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Chapeau

Today's world reflects a bleak picture; seemingly devoid of a promising tomorrow, as the phrases "transforming our world and transforming our future" are mere buzzwords in our daily discourse. On one hand we aspire for peace, greener and sustainable economies, dignity and social justice for all transcending discrimination. On the other hand, our actions continue to cultivate political, social and economic, cultural and environmental systems that exacerbate inequalities, injustices, conflict and war. The daily struggles we face, intricately linked to intergenerational development challenges, mirror the enduring failures deeply ingrained in systemic structures over decades.

While the United Nations primary objectives - maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, providing humanitarian aid, supporting sustainable development and climate action and upholding international law are enshrined in the Agenda 2030, the transformational potential of these words do not materialize into tangible actions. Regrettably, the international community creates loopholes to sustain the current status quo primarily benefiting those who wield power. The urgency for change is not in the present; it was yesterday and rights-based reforms are not mere set of recommendations; they represent the only viable path forward.

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

The financing gap for sustainable development is de-facto generated by the architecture of neoliberal globalization and its associated patterns of extractions and dependencies. Repacking financing models that prioritize profit over people, promote privatization at the expense of the full enjoyment of human rights, and increasing debt and dependency only exacerbates our worsened situation.

We need, instead, a profound reform of the international tax, debt and financial architecture under the aegis of the United Nations. This reform could involve establishing a multilateral legal framework that would comprehensively address unsustainable and illegitimate debt, including through extensive debt restructuring and cancellation. Additionally, it could include agreeing on an intergovernmentally negotiated UN Tax Convention to comprehensively address tax havens, tax abuse by multinational corporations and other illicit financial flows, among others[1]. At this critical juncture, there is an urgent need to prioritize achieving maximum development impact and significantly increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA) levels and their effectiveness.

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[1] https://csoforffd.org/2023/06/19/statement-concerns-on-the-summit-for-a-new-global-financing-pact-and-its-governance-and-policy-implications/

This is essential to fulfill long standing commitments and to ensure that the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is well-prepared for the challenges of the future.

Chapter II. International peace and security

Aspirations for international peace and security are lie buried under rubbles in Gaza alongside thousands of children, women and elderly today but also in all other countries where we continue to witness war and conflict. Syria, Sudan, Yemen are no different. Decades-long wars turn into `normal` while the deadlock at the UN- observed by millions- continue to result in loss of lives every single second. The freedom from want and freedom from fear of millions are set aside amid veto power of a handful of countries. The calls for ceasefire by millions protesting are not only overlooked but even worse restricted, violating freedoms of speech and peaceful assembly. In such a context where young generations are considered as the engines of change, unfortunately they cannot think about the future but rather focus on their daily struggles of survival only.

This context of no peace and no security allows those controlling power and the arms trade to profit from war but in turn results in further global problems of displacement and migration. At this stage, securitization of the migration, measures for border control and militarization of aid are no panacea. On the contrary, what we need is to address root causes of conflicts, injustices and inequalities that we see at multidimensional levels. This entails upholding the right to self-determination and ensuring that impunity is not tolerated.

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

Addressing our collective challenges through science, technology, and innovation is no longer a distant utopian vision. The digital transformations and collaborations we witness daily have become a reality for millions. However, it's crucial to recognize that the ongoing digital transition is predominantly led by those who hold power and benefit from digital capitalism. This has resulted in a digital divide where many are left behind due to a lack of knowledge, financial resources, and human capital.

To bridge this gap, the establishment of a global digital compact is imperative. This compact should be grounded in the fundamental right to development, and the multilateral system must extend institutional support to the Global South. This support aims to empower developing countries in acquiring policy frameworks and institutional capacity for the effective and efficient taxation of the digital economy. Additionally, international financial institutions should play a role by providing low-interest funds dedicated to digital infrastructure development in developing countries. This comprehensive approach seeks to ensure that the benefits of digital advancements are shared inclusively across the global community.

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

From MDGs to SDGs decades passed, generations changed but so did our development challenges at economic, political, environmental levels. The intergenerational development challenges we face, demands action, requiring the active engagement of youth and future generations in all policy processes. The aim is not to make decisions about their future but rather to make decisions with them for their present and future. It is evident that today's socio-economic, environmental policies create inequalities and injustices for next generations burdening them

rather than providing relief. These policy choices do not build a future for them but rather borrow from the potential of future generations.

The words[2] of an Arab youth puts the stance of youth crystal clear in front of our eyes: "Is it reasonable for young people who have learned lessons about development, human rights, democracy, and peacebuilding over the past years to regain hope and confidence in these lessons after seeing that these rights only receive attention when influential people are concerned? Are we facing a deception that resembles a modern-day Trojan horse but with different concepts, context, time, and place than before, under agendas, programs, and names that we sometimes accept eagerly and passionately? …The world has unanimously agreed on the SDGs as an international agenda and guiding normative framework to which countries have pledged to implement their commitments. However, does it embody a deception and a distraction to divert the world's attention from national and sovereign concerns, distracting them with development issues?"

Chapter V. Transforming global governance
A starting point for transforming global governance is a genuine reflection and questioning the "leave no one behind" approach. In other words[3] "Does the call to leave no-one behind apply to decision-making, governance and accountability or is it limited to the provision of services? Does this commitment reflect a rights-holder orientation or a consumer/client one?"
"We the peoples" welcomes one that opens the UN Charter. Yet at this stage amid legally binding treaties and voluntary commitments towards development we see lack of trust to the global governance system we have built and we the peoples understanding moving away from international cooperation and collaboration understanding. The call for reform and transforming global governance system is much needed based on a fair and agreed normative framework.

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[2] https://www.annd.org/en/publications/details/integrating-palestinian-youth-into-international-development-efforts-between-reality-and-speculations-tamara-teebi
[3] https://www.2030spotlight.org/sites/default/files/spot2019/Spotlight_Innenteil_2019_web_chapter_I_Adams.pdf