Doha, Qatar  
November 28, 2008  

Dear Mr. President of the General Assembly,

With the culmination of a two day Forum in preparation for the Official Review Conference of the Financing for Development Process, we the members of Civil Society, representing some 252 delegates from 52 countries have adopted a declaration to be delivered to the Official Review Conference.

Mr. President today, here, we present to you the key findings of this declaration and would appreciate your reaction to these proposals and your plans for the way forward.

We find ourselves in the midst of a crisis that threatens not only the completion of the MDG’s, and the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people, in the North and the South, but also the stability of the world’s economies. In the light of the failure of Northern Governments and the appointed institutions (BWI, etc) to provide adequate resolutions to avert this crisis, we can think of no better moment for the UN to assert itself as the instrument that defines the way forward.

At this transformative moment, it is clear that systemic and global governance issues must be debated and decided in the pre- eminent political institution, the UN. But the negotiations on the Doha outcome document seem to continue as if nothing has happened. There is a lack of urgency in the negotiations. What we need now is creative thinking and collective multilateral action instead of following the business as usual and muddling through approaches of the past.

Two weeks ago, the leaders of the 20 most powerful countries of the world met in Washington as the G-20. They adopted a declaration on "Financial Markets and the World Economy" – a preliminary "to-do-list" to solve the current financial crisis. Without doubt, some of the 47 announced measures might be useful and necessary.

That the Washington summit took place at the level of the G-20 and not the G-7 or 8 reflects the changing realities of the world and might be a step in the right direction. But it would be a grave mistake to stop there and to exclude 172 governments and the global civil society from the decision making process about the future financial and economic system.

Mr. President, in this regard, we reaffirm our support for a new United Nations Conference – a Second UN Monetary and Financial Conference. Such a comprehensive conference under UN authority should be based on the inclusive principles which have guided Financing for Development. All countries have voice and vote, multilateral agencies are engaged and civil society has a voice. The basis for such an agreement is found in para. 58 a of the Draft Declaration.

The Financing for Development Review Conference provides a unique opportunity to start a comprehensive process, the preparations should start immediately in the first quarter of 2009.

To ensure that the way forward is secure, we support a strong follow-up Financing for Development process centred in the United Nations, bringing together all relevant agencies and multilateral institutions, with adequate staff and resources. We further support the holding of a second review conference in 2013.

In the longer term, to bring the more limited agenda of the G-20 into the universal forum of the United Nations, a permanent forum or “economic security council” within the UN with regional representation and a rotation system needs to be established that can deal with the burning economic and financial issues in a comprehensive way. Modalities for the establishment of such a forum should be set up in the coming months. A more effective ECOSOC BWI High Level meeting could provide an opportunity to start such a process. There needs to be an adequately staffed and resourced unit within the United Nations system.
that is able to support this process.

Mr. President, with many others we are confronted with the reality that resources for development are being reduced and diverted in the current context. We therefore believe that a number of further decisions and commitments are necessary this week.

**We support the proposal to upgrading the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. (Para. 8)** With the growing loss of resources through capital flight and tax evasion we need a more representative space for dealing with taxation, building on the work of the OECD tax committee, by upgrading the UN tax committee to an adequately resourced and fully mandated intergovernmental body based on political representation and technical expertise.

We must reverse the flow of vital resources from south to north. We therefore **recommend recognition of the priority of domestic resource mobilization for developing countries and ensuring the authority of their governments to take the necessary measures in this regard, transparency on cross-border flows, country by country reporting and international accounting standards which ensure disclosure, we support action on illicit flows and on odious debt, with fuller, deeper and more comprehensive debt cancellation.**

This is not a pledging conference, but the Review Conference must take steps to ensure that **increased resources for development** and justice are available and reach the poor, the vulnerable, and strengthen rather than subvert the achievement of the MDGs and other development goals. Thus agreement on binding targets and timelines for donor fulfillment of the 0.7% goal is essential.

To monitor and encourage these steps we need a strengthened Development Cooperation Forum.

Mr. President, these items are highlights of comprehensive decisions made at the Civil Society Forum, and we are pleased to present the final Declaration of the Forum to you.

Mr. President, we are seeking a new consensus, a global consensus of the G-192, which directs its efforts to the rights, needs and demands of those most affected, and addresses the structural causes of this crisis, in order to provide long-term justice and security.

Mr. President, we appreciate the steps the General Assembly has taken to seek and develop expert advice on responses to the current crisis. We recognize that Ministries of Finance in the G-20 will be focusing on immediate steps in the first quarter of 2009. **We are asking the President of GA what steps you and the S-G may take to ensure the pre-eminence of the UN in this formative period of response, to ensure the impacts on poverty, employment, human security of the majorities of the world’s population are taken fully into account.** Further we ask how we in civil society can assist in assuring the advances we are putting forward in this open letter.

In conclusion, we salute you for your commitment and your efforts to seek meaningful and timely results.

Presented with the Declaration of the Civil Society Forum on Financing for Development.