

Important Gains at the Financing for Development Conference in Seville

Roy Culpeper, Past Chair, Group of 78

A vitally important meeting was held in Seville, Spain, from June 30 to July 3 to work toward mobilizing greater resources for developing countries. Organized by the UN, it was the fourth in a series of “financing for development” high-level conferences since the first was convened in 2002 in Mexico. A second was held in Qatar in 2008, and a third in Ethiopia in 2015.

The meeting in Spain coincided with the upheavals in international cooperation triggered by the incoming Trump Administration. Ironically, the withdrawal of the U.S. delegation during the Seville conference facilitated a coming together of the rest of the international community to address the growing challenges posed by the turmoil, including deep cuts to foreign aid programs by the US and other donors.

A report on the conference published by the Carnegie Endowment notes that “the ultimate [outcome] document produced underscores a collective obligation to advance development, rather than a mere bargain between the Global North and South,” representing “a substantive advance both for the Global South and the cause of multilateralism”. It points to four policy areas in which significant gains were made:

- Alleviating sovereign debt burdens
- Increasing trade access
- Expanding public domestic resource mobilization, and
- Support to faltering international development cooperation.

Among other measures, governments once again committed to devote 0.7 percent of their Gross National Income to Official Development Assistance (ODA)—a target that has been sorely neglected in recent years. (Although the Carnegie report does not refer to it, the new target that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members are endorsing—of spending 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product on defence—should reinforce the importance of also meeting the lower target for ODA).

UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, said: “We have agreed on an outcome document — the *Compromiso de Sevilla* — that upholds the commitments from Addis Ababa 10 years ago and seeks to rekindle the sense of hope embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Harnessing finance for development redefined in a disordered world will be a key theme of the upcoming G78 annual conference on October 10, 2025, in Ottawa. The advances made in Seville can and should be built upon by countries, including Canada, and multilateral institutions.

Resources

Read the full Sevilla Outcome Document here:

<https://financing.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/ffd4-documents/2025/Compromiso%20de%20Sevilla%20for%20action%2016%20June.pdf>

Access the Carnegie Endowment article of July 16, 2025 by Minh-Thu Pham here:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/07/sevilla-development-finance-conference-multilateralism?lang=en>

consult Amina Mohammed’s remarks at the conclusion of the Seville conference here: <https://press.un.org/en/2025/dsgsm1986.doc.htm>