



Third Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), NY, 10-14 February, 2025

Lena Simet, Human Rights Watch on behalf of the CS FfD Mechanism Intervention delivered at the Zero draft para by para comments: A global financing framework

Thank you Chair. My name is Lena Simet with Human Rights Watch, I speak on behalf of the Civil Society FfD Mechanism

While the Zero Draft mentions human rights as a cross cutting issue, it fails to recognise the critical role of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development as guideposts to conduct the necessary economic transformation to deliver on development finance goals and a fairer Global Financial Framework. We call on states to explicitly ask for the building of human rights economies, a concept that has long been developed in the Global South and North, and which the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has been championing recently.

Accordingly, FfD4 should ensure that public services are delivered in alignment with human rights standards, adequately regulating private actors where they may be involved, preventing the risks of privatization and commercialisation that often reduce quality and accessibility. Development banks must prioritize public services over private sector expansion, ensuring accountability and compliance with human rights - including rights of women and gender-diverse people - racial and climate justice.

It also needs to deliver on social security. We are pleased to see social protection included in the Zero Draft, which is an important step forward from the elements paper. However, it is not included in the action areas and weakens past commitments by using vague terms like "essential" instead of reasserting universality. All countries have committed that "everyone has the right to social security" as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to establish social protection floors through ILO Recommendation 202. Failing to reaffirm universality would amount to backtracking on these obligations - disproportionately affecting women & marginalized groups.

Additionally, the next draft should acknowledge structural inequalities in international tax and debt negotiations. On debt, the current system results in a massive transfer of resources from the Global South to the Global North. This undermines human rights, including the right to development, as essential resources are diverted away from funding quality public services and social security, hindering compliance with the maximum available resources' and Extraterritorial obligations (ETO) of states. Advocating for measures like progressive taxation of corporations and high net worth individuals, combating illicit financial flows, and holding international financial institutions accountable would strengthen the draft's human rights foundation.

Moreover, the zero draft mentions the IMF and MDBs and their role in financing both social security and public services. These institutions, as specialized agencies under the framework of the UN, are also bound by international human rights law, both in stable times and during crises. Too often, [IMF-led austerity measures](#) have resulted in cuts in social security and public services, prioritizing narrowly targeted, time-bound schemes over rights-aligned systems.

As we advance in the FfD4 process, we urge a strong commitment to human rights, substantive gender equality, universal, rights-aligned public services and social security, backed by equitable, decolonial, antiracist, and sustainable financing mechanisms, as the ongoing process towards a UN Tax Convention encouragingly exemplifies.

Thank you.