



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Statement by the Permanent Observer Hon. Patricia Torsney

Second drafting session for the outcome document of the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development

United Nations
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Co-chairs,

My comments on this process and on Data, Monitoring and Follow up (Section H) draw in part from the Hanoi Declaration that was circulated to all members last week. This Declaration is the outcome of our 132nd Assembly on the theme *The SDGs: turning words into action*, in which over 600 Members of Parliament from 130 countries participated.

The question of how to mobilize financing for development begs the much larger question of what sort of development we believe in.

What we want, is a people-centered sustainable development in the deepest sense that the people are in charge, through their own representatives in parliaments and ultimately through their governments. This means governments *by* the people, *of* the people, and *for* the people, without discrimination, and with the realization of all human rights as the overarching aim.

From this perspective, we welcome the many references throughout the draft to governance, the rule of law, and human rights. Some of these references could be contextualized better and linked more directly to this vision of people-centered development.

This is particularly important given the increasing role that the zero draft attributes to the “private sector” – a rather heterogeneous category that lumps together home-grown microenterprises with more powerful transnational corporations. We appreciate the role of the private sector, where most jobs are created, particularly when it comes to infrastructure investments, technology innovation and the like. Yet, we must be clear about the boundaries between public and private spheres and the limits of “partnership” between the two.

The private sector does not cast a vote at elections. *Citizens* do. The terms of private sector engagement must be clearly set by the governments on behalf of their people.

Put differently, governments and parliaments must be vigilant not to be unduly influenced by private interests of any kind, including corporate interests, and instead make decisions that are clearly for the common good. When it comes to financing for development, governments must be fully empowered to set the rules and the laws that will govern how *all* partners, domestic and international, are to contribute.

The language of partnership in the zero draft could be tightened to make this point clearer. For example, it could make more explicit that governments must retain the authority to regulate capital flows and foreign investments, or enact countercyclical policies as it best fits the interests of their people. It should stress more that partnerships with the corporate sector should conform to human rights standards and *verifiably* lead to the growth of value-added industry and capacities in host countries.

Co-chairs,

The outcome of the Addis Ababa conference will need to articulate a clear role for parliaments, which, regrettably, are not even mentioned in the zero draft.

In all countries, parliaments - as the institution of government most representative of the people - are critical to ensuring *national ownership* and the inclusion of all people in the development process. When this is not the case, it is often because parliaments are not equipped with adequate capacities or are *de facto* constrained in the exercise of their authority. This calls for more donor support to strengthen the institution of parliaments in many countries.

On monitoring and follow up, we see the need for a distinct paragraph recalling the legislative and oversight functions of parliaments. Their oversight role applies to all sources of financing for development, public and private, national and international. Because of the non-binding nature of the Accord, the future of its commitments will depend entirely on how they are translated into national laws and attendant regulations – including the critical budget bill - that are ultimately *enforceable*. Parliaments are key in all this.

As a UN partner, the IPU has endeavored for years to mobilize parliaments behind major UN agreements. It would be tremendously helpful to our efforts to engage parliaments in the implementation of this agreement if they could see themselves reflected in it.

Thank you for your attention.