

The FfD Chronicle



**CIVIL SOCIETY
FINANCING FOR
DEVELOPMENT**
Mechanism

The CS FfD Mechanism is an open civil society platform including several hundreds of organizations and networks from diverse regions and constituencies around the world. CS FfD Mechanism's core principle is ensuring that civil society can speak with one collective voice.

IS CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS “TOO DEI” FOR MEMBER STATES?

The FfD Chronicle is puzzled that an issue as important as the assurance of transparency and inclusion of this process has remained in the drawers of the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Bureau of the 4th International Conference on FfD for too long. We are already halfway through the Third Preparatory Committee Session (3rd PrepCom), and there is an understated assumption that it is okay to undermine civic space as long as everyone pretends that some enforced technicalities fell from the sky, with no one being truly responsible for such regression. Yet, the opposite is true: observers do have memory, and recall the great tradition of past FfD conferences with meaningful civil society participation at every stage of the negotiations. Moreover, the full access to the necessary documentation and information ensured strong citizen engagement side by side with Member States. The FfD Chronicle calls on those who are guarding the integrity of the process to honor the highest standards that led Member States to agree on the Monterrey and Doha Consensus, as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

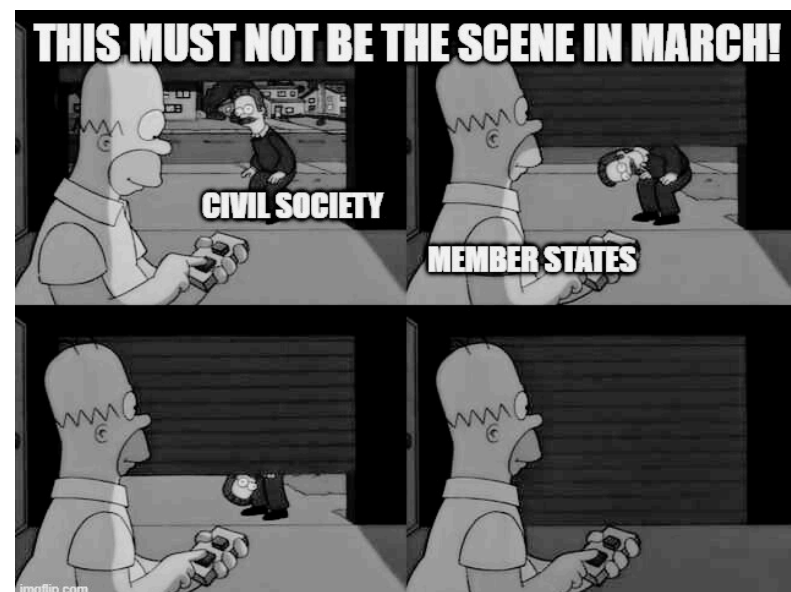
All Member States should feel compelled to raise this issue from the floor. The FfD process has everything to lose if observers are left out of the room when the negotiations take place. Not only the legitimacy of the outcome will be questioned before it is presented to the world, but the purpose itself of the discussions will be distorted: if business as usual has led to the current global crises, then the regular power dynamics behind them need to be called into question as well.

It is in everyone's interests (and regarding every topic of the agenda) to ensure that constructive and hopeful voices are heard amidst the current contexts of global misalignments. After all, civil society's sole purpose of engaging in the FfD process is to help you, Member States, to ensure the most ambitious outcomes while uplifting the democratic potential of the United Nation's spirit of one country, one vote.

The FfD Chronicle witnessed the way in which Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) have been put in suspense by some voices in the room.

We wonder then, in disbelief, if (as a delegate mentioned during the first day of this week's PrepCom) CSO participation has become “too DEI” for Member States in the FfD process, despite their assurances of a commitment to democratic principles on economic governance. In the same way that DEI is helpful to acknowledge past omissions and rectify gaps, civil society participation and engagement across all stages will be key to add vibrancy to a much familiar scene of ratification of group and national positions.

Technicalities aside, the FfD Chronicle is certain that this 3rd PrepCom can make a difference by giving a clear signal this week of a full and meaningful participation of civil society during the upcoming negotiations in the lead up to Sevilla. Furthermore, as in the case of the negotiations in Addis Ababa in 2015, civil society participation in official national delegations should be encouraged. Moving forward Member States in the room can say, without a doubt, that nothing is too DEI. That the right thing to do is to ratify the collective commitment to democratic principles for the global economic governance that the world deserves.



ENOUGH THEATRE - TIME FOR REAL NEGOTIATIONS!

The FFD4 conference is less than 5 months away and we are *still* waiting for member-state- led negotiations to begin. Following the publication of the zero draft, we expected line-by-line negotiations to start this week with a sense of urgency. But we have instead been watching a theatre of the absurd where UN diplomats sit and read out deeply contradictory positions, but rather than a real negotiation, the discussion simply moves to the next paragraphs.

The main protagonists in this theatre are the 4 co-facilitators appointed by the co-chairs ('co-facs'). Though we are still confused about this large number of co-facs and their respective roles and responsibilities. So far we have watched the co-facs essentially shoot themselves in the foot by refusing to give up control of the pen. Meanwhile, co-chairs and Bureau are hiding behind the curtains.

Rather than facilitate truly transparent line-by-line negotiations where member states start to take ownership of the text, we have been met with a mere façade of transparency. Text is displayed on the screen but no line-by-line edits allowed. No record of attribution to edits made in each paragraph by different member states and no compilation of text where the proposals of different Member States are pulled together. The co-facs will simply produce a revised version with no accountability on whose inputs were taken on board and whose were ignored.

While a general collation of ideas can work for an initial input, moving forward it will obscure transparency. Compilation text, with attributions to clarify which member state has suggested what, is fundamental to ensure accountability as well as push for ambition. Rather than member states being protagonists, we instead have a co-facs led theatre of pretending to negotiate.

Then there is the final part of the co-facs' roadmap where line-by-line negotiations will begin next month in secret. No civil society will be present and cameras will be turned off (i.e no live-streaming of negotiations). As we had noted in a previous edition, 'ambition is not built behind closed doors.' There is also no such thing as 'secret' negotiations involving over 190 member states, several UN agencies and staff. It only encourages leaks and breeds mistrust in the process. Furthermore, governments do not exactly tend to become more ambitious, responsible and cooperative when they get to hide behind closed doors, and opaque negotiations emboldens bad faith negotiation tactics when there is no broader scrutiny or accountability.

The co-facs might call this a 'roadmap'. We call it a recipe for disaster. We sincerely hope UN member states interested in an ambitious and meaningful outcome at Seville put a stop to this theatre and course-correct urgently.

Recipe for a disastrous FfD4

Disallow line-by-line edits of zero draft

Unattributed edits & no compiled text

Secret future session for line-by-line negotiations without civil society?

Raising the FfD4 Zero Draft Ambition: Towards a UN Convention on International Development Cooperation

Join us for a critical discussion on the IDC section of the FfD4 Zero Draft and the urgent need for a UN Convention on International Development Cooperation

Date: 12/Feb/2025
Time: 1:15pm- 2:30pm
Venue: CR-E, UN HQ, NY