



UN Economic and Social Council assumes two new major functions

GA President confirms dates for High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development

Registration opens for civil society organization

In a [letter](#) dated 27 July 2007 to all permanent missions to the United Nations in New York, the President of the General Assembly confirmed the 22 and 23 October 2007 as the dates for the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The President asked all member states to be presented at the highest possible level during the Dialogue. As of today, the Financing for Development Office and NGLS have opened the application process for participation in the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development (22-23 October 2007), as well as informal interactive hearings with representatives of civil society organizations (11 October 2007). The application form for participation in the Hearings and the High-level Dialogue can be retrieved [online](#).

Five years after the United Nations Financing for Development (FfD) Conference held in Monterrey Mexico in 2002, Social Watch Philippines (SWP) once again kicks off the civil society review of the FfD outcomes in the Philippines. Five years ago, SWP led civil society participation in a multi-stakeholder approach convened by the Philippine government, in the crafting of official policy positions on FfD, which also included the business sector. The partnership forged around the FfD conference between and among government, civil society and the business sector was observed by many as a “best practice” in constructive engagement. Today, the civil society review process is anchored on the overriding objectives of mobilizing new and additional resources for the MDGs at the country level, and identifying stumbling blocks as well strategies to overcoming constraints and challenges. Some years ago, a government study pointed out that the cumulative resource gap for all MDG financing from 2007 to 2010 stood at PhP 394.7 B (or 1.2 % of GNP) under high cost assumptions. The study also outlined ways of reducing the shortfall through lower cost interventions and proposed policy measures to increasing budgetary support. The SWP review will take off and build on the results of the study. It will identify ways of increasing revenues while pointing out the need to address existing policies that promote inequities. Innovative government-CSO proposals will also be presented such as changing the debt sustainability concept of the IMF and Paris Club, and mainstreaming a debt-to-MDG conversion for countries outside the HIPC initiative. The FfD CSO review will also look into the critical role of labor migration, particularly the contribution of overseas workers remittances in keeping the

Philippine economy afloat. Finally, the study will point to the centrality of the quality of governance in addressing the FfD challenges faced by the country. The FfD thematic policy papers generated by SWP will be discussed and debated in a national consultation of CSOs. The CSO consultation is scheduled around World Poverty and Hunger Eradication Day (17 October 2007) to commemorate and highlight the FfD aspects of poverty and hunger. The CSO policy positions firmed up during the consultation shall be shared with official policy makers in relation to the FfD process.

Workshop on “The Road to Doha”

By Eva Hanfstaengl*

On 29 June 2007, a workshop on “The Road to the International Review Conference on FfD” was held in Geneva in the context of the Civil Society Development Forum in Geneva, organized by CONGO and the Millennium Campaign. The event brought together over 600 participants. Eva Hanfstaengl (NGO Committee on FfD) presented the background of the FfD process. John Foster (North-South Institute) informed about progress of the “Leading Group on Solidarity Levies for Development”. Mr. Foster highlighted that France had launched an airlines levy for drug purchase, joined by a 24 other countries. One of the key innovations was the principle that taxes for global objectives could be initiated nationally, without universal consensus. The Third Plenary meeting of the Group would be held in Seoul in September 2007. NGO networks were currently seeking a champion country to initiate a pilot currency transaction tax. Philo Morris (NGO Committee on FfD) highlighted the options for NGOs to fully engage in the FfD process. She also mentioned that in preparation of the High-level Dialogue on FfD, the GA will hold the

2008 spring meeting of ECOSOC with BWIs, WTO and UNCTAD and the Development Cooperation Forum (July 2008). Kinda Mohammedieh (Arab NGO Network for Development) reported on the debate on the “Financing Development to achieve the MDGs” that took place in Doha, Qatar on 17-18 June. Ms. Jean Saldanha (CIDSE) highlighted important topics for the Doha agenda, including, a fair, comprehensive and transparent procedure to negotiate debt cancellation and international cooperation against tax evasion and capital flight, as well as the establishment of a world tax organization. Finally, the following recommendations were made and presented to ECOSOC:

1. The Doha Conference should be at the Summit level, have a full preparatory process including periodic meetings of a preparatory committee and an outcome document.
2. Debt cancellation and humanitarian relief must not be included in the definition of ODA. The Millennium Development Goals should be instrumental in debt sustainability criteria.
3. International support should be given for further pilot projects in innovative financing, in particular the currency transaction tax to finance development objectives.
4. Progressive national tax systems should be developed to redistribute wealth and resist tax competition. Tax havens must be closed and tax evasion eliminated.
5. The reform of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) must incorporate