

THE THIRD SUMMIT OF PDBS SHOULD PRIORITIZE INVESTING IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO GO BEYOND A JUST RECOVERY AND MOVE TOWARDS BUILDING A JUST, EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD FOR ALL, PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the summit on behalf of civil society. Today over 500 Public Development Banks (PDBs) are gathering here in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, for a third international summit on Finance in Common. In the former two, (2020 in Paris, 2021 in Rome), Civil Society Organizations from different walks of the world signed on statements in part demanding that the development banks recognize and incorporate human rights in their plans and actions, following a “do not harm” obligation and also, positively, assessed for achieving progress in access to fundamental rights for all.

While PDBs in their own words are committing to provide an opportunity to highlight their key role in supporting the transformation of economies and financial systems towards sustainability and addressing the most pressing needs of developing countries and vulnerable groups, that is still far from reality. Unfortunately, what we see is that many PDBs continue to safeguard the interest of the powerful, limit the level of participation of the people and conceal crucial information about their plans and funding decisions that would help to turn good intentions and commitments into concrete actions.

This year’s theme is “Green and Just Transition for a Sustainable Recovery”. This theme is relevant for communities that should be the beneficiaries of investments supported by PDBs, but pragmatically ironical on many aspects as PDBs have a long history and track-record of making investments in the opposite direction that only benefit private interests, corporations that are profit-oriented and that undermine human rights and environmental protection.

Although progress has been made by the Finance in Common to increase the meaningful engagement between PDBs and CSOs, as well as to address critical issues such as the urgency of human rights-based approach to financing for development, it still lacks the adequate means to ensure that concerned communities could play the rightful role as a driving force in providing answers to the global challenges that FIC hopes to address. As a result, civil society and community voices have gotten together for a Finance in Common Shadow Summit to amplify the voices of those who are to be considered also as development experts: human rights defenders, local communities, civil society groups, who will be sharing their perspectives on the key themes addressed at the Summit and explaining how a community-led and human rights approach to development could look like.

With the development finance community claiming it is gathering to discuss the mobilization of financial resources for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, support just economic transitions, fight climate crisis and preserve biodiversity, the world needs convincing changes to former practices. Reaffirming the public character of PDBs, decisive ambitious actions must rely on democratic, transparent, participatory and

inclusive governance mechanisms at all stages at all levels, from local to multilateral. As we talk about FLAGSHIPS, it is essential that PDBs adopt a localization agenda by putting people and communities at the front and the center of the discussions and decisions about their policies, strategies and operations, from financial decision-making to planning, execution and evaluation of development projects.

As the synergic global crises that brought FIC together for the first time have only intensified since then, we, the undersigned civil society organizations, recall and reaffirm the concerns and demands presented by civil society organizations on the occasion of the first two FIC Summits. And once again we call all public development banks to be accountable to public interest at local, national and global level about the concrete efforts to respond to them.

We also call on all PDBs to unlock their full potential as counter-cycle drivers and support public financing for universal, quality public services, which are the foundation of a fair and just society. This will also require shifting away from the austerity narratives and trends of encouraging privatization of public services, including through private-public partnerships, and instead leverage public financing and public governance of public services which are essential for the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to health, education and social protection.

And in this effort, it is vital that PDBs actively contribute to the overcoming of all forms of intersecting and structural inequalities, including by adopting concrete affirmative measures towards gender and racial justice.

We also call on PDBs to mobilize and invest the necessary resources to support the just transition to a more sustainable food system that ensures the human right to adequate food for all. To that end, it is critical that PDBs prioritize investments that favor sustainable and agroecological production by family farmers, rural women, indigenous peoples and other traditional communities.

It is also urgent that PDBs take ambitious, concrete and measurable steps to align their direct and indirect investments with the Paris Agreement, including by ending the finance to fossil fuels and increasing support for a just transition from oil, gas, coal and other false solutions towards renewable and truly sustainable energy sources. PDBs must also recognize that it is not possible to face the climate crisis without stopping financing damaging industries, such as factory farming, and ensure portfolios which are consistent with a pathway of low-greenhouse gas emissions, respect for human rights and sustainable development.

PDBs should act as role models for private investors by promoting genuinely responsible business models which protect and respect human rights, labor rights, and meet the highest standards of due diligence. That includes the adoption of adequate measures to ensure local ownership of all investments to maximize the development impact and keep socio and economic benefits in the country/ communities where the investments are made.

We also call PDBs to adopt and incubate strong human rights principles and frameworks at all stages of their work and to undertake all the necessary measures to put in place strong due diligence procedures, and robust accountability mechanisms that ensures communities and workers the adequate remedies. We encourage PDBs with existing accountability mechanisms to strengthen them with meaningful engage of affected communities in the process, and to support other PDBs with the lessons learned.