

Talking points

Friday May 15, 2015 – FFD Informal Consultation

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My colleagues working on FFD have entrusted me to deliver some thoughts on follow up and a general reflection on the week that ends.

With regards to the Follow up, we are concerned by proposals to fold follow up into the working of a body that hasn't even started operating—the HLPF --, and when it does will meet 9 days in the year to cover the whole post-2015 agenda.

When we should be increasing the space and attention allocated to normative developments on FFD issues at the UN, this would achieve the opposite.

We would like to believe this is not by design, just an oversight. Nevertheless, the consequences remain equally perverse.

We need to learn from failures: where Monterrey Consensus fell short was in its follow up. The price was paid in weak implementation of its rich content

We firmly believe the Addis Ababa conference should set up an autonomous intergovernmental body dedicated to follow up on Financing for Development matters.

We are not wedded to names for this body, but we are wedded to its characteristics, namely 1) that it meets periodically (maybe biennially), 2) that it involves a Ministerial level meeting producing a negotiated outcome and 3) that it maintains the sui generis rules of participation in the FFD process.

We are conscious of the need to achieve coherence and synergy, to avoid duplication with the MoIs to be monitored in the post-2015 agenda.

We suggest this can be achieved if the High Level Political Forum provides on its agenda for a meaningful and periodic dialogue on the findings and conclusions of the FFD follow-up. All stakeholders of the FFD follow up should be part of that session, too.

Now, one of the objections to such mechanism is that it will be costly. I'm not familiar with the costs, but I am pretty sure it won't be more costly than failure to meet the SDGs would be.

Without a mechanism at the UN for follow up on the MOIs of this agenda there will be no implementation of MOIs, and as much as we may want to delude ourselves, without MOIs there will be no goals. Let us remember, the agenda we embark on now is one about the future of the planet we all share.

General comment on this week

In spite of what I just said about its follow up, Monterrey was an ambitious and remarkable consensus.

Those who were there, like I was, would remember people talked a lot at the time about the “Spirit of Monterrey.” This was something you could feel in the air: governments willing to get out of their comfort zones to create a strong compact of actions.

We are worried that this week we have not seen anything similar. We do not see a “spirit of Addis Ababa” rising.

At the rhetorical level, yes, everybody in this room speaks of ambition.

But the positions we have heard are not ambitious - - quite the opposite. We hear:

--governments cannot ensure ---only “seek to ensure” things [in Monterrey there were plenty of “we agree”, “we will ensure” , “we commit”]

--negative response to any increase on resources for anything, [including rejection of some innovative sources of finance that are by now undoubtedly feasible]
--no willingness to reexamine trade and finance rules developed under a different paradigm through a sustainable development lens
--the accord cannot even “invite” the Bretton Woods Institutions to do anything? – why cannot countries that are all shareholders of those same institutions not make a political commitment on what they will pursue therein? The G20 does this all the time (and they are just 20 shareholders!)
-- key principles such as the Rio principles are questioned, ironically by the same governments that want to rebaptize this conference as one about financing sustainable development
--Not only is there limited ambition in commitments, but we heard attempts to renege on existing ones

We wish to remind governments that two other important conferences are hanging from the outcome of this one. Two that will decide the vision on the type of development we want for the next 15 years.

What we saw is not the spirit that can create the trust and strong foundations for such a large undertaking as the international community is about to embark on.

If Member States want that agenda not to become dead letter even before it is approved, we think they will have to significantly up their game in the few weeks that are left before July 13th.

Thank you.