



## ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD4)

NY, 20-24 April, 2026

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**Intervention delivered at the session '2026 in-depth review: International trade as an engine for development', International trade as an engine for development in a changing global landscape.**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, let us take this opportunity to critically analyze if the Compromiso de Sevilla responds to the current moment.

The connection between trade and development is central in the Financing for Development process. Following the human capabilities approach to development, trade should be a means to the end of improving peoples' capabilities. In this sense, and despite growth in GDP, the multilateral trading system **has failed** to meet its purpose.

The Compromiso de Sevilla sets out that “A universal, rules-based, fair, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in all three dimensions, providing policy space for national development objectives, poverty eradication and sustainable development, while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and countries' commitments.”

*Should* is the key word here. It is an acknowledgement that the current multilateral trading system is not fulfilling these purposes. The direct violence in the SWANA region being facilitated by trade, and the indirect violence of unilateral coercive measures, price shocks, and manipulation, are certainly not rules-based, predictable, non-discriminatory, or equitable. And they are in direct opposition to international rules.

It has been laid bare that WTO rules are binding for those economically and politically weaker, whether it is at country level or constituency level, while the powerful actors that pushed these rules in the first place are free to break them. No rule, no principle, no values are sacrosanct anymore.

While the fundamental imbalances enshrined in WTO rules must be addressed, the United Nations must fulfill its central role of ensuring the global public good. This is precisely why the Financing for Development process originated: to provide a democratic forum for exchange on the systemic inequalities in the global economy, with the understanding that social and economic justice are inherently connected.

In our current context of might makes right, we are in desperate need of a shared vision of progress and justice, and the global solidarity to pursue such a vision. Some of the seeds of these initiatives are located in the Compromiso de Sevilla, but ambition needs to reach far beyond mere implementation to truly make progress towards trade justice. The Compromiso de Sevilla must be the floor, not the ceiling, of global cooperation on trade. Cosmetic fixes on a broken system will not correct our current course.

I thank you.