

Summary of the Doha Civil Society Forum

(Doha, Qatar, Ramada Plaza, Doha 25-27 November 2008)

The Civil Society Forum was held under the theme “Investing in people-centered development” in preparation for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (Doha, Qatar, 29 November - 2 December 2008). More than 250 civil society organizations and networks participated in the meeting, which featured plenary sessions, roundtables and side events. Participants adopted a Civil Society Declaration at the Forum, which was delivered by Ms. Gemma Adaba, Representative to the United Nations for the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to the plenary session of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in the afternoon of 29 November 2008. The declaration put forward a number of key recommendations, organized around the six thematic areas of the Monterrey Consensus.

- I. On domestic resource mobilization, the Declaration affirms that in order to achieve the international development goals and overcome dependence on external sources, developing countries need to substantially increase revenue from national resources, and channel them towards meeting the needs of the people living in poverty.
- II. With respect to foreign direct investment the Declaration calls for a holistic approach that includes, among others, the social development aspects, sustainable technology transfer and elimination of tax havens that deny poor countries much needed financial resources for development.
- III. Concerning trade, it concludes that the impact of the global financial crisis in developing countries is exposing vulnerabilities that stem from too much emphasis on the liberalization of trade, without looking at mechanisms for ensuring that trade provides a stable source of development finance.
- IV. On the question of aid, civil society organizations called for binding timetables for donor countries to reach the 0.7% ODA/GNI target by 2015 at the latest. Innovative sources of finance, such as a small currency transaction tax, can provide much needed additional resources for development.
- V. As for external debt, the Declaration calls for a new debt architecture that is inclusive, participatory and democratically accountable to the peoples it aims to serve. The United Nations should play a key role in its development, and the institutions and mechanisms should be subject to international human rights norms and treaties.
- VI. With regard to systemic issues, the Declaration calls for a new mechanism within the UN, which ensures implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and brings together all institutional stakeholders. The UN should hold a major international Summit level conference in order to comprehensively review the international financial architecture and global economic governance structures.