proponents and gives concrete recommendations for policymakers.

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