

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development



Statement by

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Delivered by

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Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

Seldom in history has so much been at stake for so many. The outcome of this Conference will affect the development prospects of this and future generations. Our collective ability to implement an ambitious, rights-based framework for financing development will determine whether or not the fundamental promise of the United Nations Charter, a world free from fear and free from want, is realized for all or remains an unfulfilled dream for countless millions.

Hunger and malnutrition, inadequate access to basic services, war and conflict, climate change, economic crises – these problems threaten our survival, our dignity, and our well-being. Because we yearn for better lives and equal opportunity for all, we envision a better way. The international community has marked 2015 as the year in which the cornerstone will be laid for a better world. In this better world, development is financed; inequalities are eradicated; human rights are enjoyed by all.

Making this world a reality starts with a simple step: honouring the commitment to expend maximum available resources for the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as to advance civil and political rights and the right to development.

Excellencies,

Decisions made here today in Addis and in the coming months in New York, Paris and capitals around the world will chart a new development path, measuring the true strength of State commitments to promote, protect and fulfil human rights for all persons, without discrimination.

Today, many are blessed with a wealth of opportunities and resources, while others struggle to survive in conditions of extreme poverty and peril.

Such inequity cannot be permitted to stand. Financing for development must satisfy the demands of all persons to have their most basic needs met in a world that does not lack the means, but has failed to demonstrate the will, to make human rights a reality for all.

I call upon you all to put aside political differences and reach toward our greatest common objective: the enjoyment of sustainable, rights-based development for all, without discrimination.

In this regard, I welcome the considerable progress that has been made by Member States in integrating human rights considerations in the financing for development discussion.

Commitments have been made to combat tax evasion, prevent illicit financial flows, improve transparency, promote tax cooperation at all levels, and ensure that businesses pay their fair share of taxes.

States have agreed to promote financial inclusion and reduce inequalities. They will seek to eradicate extreme poverty, ensure gender equality, and provide social protection and essential public services for all, with a focus on those furthest below the poverty line.

The need for increased international cooperation to improve policy coherence across the economic and development spheres has also been recognized.

The discussion of Financing for Development has yielded a clear consensus that the status quo is no longer enough. More must be done to identify innovative sources of finance; to improve the effectiveness of development assistance; to harness technological progress for the benefit of people and not just the profit of businesses; to promote transparency, participation and accountability of international financial institutions; to ensure responsibility and accountability of businesses; to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of financial crises; to guarantee adequate follow-up, monitoring and accountability for FFD commitments; and to make people the central subjects, active participants and beneficiaries of development.

Distinguished Delegates,

The need for action is clear. The means for realizing our development goals are present. They consist of an ever-growing pool of resources freed by human ingenuity, innovation and scientific advancement. We must not be remembered for failing to effectively mobilize and equitably distribute these resources.

Through the collective action of States and other relevant actors working in solidarity to fulfil their human rights commitments, we can realize the vision of a world free from fear and want that is laid out in the UN Charter and reaffirmed in the outcome document of Rio + 20 and each of the numerous intergovernmental summits that preceded it.

In mobilizing the means for sustainable development, we can guarantee that all persons have the necessary means to live a life of human dignity. But this will require that all parties honour their most basic and precious commitments to respect, promote, protect and fulfil human rights as follows:

First, under core human rights treaties, States are obligated to mobilize and allocate the maximum available resources for the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as to advance civil and political rights and the right to development. To eradicate poverty, achieve the post-2015 development agenda, and fulfil their human rights commitments, States should actively seek to mobilize all available resources for development, including through a fair and effective debt workout mechanism; progressive tax systems that are equitable and that benefit the poorest and the most vulnerable while ensuring that those with the most means pay their fair share; and the establishment of new and innovative sources of finance that are additional to traditional ODA and distribute global income to reduce gross inequalities including carbon taxes and financial transaction taxes.

Second, States must amplify cooperative efforts for the realization of all human rights by fulfilling and building upon their existing development commitments and establishing an enabling international environment for development. More must be done to ensure coherence, including full respect by current international legal regimes for trade, finance, and investment for norms and standards for labour, the environment, human rights, equality and sustainability. When States act in these arenas, including as members of multilateral institutions, appropriate environmental, social and human rights safeguards must be applied.

Third, States have committed to empower excluded persons and groups -- such as women, indigenous peoples, migrants, minorities, persons with disabilities, older persons, children, and the poor -- to reduce inequality, and to eliminate all forms of discrimination. A rights-based approach to financing for development must ensure that the benefits of

development are accessible to all and eliminate discriminatory barriers to the enjoyment of basic services, including financial services.

Fourth, according to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and other human rights instruments, private sector actors have human rights responsibilities. States have an affirmative obligation to protect human rights from the potentially negative impacts of business activities. Financing development the right way requires States to establish appropriate regulations and accountability mechanisms for all actors in the development and economic spheres. It further requires all actors to respect human rights and to do no harm to their realization. To help ensure their responsibilities are met, all companies should undertake mandatory Economic, Environment, Social, and Governance reporting commensurate with the level of risk posed by their activities, and when human rights harms do occur, effective remedies must be provided.

Fifth, States have an obligation to guarantee that all persons enjoy the rights to food and health as well as the benefits of science and its applications. Efforts to finance sustainable development should seek to ensure that global intellectual property regimes do not obstruct the realization of the right to food, hinder access to medicines, or impede the benefits of development from reaching the poor and marginalized.

Finally, in financing development, as in all of our work, we must effectively monitor human rights progress and ensure accountability of all duty-bearers to rights-holders. A people-centred post-2015 development agenda must include a broad, human rights sensitive measure of progress that captures the degree to which an economy meets the needs and rights of people, and how sustainably and equitably it does so. States should regularly review and subject to peer review their financing for development commitments according to specific, measureable, time-bound targets. These monitoring efforts should be underpinned by a human rights-based data revolution that makes information more available, more accessible and more broadly disaggregated to track development impacts for all people in all countries.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

This year presents us with a singular opportunity to strengthen our collective response to the challenges of eradicating poverty and hunger; to realize all human rights, including the right to development, for all persons; to prevent the worst impacts of climate change; and thereby, to also promote peace and security. These are opportunities that we must seize.

All of this starts here in Addis with financing for development.

Financing development is not simply a matter of money. The world does not lack for financial resources, yet countless millions suffer gross deprivation and human rights violations on a daily basis.

This situation is unconscionable. Our hands are not bound by resource limitations but rather by insufficient ambition, selfishness and greed. Going forward, we must be guided not by our fears but by our compassion; not by our selfish desires, but by our legal, moral and ethical responsibilities to our fellow human beings and to the planet that we share.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is only by embracing our human rights responsibilities that we can put ourselves on a path toward securing freedom from fear and freedom from want for all people without discrimination.

Today, I call upon you all to ensure that your efforts to finance the new development Agenda reflect the needs and demands of people, that they fully integrate relevant human rights commitments, encapsulate the imperative of human-rights based policy coherence, and set a firm foundation for upcoming negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and on climate change.

This is the mandate of the hundreds of delegates working in these halls today.

This is the demand of the billions awaiting your outcome.

I thank you.