

38th INFORMAL WORKING BREAKFAST ON AGENDA 2030

*From Financing for Development to Means of Implementation:
Commitments and Challenges in Implementing the 2030 Agenda.*

Hosted by the Bahá'í International Community,
the International Movement ATD Fourth World, and Regions Refocus
25 May 2017

A diverse group of stakeholders¹ attended a working breakfast to discuss key issues related to the Financing for Development Forum and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The following are highlights of the discussion:

- The ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development is a priority for developing countries. Dialogues like this are fundamental, and everyone has a part to play.
- What will be done between the conclusion of this year's Forum and next year? The Interagency Task Force has been requested to submit a report for the Forum to discuss in 2018. How do we get from today to next year without just having a nice discussion without any consequences?
- The private sector has a role to play, especially in taking on risk. Their ultimate responsibility is to their shareholders, while government's is to their taxpayers.
- Investment is low, and therefore, trade is not growing. Governments with existing debt have trouble building new projects. We need a facility to write down debt, one that does not necessarily exist within the UN.
- Private finance has an explicit and implicit focus on win-win. However, a lot of the most important things we need to do are not win-win, and will not generate profits for the financial sector. For example, progressive taxation or increased corporate taxation will not generate profits for the private sector in the short or medium term, yet need to be implemented in the interests of the agenda. Implementing living wages and labor rights are also losing attention. We need to be brave enough to implement these things to achieve some of our goals, while accepting the fact that they may not generate profits for the private sector.
- We face a big challenge in trying to break the paradigm of competition. The traditional idea has been that competition is very healthy and helps lift people out of poverty, but this is not necessarily true. Private resources rely a lot on public resources; Brazil provides a good example of how the public sector helps the private sector. The question is - how do we actually develop a paradigm of cooperation?

¹ Permanent Missions & Government Agencies: Botswana, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Honduras, Germany, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, South Centre; Non-governmental organizations: Bahá'í International Community, Center for Economic and Social Rights, Child Fund Alliance, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepard, Daughters of Charity, Delegation of the Government of Catalonia to the US, Eurodad, Feminist Task Force, Gestos, Global Action to Prevent War, Global Policy Forum, Gray Panthers, International Committee for October 17, International Movement ATD Fourth World, InterPress Service, Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability, Medical Mission Sisters, Regions Refocus, Save Cambodia, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Charity Foundation, Social Watch, The New School, UNANIMA, UN Major Group on Children and Youth, Vivat International, World Council of Churches, Youth in Development Workgroup

- We need a paradigm shift in our thinking, from an economy of scarcity to an economy of abundance. The issue of investment in gender equality and women's rights needs to be addressed. Achieving gender equality is necessary for sustainable development. The commitments are there, so how do we put these into action? The women's human rights agenda needs a stronger commitment. We should devote a session in the financial forum to women's rights in terms of finance.
- Finance should also take into account militarization, and the amount of money that goes into destroying development and the planet, in turn creating poverty. Defense gets a lot of investment, but development does not. We should propose a resolution that development should come first. We rarely address financing for the army and why it is necessary in the first place. How do we frame security and conflict in this discussion?
- Access to climate finance remains a big challenge. It is difficult to access and even when accredited, grants are small. We are taking our own serious measures at home. When we mobilize all national resources and come up with a national plan, then finance becomes a collective effort. The participation of all institutions will help us to develop.
- One of the low hanging fruit we can address is social protection floors. It is the first thing to get cut through austerity measures, and should be a priority for both developed and developing states. Social protection is very important, and if our goal is the eradication of poverty, then we need to establish a baseline standard of living.
- Implementation is lacking. Is there an opportunity to take this forward to the General Assembly and get a debate going in this area?
- Though the UN involves national governments, actual development happens at the local level. This needs to inform the processes happening in New York. Closing this gap will help us move closer towards and achieve the 2030 Agenda.
- How do we measure action in terms of the SDGs? It is important for us to determine how to measure our progress and establish a baseline.
- Everything is linked; the Agenda 2030 comes with new principles of universality, complementarity, and interdisciplinary issues. We need to be practical in what we're saying and understand that it affects everyone. Failure to act will have consequences for everyone- none of us will be isolated from the fallout. How do we advance the frameworks in place?
- We need to challenge the dichotomy between "us" and "them". The Agenda 2030 is not beyond us to achieve, we just need to have the will to change.