

Delivering Public Services Demands Global Economic Reform

Conference Ahead of UN Financing for Development Sets the Agenda for Delivering on Fairer Economic Systems

(Seville, 27 June 2025) Following a high-level meeting day ahead of the Finance for Development Conference (FfD4) that will start on 30 June, 11 organisations are calling for states to step up their efforts to increase finance for the realisation of economic and social rights, and the public services essential to their enjoyment. In particular, States should reaffirm their support for a treaty supporting tax cooperation, and for developing a framework for social spending at the November World Social Summit and at COP30.

As States prepare to adopt the outcome document of FfD4, labeled “Compromiso de Sevilla”, that is disappointing in many respects, in particular because it does not tackle systemic issues related to debt, it has become all the more critical to keep on developing new instruments for funding social development and public services, and to reduce economic inequalities.

ActionAid’s Head of Programmes, David Archer, observed ‘The present international debt architecture is rooted in the colonial era and is not fit for purpose. 54 countries today are in a debt crisis and 75% of all lower income countries spend more on servicing their debts than they do on health. The final outcome document from the UN Financing for Development conference fails to address the need for fundamental system change so that countries can sustainably finance public services. Civil society movements must work with Global South member states to urgently pursue the case for a UN Framework Convention on Debt, including at COP30 and through the UN General Assembly’.

The [event](#) that took place today, titled “Financing Public Services: Fulfilling Human Rights and Building a Care Society”, was sponsored by 3 countries, 3 UN agencies, and 18 civil society organisations. It saw the interventions of high-level speakers, including Mónica Colomer, Spain’s Ambassador-at-Large for Financing for Development, and Javiera Toro, Chile’s Social Development Minister, and Professor Sidy Alpha Ndiaye, Minister, Legal Advisor and Deputy Chief of Staff to the President of the Republic of Senegal.

Minister Toro stated: “Today we face a historic crossroads: continue managing scarcity with temporary fixes — placing the burden on the most vulnerable — or build a care-centered society. We choose the latter, guided by an unshakable principle: the economy must serve people, not the other way around.”

Camila B. Maia, Executive Director of the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, stressed the significance of the event. “This event challenged a commonly overlooked assumption: what exactly are we aiming to finance when we talk about financing development? Voices from across the Global South made it clear—we must fund States as key drivers of inclusive and sustainable development, and ensure the protection of rights through free, universal, high-quality public services.”

Nelsy Lizarazo Castro, general coordinator of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) and vice-president of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) stressed: "A collective effort that integrates sustainable financing, strengthened governance, evidence-based evaluation, and fair and inclusive policies is essential, along with clear policies and regulatory frameworks to restrict the advance of privatization".

David Boys, Deputy General Secretary at Public Services International, said: "In this highly unequal world, we have to build the power to challenge the status quo. Unions and NGOs must build alliances in order to get the funds to hire enough workers, treated well, to deliver universal access to quality public services everywhere."

The event was designed to bridge discussions related to financing, which are the focus of FfD4, and on social spending. Participants reflected on importance of combining adequate fiscal measures and spending on public services to build human rights economies and support a just transition to a fossil fuel-free economy. These issues will be the focus of upcoming summits: the [Second World Summit for Social Development](#) and [COP30](#), which will take place in November, and the negotiations for a [United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation](#) that will start in August.

Sylvain Aubry, Deputy Director on Economic Justice and Rights at Human Rights Watch, said, "In the face of major world disruptions, the series of summits taking place this year is a major opportunity for states to build fairer international economic rules in order to build economies that deliver on human rights, which is also the best antidote to authoritarianism."

Anjela Taneja, Oxfam's Public Services Lead said, "Public services are the frontline of justice. Yet, 84 per cent of countries have cut investment in education, health and social protection in the preceding two years. Without bold financing reforms that enable countries to spend enough to enable them to deliver services of the same high quality to all their people, inequality will deepen and democracy will wither. In Seville, governments must choose: uphold the public good, or surrender it to markets."

The event highlighted the critical importance of public services like health care, education, care, and social security to reduce inequalities and realise human rights.

Refat Sabbah, president of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), said: "We urge Member States in FfD4 to make the bold decision to transform the global financial architecture towards addressing inequalities within and between countries and agree on actions to sustainably finance quality public education and services for all."

Angella Kasule Nabwowe, Executive Director Initiative for Social and Economic Rights added: "More than ever, we need bold commitments on tax, debt and climate financing especially now as many countries are grappling with the crisis of major cuts to ODA. Austerity measures are harming the public delivery of education, health care and social protection thus exacerbating poverty and inequality."

Progress towards building a care economy, and a gender-transformative approach to taxation and budgeting are also critical to building fairer societies.

“We need to fundamentally rethink who has a say in public resource decision-making,” said Jennie Grant, Senior Director of International Programs at the International Budget Partnership. “When we center the perspectives and valuable evidence of communities that are marginalized, especially women, we end up with better government decision-making around how to manage public resources. For real progress to happen after Seville, we must ensure that every element of fiscal policy—tax, debt and spending — is made accountable and responsive to the people most affected by these decisions.”

Ana Moreno's, GAC's Technical Secretary, said: “The Global Alliance for Care envisions a society where public services reduce and redistribute care work, helping to close the gap in universal care services. In doing so, they free up the time of women who shoulder most unpaid care, and contribute to the well-being of the diverse people who make up our societies.”

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