

Financing for Development – stock-taking at the UN

Part 2: The IATF report: basis for an outcome? (Part 2 of 2)

The central substantive piece during the preparations for the 2017 FfD Forum has been the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) and its report “[Progress and prospects](#)”. However, during open briefings from the IATF on the report, Member States - mostly members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - expressed frustration, wanting to understand the division of responsibilities among Task Force members in report preparations. They referenced the mandate of the IATF stated in paragraph 133 of the Addis Agenda:

*The inter-agency task force will report annually on progress in implementing the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the post 2015 development agenda and advise the intergovernmental follow-up thereto on **progress, implementation gaps and recommendations for corrective action**, while taking into consideration the national and regional dimensions.¹*

While much of the report sticks closely to the language used in the Addis Agenda, the mandate calling for “recommendations for corrective action” has enabled the Task Force to make suggestions about ways to address these gaps and strengthen / expedite implementation not only of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also of the overall development financing objectives.

The G77/China and the EU generally expressed appreciation for the work put into the report during the first informal sessions to negotiate an outcome document for the 2017 FfD-Forum. However, beyond praising the report as a “very good basis for the discussions over the coming weeks and at the FfD Forum itself”, and asking for the draft outcome document to be based on the IATF report,² criticisms were raised, especially by delegates speaking on behalf of the developing country groups of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)³ and the African Group.⁴ The G77/China summarized its points by saying “while the report covers what has been done and achieved since Addis, it does not sufficiently highlight the gaps that need further work”.

¹ Paragraph 133, Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, New York, 2015.

http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

² Draft EU intervention at second informal consultations 21 April 2017, cf.

https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdforum/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/05/2ndInformal_Statement-by-EU.pdf

³ Statement by the Republic of the Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States at the Informal Consultations on the Council forum on financing for development follow-up 21 April 2017, cf.

⁴ Statement on behalf of the African Group, cf.

https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdforum/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/04/2ndInformal_Statement-by-AOSIS.pdf

The Group added that, while there is some interesting analysis and concrete recommendations on how to undertake national-level actions on partnerships, it often ignores the specific commitments of the Addis Agenda or provides only general recommendations.”⁵

In a briefing on the 2017 IATF report, the UN representative on the Task Force, described the work of the IATF as “not following up on these clustered areas in depth, but rather working with 50 UN agencies, including some outside agencies like the Financial Stability Board (FSB) and the OECD, to find out what they are doing already and how to monitor these areas”.⁶

CSOs have also provided constructive criticism of the report, noting, for example, that it “mainly maps what has happened since Addis, but it does not map what did not happen”, and suggests “more focus could be placed on the cooperation, joint action elements and individual responsibilities to meet commitments”, and places critical importance on the “catalytic role of public finance”.⁷

Meeting in preparation for the 2017 FfD Forum, Egypt expressed appreciation for the comments received from civil society on the draft IATF report, including those developed by the [Civil Society FfD Group](#), “particularly their comments and recommendations that pertain to Domestic Resource Mobilisation, and on Debt and Debt Sustainability”.⁸

Some of the strongest perspectives expressed by Member States included opposing views on whether or not the IATF report is “comprehensive”⁹ or could “serve as a solid reference for future discussions”. Additionally, some pointed out that it “fails to address the issue of illicit financial flows with the seriousness it deserves”.¹⁰

Thus, it isn’t surprising that there are disagreements about the role attributed to the report when it comes to formulating the outcome document of the FfD Forum as well as the nature and function

⁵ Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China by Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations, at the second informal consultation for the preparation of the draft outcome of the Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up (21 April 2017), cf. https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdforum/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/04/2ndInformal_Statement-by-G77.pdf

⁶ The progress of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (IATF on FFD) in preparing its 2017 report and online annex. New York, 21 November 2016 <http://webtv.un.org/watch/the-progress-of-the-inter-agency-task-force-on-financing-for-development-iatf-on-ffd-in-preparing-its-2017-report-and-online-annex/5219553369001>

⁷ Cf.

https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CSO-FfD-Group-submission_11Apr2017.pdf

⁸ Statement by Egypt Second Informal Consultation for the Preparation of the Draft Outcome of the Forum on Financing for Development Follow-Up New York, 21 April 2017 http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdforum/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/04/2ndInformal_Statement-by-Egypt-1.pdf

⁹ US Statement, FFD Informal, April 21, 2017; cf. https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdforum/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/04/2ndInformal_Statement-by-USA.pdf

¹⁰ Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

of the Forum itself, all begging the questions: **How much impact does the IATF have in shaping the agenda going forward? How much influence should it have? Is it an enabler or a gatekeeper?** In this context, the FfD outcome document's 'requests' for future IATF work will be revealing.

Additional information can be found on the Financing for Development Office webpage (<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/index.html>).