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Intervention

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Thematic Focal Point on Tax

FfD Children and Youth Constituency

Major Group on Children and Youth

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High-Level Opening Plenary

Global Youth Conference on Financing for Development (GYCFfD)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Excellencies, Honorable Moderator, distinguished colleagues, and fellow children and youth,

I first would like to thank you for inviting me to address the Opening Plenary of this Conference. It is a tremendous honor to speak on behalf of my constituents of the FfD Youth Constituency, and I do not take this for granted.

With just one day left for the opening of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, children and youth demand a fundamental restructuring of the international financial architecture.

Yet, we as young people lie in this critical crossroad and wonder, are we truly being included as valid stakeholders in FfD4? Are we able to engage meaningfully and effectively?

For the countless children and youth present in Seville and following FfD4 from every corner of the globe, the answer is no.

As the Thematic Focal Point on Tax Cooperation, I should be in Seville today.

Instead, at sixteen years old, I was denied a badge by a minimum age requirement being instituted for FfD4.



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With no consideration of my sectoral expertise, support from an accredited NGO, and my mandate at the FfD Youth Constituency, I was barred, silenced, and ignored. So did the rest of the children all over the world who wanted to voice their rights to participate in this momentous conference.

Excellencies, dear Colleagues, this is not right.

What is the purpose of discussing substantive demands from young people if we are denied access to the very spaces where decisions are made? If we cannot even receive badges or enter the premises, how can we claim that our voices matter?

We demand the immediate removal of arbitrary, unjust, and counterproductive age restrictions that prevent children and youth from participating fully in FfD conferences and preparatory committees. All accredited individuals, regardless of age, must be granted full access to all UN and UN System bodies and events.

Second, we call for a comprehensive overhaul of global tax and debt rules.

We call for robust support for the UN Tax Convention, which must close the loopholes perpetuated by the G20 and OECD, ensuring that all countries—especially those in the Global South—can secure fair and sustainable revenue.

Simultaneously, we demand the establishment of a people-first UN Framework Convention on Debt that enshrines transparent, rights-based processes for resolving debt crises.

Third, we demand a fundamental transformation of the international financing architecture to consider intersectional principles of sustainable development, gender equality, and human dignity.

Financial systems must be redesigned to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable, to address historical injustices, and to ensure that no one is left behind. This transformation must be guided by the voices of those most affected by global inequalities—including children and youth.

Finally, we insist on strengthening domestic public finances as the bedrock of sustainable development.



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Domestic public finance is the foundation upon which sustainable development is built. We call for increased investment in public services, progressive taxation, and mechanisms that ensure accountability and citizen participation in budgetary processes. Only through such reforms can we achieve the SDGs and secure a just future for all.

Distinguished colleagues and fellow youth,

We are here to ensure that FfD4 will not be remembered as yet another conference that left children and youth stakeholders disappointed or excluded.

We refuse to let our voices be silenced or our concerns be neglected in the critical negotiations shaping our shared future.

We will not allow our contributions to be confined to the margins of Seville,

Instead, we stand united and determined.

We will rise, we will speak, and we will persist in our fight for justice, inclusion, and meaningful change, because we must.

Thank you very much.