



Cordially invite you to:

Applying Common but Differentiated Responsibilities in a Financing Sustainable Development Context

Where: Conference Room 5, UN Conference Building
UN Headquarters (46th Street and 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10017)

When: Tuesday, January 27 2015, 1:15 – 2:45 PM

SPEAKERS

- **H.E. Ambassador Guilherme Patriota**, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN
- **Stephan Ohme**, Head of Division on Financing for Development / (New) Donor-relations, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development, Germany
- **Shari Spiegel**, Director, UN Financing for Development Office
- **Manuel Montes**, Senior Advisor, Finance and Development, South Centre
- **Jean Saldanha**, Senior Policy Advisor, CIDSE
- **Roberto Bissio**, Executive Director, Social Watch

Moderator: Leni Montiel, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Development, UN-DESA (TBC)

BACKGROUND

In 2015 two important negotiating processes already under way are expected to culminate. One is the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa). The other is the adoption of a Post-2015 development agenda, at the center of which there will be a number of Sustainable Development Goals.

Countries have committed to synergy and coherence between both processes. For instance, the resolution calling the Financing for Development Conference stated that “the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration provide the conceptual framework, including in the context of the Post-2015 development agenda, for the mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing required for the achievement of sustainable development” and stressed the “need to reinforce coherence and coordination and to avoid duplication of efforts.”

However, such commitments do not exist in a vacuum, and are framed by previous international agreements that the next Financing for Development Conference will have to carefully weigh in. This opens significant conceptual challenges.

The first challenge is that of an evenhanded approach to the three pillars of sustainable development as defined in the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 1992, consisting of environmental protection, social development and economic development. Indeed, the same resolution calling the Third FFD Conference emphasized that the approach needs to address “the three dimensions of sustainable development.”

While there is broad consensus on the nominal recognition of the three dimensions of sustainable development as integral to it, efforts to address all three dimensions in a financing context have been elusive. The very notion of

financing sustainable development as opposed to “development” seems to be biased towards an identification of “sustainable development” with the environmental protection pillar, rather than the other two, a tendency that if the Third FFD Conference aspires to an evenhanded approach, it will need to overcome.

A second challenge is that of adapting a framework like the Financing for Development process to the universal agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals without denaturalizing and decontextualizing it. Indeed, in conformity with the Rio + 20 Conference Outcome document, the commitment to develop sustainable development goals “global in nature and universally applicable to all countries” was balanced by a commitment to “taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.” (para. 247)

These agreements were recently reinforced in the outcome of the UNFCCC’s twentieth session of the Conference of Parties (COP 20) held in Lima, where countries “underscored [their] commitment to reaching an ambitious agreement in 2015 that reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances.”

At Rio + 20 countries also agreed that the development of the Sustainable Development Goals “should not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.” (para. 246)

But the Third FFD Conference is mandated, first of all, to review progress on the Monterrey Consensus, whose frame of reference in terms of a global development agenda were the Millennium Development Goals. It is also worth noting that the Monterrey Consensus and its follow up process has a life that predates even the Millennium Development Goals. Its primary justification is to provide a forum for coordination on efforts to finance development in developing countries.

Thus, negotiations in the run up to Addis Ababa will need to define to what extent, and in what conditions, is FFD a pertinent forum for tackling a universal agenda. It will also need to do so in the framework of existing commitments to not divert focus or effort on the MDGs, and properly respecting the commitment to take into account national realities, capacities and levels of development.

A third challenge is how to incorporate important principles agreed at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, such as Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and equity. CBDR is particularly pertinent to a discussion of how to finance universal Sustainable Development Goals, since such principle recognizes the different historical responsibilities that countries had in creating current environmental problems, as well as their different capacities to address them.

Their application in climate negotiations in the framework of the UNFCCC has been contentious, with some countries rejecting their explicit mention. The above-mentioned consensus reached in Lima regarding the application of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities in negotiations leading up to Paris in 2015 represent, undoubtedly, a breakthrough. But given the history of contention around these principles in a context of negotiations specific to climate, it is expected that their incorporation across the board in the Third FFD Conference will not be exempt of difficulties.

This event seeks to generate discussion on these conceptual challenges. Arguably, the Monterrey and Doha FFD Outcome Documents went already some way to address them, and negotiations in the context of the UNFCCC have also explored the implications of CBDR particularly for climate finance. But much more needs to be done if the Third FFD Conference is to be faithful to the integration of CBDR in a consistent and systematic way.

How should the principles of CBDR and equity apply in the Financing for Development context? What should their implications be across the six chapters of the Monterrey agenda on which the Third FFD Conference is mandated to examine progress? What are the available proposals in this regard and what areas of agreement and disagreement exist among the different actors? Given the announced intent by some actors on focusing the Addis Ababa conference on a few deliverables, to what extent is it feasible to pursue coherence and synergy with the universal agenda of the SDGs?

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