



# CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION FINANCE IN COMMON SUMMIT

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, 26-28 FEBRUARY 2025

## INTRODUCTION

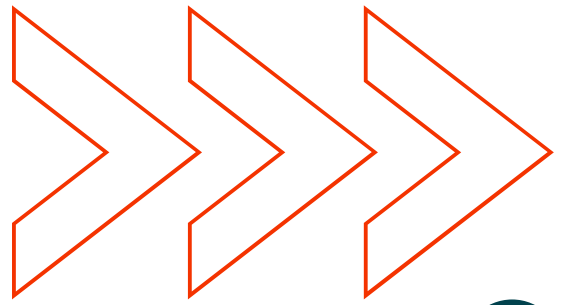
The confluence of rising inequality, debt crises, and the escalating climate emergency demands that Public Development Banks (PDBs) demonstrate genuine leadership in driving just, sustainable development. At this critical juncture, PDBs must move beyond rhetoric and commit to concrete, transformative actions, placing human rights, community leadership, and environmental sustainability at the core of all financing decisions. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) call on PDBs to embrace this responsibility and champion a new era of development finance.

PDBs, as publicly mandated institutions, should serve people, respect planetary boundaries, and ensure long-term benefits for communities and their environments. To achieve these goals, PDBs must uphold transparency, accountability, and meaningful engagement with civil society and communities to foster shared peace, freedom, and prosperity.

While some progress has been made by the Finance in Common (FiC) to increase engagement between PDBs and CSOs and emphasise human rights-based approaches, concerned communities must play their rightful role as a driving force in addressing global challenges. Civil society and community representatives join forces at the [2025 Finance in Common Summit](#) (FiCS) **to amplify the voices of development experts in their own right: human rights defenders, Indigenous Peoples, affected local communities, and other diverse civil society groups and networks, both present at FiCS and engaging remotely, to demonstrate the importance of community-led and human rights approaches in development.**

The need for environmental and social safeguards, backed by international operational and human rights standards, is imperative. As extensions of state policy and actions, PDBs are also accountable under the Extraterritorial Human Rights Obligation principles (ETOs) as outlined in international human rights law. We urge PDBs to ensure that energy transitions and development projects are community-centred, empowering those most affected to shape their future, and context-specific, championing community-led, local solutions and needs.

# CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS



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## Strengthening Civic Space & PDB-CSO Engagement

Civic space continues to shrink globally, with only 40 out of 198 countries currently enjoying an open rating. The enabling environment for civil society continues to deteriorate, with restrictive legal frameworks, repression of human rights defenders, and financial constraints limiting civic engagement. While FiCS has made some progress in fostering dialogue between PDBs and CSOs, critical gaps remain. PDBs must go beyond consultation and meaningfully integrate civil society perspectives in their governance, policies, and project cycles. PDBs have a duty to facilitate inclusive, transparent, and structured engagement with CSOs and affected communities.

In this context, we demand that FiCS immediately implement its commitment to structuring a meaningful, regular, systematic, and strategic dialogue between PDBs and CSOs.

To achieve this, PDBs must:

- **Establish and launch a FiCS PDB-CSO Coalition** at a global conference between PDBs and CSOs by the end of 2025 to institutionalise engagement, share best practices, and co-create solutions.
- **Ensure formal CSO engagement mechanisms at headquarters, country, and project levels** to align investment strategies with community needs and strengthen governance, accountability, transparency, and decision-making in PDB-funded projects.
- **Develop multi-stakeholder dialogues and institutionalised CSO engagement mechanisms**, including tripartite committees or councils, ensuring structured participation at each stage of the project or investment cycle (from selection to implementation and evaluation).
- **Leverage digital technologies** to complement CSO consultations and expand citizen engagement in financial decision-making.
- **Promote and actively support an enabling environment for civil society** by systematically incorporating civic space, human rights, and gender-transformative approaches into PDBs' decision-making at local, national, regional, and global levels.
- Ensure that PDBs, their investment partners, and investees **fully respect and protect civic space**, placing the interests and needs of local communities at the centre of decision-making.
- **Support freedom of expression and assembly**, ensuring that PDBs' activities do not contribute to repression or harm to human rights defenders.
- **Establish robust accountability mechanisms** that enable community members to assert expectations, file grievances, and meaningfully engage with project details, ensuring accessible, effective remedies for those impacted.

## Upholding Human Rights & Community-Led Development

**Respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights must be a fundamental principle guiding all PDB operations.** As publicly funded institutions, PDBs have a duty to ensure that their projects do not contribute to human rights violations but rather support the realisation of economic, social, and cultural rights for all. Tragically, large-scale infrastructure and development projects financed by PDBs have too often led to forced displacement, environmental degradation, and the repression of human rights defenders advocating for their communities. Stronger accountability mechanisms, greater transparency, and direct involvement of affected communities are necessary to ensure PDB investments advance sustainable, rights-based development.

PDBs must ensure that human rights are at the heart of their operations, from project conception to evaluation.

To achieve this, PDBs must:

- **Recognise and incorporate the international human rights framework** in their strategies, plans, and actions, following “do no harm” principles.
- **Ensure that Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)** is rigorously obtained for Indigenous Peoples, marginalised groups, and affected local communities before any development projects are approved and implemented.
- **Prioritise community leadership and ownership** in decision-making processes to ensure that development projects align with local needs, respect cultural heritage, and promote long-term social and economic benefits.
- **Establish and strengthen independent grievance mechanisms** that are transparent, accessible, and free from political interference, ensuring that affected communities can seek effective redress without fear of retaliation.
- **Enforce mandatory human rights due diligence and impact assessments** at every stage of project design, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that all investments align with international human rights standards and do not exacerbate inequalities or social harms.
- **Establish clear protocols for reporting threats and violence against human rights defenders**, and ensure that these reports are investigated promptly and impartially. PDBs must create and enforce mechanisms that allow defenders to safely report concerns.
- **Enhance financial transparency and accountability** by disclosing all PDB-supported financial flows, project risks, and mitigation plans to ensure communities can monitor and engage in the decision-making process.

## Development Finance: A Call for Fundamental Reform

The current global financial architecture is failing to address the structural causes of poverty, inequality, and the climate crisis. It perpetuates a system that benefits wealthy nations at the expense of the global majority, hindering their ability to achieve sustainable development goals and respect human rights. This system is characterised by insufficient public finance, crippling debt burdens, massive tax avoidance and illicit financial flows, and neoliberal policies that prioritise profit over people and the planet. Fundamental reforms are urgently needed to create a fair and equitable global economic order. Public Development Banks (PDBs), with National Development Banks (NDBs) at their core, must play a leading role in mobilising public finance for transformative change. This requires a shift away from extractive neoliberal policies towards a renewed global financing framework that prioritises human rights, environmental sustainability, and locally led development.

To achieve this, PDBs must:

- **Champion a Renewed Global Financing Framework:** PDBs should actively support a renewed global financing framework as outlined in the Civil Society [FfD4 mechanism recommendations](#). This includes:
  - Significantly scaling up public funding for development, particularly from developed countries and those benefiting from globalisation.
  - Increasing grant-based financing to alleviate debt burdens and support public services, prioritising women, marginalised communities and civil society.
  - Reforming multilateral development banks (MDBs) to enhance financial capacity, review governance structures and mandates, and commit to locally led development.
  - Regulating blended finance to ensure sustainable impact and adherence to social and development standards.
  - Eliminating International Monetary Fund (IMF) surcharges.



- **Facilitate Debt Cancellation and Restructuring:** International PDBs must support debt cancellation and restructuring for countries with unsustainable debt burdens. PDBs should reject the Common Framework and advocate for a UN framework convention on sovereign debt to democratise the debt process. All lending policies must prioritise human rights and environmental protection.
- **Center National Development Priorities:** PDB investments must align with individual countries' development strategies. This requires:
  - Adopting a locally led development approach, reforming decision-making processes, and working directly with NDBs.
  - Aligning investments with national development plans and strategies, such as Integrated National Financing Frameworks.
  - Strengthening local capital markets and institutions by providing technical assistance and access to affordable financing for local businesses.
  - Respecting national sovereignty through local currency lending and addressing credit rating distortions.
  - Prioritising local actors to ensure investments strengthen sustainable local economic development.
  - Modelling sustainable and responsible investing practices, placing SDGs at the core of MDBs and NDBs. This includes shifting away from harmful practices like industrial agriculture, promoting care economies, supporting the transition to renewable energy, and building resilient local economies.
- **Cease Investments in For-Profit Healthcare and Education:** PDBs must immediately stop funding for-profit private healthcare and education thus driving privatisation and commercialisation of essential public goods. They should:
  - End all new funding for commercial private healthcare and education, including investments through intermediaries.
  - Launch an independent evaluation of past and current healthcare and education investments, focusing on their impact on inequality, poverty, gender, and human rights.
  - Commit to redressing any harm caused by these investments.



## Climate Finance: A Call for Just Transition

**Climate finance must be a tool for a just and sustainable future, not a mechanism that perpetuates inequality and environmental destruction.** Public Development Banks (PDBs) have a crucial role to play in shaping climate finance flows and championing a just transition based on the principles of "polluter pays" and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). The current system often reinforces inequalities through debt cycles and exclusion of communities from decision-making. Fair, concessional, and equitable climate finance is essential to address the climate crisis, uplift communities, and create a pathway for justice-based development. This requires a shift away from the growth-led development model towards a sustainable and equitable socio-economic paradigm, including recognising the right to remedy and reparations for affected communities. A just transition must also provide access to electricity and resources for historically excluded communities. PDBs must establish a transformative approach to just transition with clear investment criteria and accountability mechanisms.

To achieve this, PDBs must:

- **Phase Out Fossil Fuel Projects and Exclude False Solutions:** PDBs must immediately commit to a timeline for ending all direct and indirect financing of existing and future fossil fuel projects, including fossil gas and false solutions. They should adopt a renewables-only energy taxonomy that promotes sustainable and inclusive renewable energy technologies, excluding damaging technologies and false solutions, including but not limited to large-scale hydropower, waste-to-energy, industrial biofuels, Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS), hydrogen-ready fossil gas infrastructure, and carbon markets. PDBs must support countries in developing and implementing ambitious, just and inclusive energy transition plans, phasing out fossil fuels while enhancing economic development through diverse renewable energy systems. Critically, PDBs must uphold international human rights law, ensuring their resources promote human rights and climate justice, including the right to remedy and reparations for affected communities. PDBs that have contributed to destructive energy infrastructure must support decommissioning plans in consultation with affected communities, contribute to remediation, and provide reparations.



- **Support a Just, Renewable Energy Transition:** PDBs must redirect fossil fuel finance to support a just, renewable energy transition, aligned with principles of transparency, accountability, community-led solutions, human rights, and gender equality. This includes strategic investments in care economies, recognising undervalued care work and women's role in environmental stewardship. Grant-based climate finance for renewable energy is crucial to prevent exacerbating debt burdens. PDBs should develop just transition indicators to ensure projects deliver development benefits, including for women, youth, decent work, agriculture, local businesses, health, and education. Mandatory community involvement in all project phases is essential. Finance must be accessible locally for diverse, decentralised energy systems, and for renewable energy technology and knowledge transfer. All PDB-funded projects require strengthened safeguards and social/environmental accountability, with recourse to remedy for affected communities. This includes access to effective and impartial grievance mechanisms, legal representation, and appropriate compensation for damages.
- **Support Climate Mitigation and Adaptation:** PDBs must redirect fossil fuel finance to support climate mitigation and adaptation measures in countries particularly vulnerable to escalating climate disasters, based on the principles of "polluter pays" and CBDR-RC. Clear separation of funding streams for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and climate mitigation/adaptation/loss and damage is essential to ensure equitable climate finance and eliminate double counting.
- **Promote Sustainable Food Systems:** PDBs must phase out finance for intensive livestock production and instead finance sustainable food systems, especially agroecological practices. All agricultural investments should support diversified, agroecological farming systems and sustainable food businesses that bolster food security, farmer livelihoods, biodiversity, health, nutrition, and ecosystem services.





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This declaration, available in **English, French, Spanish and Portuguese**, represents a **unified call to action for PDBs to prioritise people, planet, and justice in all financing decisions.** We demand accountability, transparency, and meaningful partnership with communities to ensure a just and sustainable future for all.



[Find the full list of civil society signatories](#)

[Sign the 2025 CSO Declaration](#)





# LIST OF SIGNATORIES

THIS LIST WILL BE UPDATED DAILY UNTIL FEBRUARY 28, 2025

ABONG - Associação Brasileira de Organizações Não-Governamentais, Brazil  
Accountability Counsel, Global  
Action 237-Suisse, Switzerland  
Action Education, France  
African Climate Reality Project, South Africa  
African Resources Watch (AFREWATCH), Democratic Republic of Congo  
Agrisud International, France  
AidWatch Canada, Canada  
AJESH, Cameroon  
Alliance of NPO Networks (ANNET), South Africa  
ALTSEAN-Burma, Burma/Myanmar  
AOI (Aide Odontologique Internationale), France  
ARAB PLATFORM for RENEWABLE ENERGIES & ENERGY EFFICIENCY, Tunisia  
Asia Development Alliance, Asia  
AsiaDHRRRA, Philippines  
Association CACAO POUR LA PAIX, France  
Association for Progressive Communications, South Africa  
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development, India  
Association Habitat Cité, France  
AwazCDS/Pakistan Development Alliance, Pakistan  
Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication, Bangladesh  
Bantay Kita - Publish What You Pay Philippines, Philippines  
BATIK International, France  
Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan  
Bond, United Kingdom  
Bahuuday Lok Seva Sansthan, India  
Budget Advocacy Network (BAN), Sierra Leone  
Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO), Uganda  
Cadre de Concertation des Réseaux d'Organisations de la Société civile, Congo-Brazzaville  
CAFSSO-WRAG for Development, Nigeria  
CAGF, France  
Carolina eco green economy, South Africa  
CEE Bankwatch Network, Czechia  
Centre de Defense des Droits de l'Homme et Démocratie (CDHD), Democratic Republic of Congo  
Centre for Human Rights and Development, Mongolia

Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg, South Africa  
CFSI Comité français pour la solidarité internationale, France  
Chaine de l'espoir, France  
CHD, France  
Christian Aid, United Kingdom  
CIEDEL, France  
CIONGCA - Conseil Inter ONG de Centrafrique, Central African Republic  
Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development, Nigeria  
Climate Finance Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (GFLAC), Mexico  
Club des Africains de Bretagne, France  
Coalition Femme-Paix-Sécurité (COFEPAX), Burkina Faso  
CODE-NGO - Caucus of Development NGO Networks, Philippines  
Collectif des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale issues des Migrations de la Région Bretagne (COSIM Bretagne), France  
Commerce Equitable France, France  
Committee for Peace and Development Advocacy, COPDA, Inc., Liberia  
COMPPART Foundation for Justice and Peacebuilding, Nigeria  
CONSEIL NATIONAL DES ONG DE DEVELOPPEMENT, CNONGD, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Coordination SUD, France  
Creation of unity and development, South Africa  
CRID, France  
CSVVDH, Mauritania  
DECA, Equipo Pueblo, Mexico  
Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Peru  
Development Initiative for Community Impact, Nigeria  
Development Service Exchange, Solomon Islands  
Dignity Initiative, Nepal  
Director, Universal Rights Network, Australia  
Ecoactivist, Kazakhstan  
Economic Justice Network of FOCCISA, South Africa  
Economic Justice Network Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone  
ECPAT France, France  
Ecolur Informational NGO, Armenia  
Egyptian Association for Comprehensive Development, Egypt  
Engagé·e·s & Déterminé·e·s (E&D), France  
Entrepreneurs du Monde, France  
Entrepreneurship Initiative for African Youth (EIFAY Africa), Nigeria  
Equipop, France - Sénégal - Burkina Faso  
ESSOR, France  
Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation, Estonia  
European Network on Debt and Development - Eurodad, Europe

Experts-Solidaires, France  
Fédération Congolaise du Commerce Equitable (FECOCE RDC), Democratic Republic of Congo  
FIAN, Sri Lanka  
FIDH, France  
Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, Finland  
FOCSIV Italian Federation Christian NGOs, Italy  
Fondation Danielle Mitterrand, France  
FONGA, Angola  
Forus, Global  
Friends of the Earth U.S., USA  
Fundación CAUCE: Cultura Ambiental - Causa Ecologista, Argentina  
Fundeps, Argentina  
GAPID, Mali  
Geres, France  
Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR), Global  
Globe International Center, Mongolia  
Green Advocates International, Liberia  
Green Development Advocates, Cameroon  
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Groupe initiatives, France  
GROUPE SOS, France  
Habitat-Cité, France  
HIMAYA DAEEM AATAA, Lebanon  
HRC RIGHT TO INFORMATION TRUST, India  
Ikhaya Lothando Care for the Aged, South Africa  
INDICEP - Instituto de Investigación Cultural para Educación Popular, Bolivia  
Indonesia for Global Justice, Indonesia  
Iniciativas para el Desarrollo de la Mujer Oaxaqueña (IDEMO), Mexico  
Initiative Développement, France  
Initiatives for Safe Migration and Social Justice, Nigeria  
Innoeva Development Foundation, Nigeria  
International Accountability Project, Global  
International Rivers, Global  
International Service for Human Rights, Switzerland  
ISIZIBA Community Based Organizations of South Africa NPC, South Africa  
IYAFP, Global  
Jamaa Resource Initiatives, Kenya  
Jawahar Jyoti Bal Vikas Kendra, India  
JOINT Liga de ONGs em Mocambique, Mozambique

L'Appel, France  
La Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Desarrollo, Spain  
La vouête nubienne, France  
Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP), Nepal  
Lumière Synergie pour le Développement (LSD), Senegal  
Middelburg Environmental Justice Network (MEJN), South Africa  
Migrations & Développement, France  
Mining host communities in crisis network, South Africa  
Mongolian CSOs Network for Sustainable Development, Mongolia  
Mouvement pour la Defense de l'Humanité et l'Abolition de la Torture (MDHAT), Cameroon  
MY World Mexico, Mexico  
Murna foundation, Nigeria  
Nareto Latia Indigenous Peoples' Program, Kenya  
Nash Vek PF, Kyrgyzstan  
National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal, Nepal  
National Senior Citizens Organization of Liberia, Liberia  
Natural Justice, Africa  
NGO Federation of Nepal, Nepal  
Nigeria Network of NGOs, Nigeria  
Noakhali Rural Development Society - NRDS, Bangladesh  
OBA Global Citizens, Nigeria  
Oil Workers' Rights Protection Organization Public Union, Azerbaijan  
ONG CACAO POUR LA PAIX, Democratic Republic of Congo  
ONG Humatem, France  
Orthodox Archbishopric of Zimbabwe and Angola, Zimbabwe  
Oyu Tolgoi Watch, Mongolia  
Pakistan Development Alliance, Pakistan  
Pakistan NGOs Forum, Pakistan  
Pamoja Earth Care, Kenya  
Participatory Research & Action Network- PRAAN, Bangladesh  
PFNOSCM - Plateforme Nationale des Organisations de la Société Civile de Madagascar, Madagascar  
Plateforme des Droits Humains, France  
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Recourse, Uganda  
Recourse, Belgium  
Rencontre pour la Paix et les Droits de l'Homme (RPDH), Democratic Republic of Congo

REPONGAC - Réseau des Plate-formes des ONG de l'Afrique Centrale, Central Africa  
Ritimo, France  
Rivers without Boundaries Coalition, Mongolia  
ROTAB, Niger  
Rural Reconstruction Nepal- RRN, Nepal  
Sahas sewa sansthan, India  
Santé Sud, France  
Sayanaa Wellbeing Association, Mongolia  
SCMAC, South Africa  
Searchlight Development Action Cameroon, Cameroon  
Seinoli Legal Centre, Lesotho  
Sinergia Animal, Global  
Society for Gender Justice, Zambia  
SSDC, Nepal  
Stop Financing Factory Farming (S3F) Coalition, Global  
SUKITA TZ, Tanzania  
SWATI, India  
SWB NGO, Mongolia  
Tetraktys, France  
The Bretton Woods Project, United Kingdom  
The Kenya Human Rights Commission, Kenya  
The New Environmental Justice Solutions, South Africa  
Touiza Solidarité, France  
TRAFFED -RDC asbl, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Triangle Génération Humanitaire, France  
Tshwaraganang Ma-Africa, South Africa  
Uganda Consortium on Corporate Accountability, Uganda  
Uganda Peace Foundation, Uganda  
UNASCAD (Union des Amis Socio Culturels d'Action en Developpement), Haiti  
UNITAS, Bolivia  
Uzbek Forum for Human Rights, Germany/Uzbekistan  
VANI - Voluntary Action Network India, India  
Village Farmers Initiative (VFI), Nigeria  
Waterberg Women Advocacy Organisation, South Africa  
Women and Youth Advancement Inc. (WOYA), US  
World For World Organization (WFWO), Italy  
Zimbabwe People's Land Rights Movement, Zimbabwe



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