



**Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) First session, Addis Ababa, 22-26 July 2024**

***Intervention by Emilia Reyes, Equidad de Género, on behalf of the CS FfD Mechanism during the Multi-stakeholder round table 8: Science, technology, innovation, and capacity-building***

Thank you chair

My name is Emilia Reyes, with Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia, and I am speaking on behalf of the Civil Society FfD Mechanism.

Science, Technology and Innovation do not come in a vacuum. Without proper regulation, multinational corporations that are basing their global presence under the arguments of innovation and supporting economic growth, continue to expand harmful impacts across the board. Governments should consider the expansion of market concentration and monopoly practices among technology and other companies, which can result in market distortions and poor working conditions, worsening the situation of women and groups who suffer multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. International coordinated action should be taken to address market concentration.

The global pandemic exposed the extent and further exacerbated the Digital Divide – the already wide and still widening gap in access to digital technology and infrastructures between the North and South, between men and women across the world, and between urban and rural communities within countries.

Recently we learned that Google and Microsoft consumed more electricity in 2023 than over 100 entire countries. Proposals for a Green transition based in techno-fixes such as geo-engineering (including solar engineering) or the expansion of digital solutions that would require a renewed increase of extractive-mega projects in the Global South to provide raw and critical materials. This would imply a lack of coherence between the three sister UN conventions on climate change, biodiversity and desertification, because it seems that the lack of a global understanding of the internal processes of development, circulation and disposal within the life cycle of technology, and the lack of democratic governance is still accelerating the unequal

exchange globally while destabilizing the biosphere. The FfD4 Conference is the space to connect these dimensions to ensure a system change mindful of people and the planet.

More recently, the UN Secretary General made a controversial proposal to establish a multistakeholder body led by technology companies to govern digitalization. Amid these disparate efforts at the global and national levels, there remains a huge vacuum in governance of digital technologies that needs to be addressed with a sense of urgency to protect human rights and assert the mandate of democratic institutions over corporate interests.

As solutions, we have emphasized the need to carry out ex-ante human rights, gender and ecological impacts assessment when considering the role of technology for development. Moreover, a vital UN-led Global technology assessment mechanism is needed to prevent big tech giants from exploiting disparities to consolidate market dominance, potentially sidelining public interventions in critical social services.

In closing, we welcome what has been mentioned by Cuba on Unilateral Coercive Measures, Mexico on inequalities, and the right of the South to seek an expansion of effective opportunities to develop its own technologies beyond the unfair restrictions of the Intellectual Property regime.