

On 2 November 2020, the Deputy Secretary-General virtually convened 12 representatives from civil society, the President of ECOSOC, the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Jamaica, and the Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Agenda, to a High-Level Civil Society Meeting as part of the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond. The Meeting

and questioned the assumption that public-private partnerships are inherently good. They also noted that public finance should focus on priority sectors including health, education, the environment, and climate.

Participants stressed that COVID-19 has been the “great revealer” which has laid-bare the inequities of our global economic model which have been growing since the implementation of austerity measures in the 1980s. To rectify this, civil society called for the creation of a de-colonial

Emphasizing that the wealth of tech billionaires soared by 41% during this pandemic, while vulnerable groups have disproportionately suffered, civil society also called for technology justice, closing of the digital divide, and for more progressive taxes for tech giants. They also called for a multilateral mechanism to help stakeholders grapple with the governance of emerging technologies and to evaluate their impact on the environment, labor market, livelihoods, and society.

In closing, the Civil Society Meeting resulted in several concrete asks of the United Nations System to advance a new global economic consensus to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and strengthen fiscal and policy space for a socio-economic transformation guided by the interrelated agendas of human rights, gender equality, and climate justice. To achieve this, civil society specifically called for: the creation of a Global Summit on Economic Reform and Reconstruction, a Global Tax Convention, and a Global Fund for Social Protection. It was also suggested that the Discussion Groups should continue to operate year-round to allow civil society to engage on these issues outside of the Financing for Development Forum. Upcoming events, including the Finance in Common Summit and the Paris +5 Summit were cited as opportunities to help implement the options and move the agenda forward.

A second engagement with civil society to discuss these and other issues related to the Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2021.