

## **Women4GlobalFund advocacy messages for the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development.**

The world has entered an era of overlapping and compounding crises that are severely undermining the living conditions and future prospects of its population — especially the poorest and most vulnerable. For gender equality and health, this means a direct and devastating impact on the lives and rights of women and girls in all their diversity, particularly those affected by and living with HIV, TB, and malaria.

Sustainable development is being actively obstructed by the persistent lack of equitable, accessible financing for those most in need — while unprecedented levels of wealth continue to accumulate in the hands of the most privileged. Inequality is deepening. Famine remains widespread. Humanitarian crises recur with increasing frequency. Financial instability persists, economic growth is slowing, and global trade continues to fragment.

This reality is compounded by worsening sovereign debt burdens and regressive, unjust tax systems — both locally and globally — which further diminish the resources available to finance human rights and sustainable development. Public services are under immense strain. Essential healthcare is chronically underfunded. Yet vast concentrations of private wealth remain untouched, protected by a global financial architecture designed to benefit the few at the expense of the many. Today, the richest 10% of the global population control 74% of all wealth, while billions of people face hunger, disease, displacement, and gender-based violence. The world loses US\$492 billion annually to cross-border tax abuse — US\$347.6 billion through corporate tax avoidance and US\$144.8 billion through tax evasion by ultra-wealthy individuals.

At the same time, risks related to climate emergencies, pandemics, and armed conflict are intensifying in the context of an increasingly fragile and fragmented international order. Multilateral cooperation is weakening. Disillusionment with democratic institutions and inclusive governance is growing. This has emboldened regressive political agendas, shrinking civil society space and the negative effects from the gender-backlash challenge women's and girls' rights, oppose migration, reject multilateralism, and encourage authoritarian nationalism. A well-organised and well-resourced gender backlash is gaining momentum, driven by some state actors, religious groups, far-right organisations, and conservative ideologies. Women4GlobalFund, conducted a global consultation to explore how the anti-gender backlash affects gender-transformative health programming focusing on sexual and reproductive rights linked with HIV, TB, and malaria responses. With the Global Fund as a key global financier, this research aimed to understand primary drivers of the backlash against gender in the context of global health, and inform advocacy, ensuring that investments secure

gender-transformative programming. Our results showed that of 259 survey respondents, 63% reported experiencing gender backlash in their countries. The most affected were transgender women (85%), sex workers (82%), women who use drugs (75%), and women living with HIV (65%). Key manifestations include human rights violations (14.4%), increased stigma and discrimination (12.4%), gender-based violence (11.3%), reduced funding for gender-focused programs (10%), restrictive laws (9%), decreased community engagement (8.7%), and harmful cultural norms (8.6%). Other reported impacts include insecurity (7.32%), shrinking civil society space (4.4%), and criminalization (5,19%).

In this context, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) is a decisive moment to reimagine and restructure how development is financed in practice. The world is far off track in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Without urgent, bold action, most of these targets, particularly those related to gender equality and health, will not be achieved by 2030.

As a network of 411 advocates across more than 75 countries, Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) asserts that the health and gender-related SDGs must be achieved without leaving anyone behind. This requires financing approaches that are gender-transformative, inclusive, and responsive to the realities of all women and girls in all of their diversity, especially those affected by and living with HIV, TB, and malaria.

#### **Key message for the FFD4:**

##### **Recognise health and gender equality as foundational to sustainable development.**

The SDGs — including SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) — are not attainable without feminist financing and gender-transformative actions and programmes. Without meaningful and sustained investment in gender equality, health systems, and community-led accountability, the development agenda will remain unfulfilled and off course, thus gender blind.

##### **Integrate women-led and community-led accountability into all development financing.**

These mechanisms are essential to fight the backlash against women's and girls' rights, to uphold participatory governance, and to ensure transparency and effectiveness in both public and private investment for development.

##### **Move beyond outdated development metrics.**

Indicators such as Gross National Income (GNI) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fail to reflect the complexities of intersecting inequalities. International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and donors must

adopt human rights-based, gender-transformative frameworks and metrics that capture the true state of development and guide more equitable allocation of resources.

**Support a fair global financing agenda that tackles tax injustice.** Governments must agree on bold actions to combat tax abuse, evasion, avoidance, and the use of tax havens by ultra-wealthy individuals and multinational corporations. These practices drain public resources that are urgently needed to fund health, human rights, and development for those most vulnerable. #FundHerHealth

**Transform the terms of development financing.** We call for patient, risk-tolerant, and concessional finance, including long-term loan modalities, generous grace periods, below-market interest rates, and significantly increased grant financing, especially for countries in debt-stress.

**Advance global collective responsibility and shared returns.** FfD4 must deliver a concrete commitment to a renewed, inclusive, and representative global financial governance system — one that restores public trust and realigns development financing with the values of justice, equity, and solidarity.

This is a historic opportunity to act. We must replace systems of exclusion, austerity, exploitation and colonialism with financing approaches rooted in solidarity, accountability, and equity connected to human rights, public health, dismantling social drivers of inequalities and gender justice. Global development cannot succeed if it continues to ignore the structural inequalities that leave the most vulnerable and women and girls in all their diversity behind, particularly those affected by and living with HIV, TB and Malaria.

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