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FORUS POST-2030 VISION PAPER

APRIL 2026



THE VISION: WHAT WE DEFEND,
DEMAND AND DECLINE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With 2030 rapidly approaching, the global debate is increasingly shifting towards what should follow the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While formal negotiations are expected to begin at the 2027 SDG Summit, informal talks around agenda-setting, coalition-building and political positioning are already underway. These discussions are unfolding in a far more volatile context than the one that enabled the adoption of the SDGs in 2015: geopolitical fragmentation is deepening, civic space is shrinking, development finance is under growing strain, and support for multilateralism and universal norms is increasingly contested.



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→ **24,000**

This paper was developed in partnership with Forus members from across the network representing over 24,000 NGOs.

→ **3**

Presenting three scenarios for how the post-2030 process may evolve

FOR FORUS, THE COMING YEARS REPRESENT A STRATEGIC WINDOW TO INFLUENCE NOT ONLY THE SUBSTANCE OF THE POST-2030 AGENDA, BUT ALSO THE RULES OF THE PROCESS – INCLUDING WHO PARTICIPATES, HOW ACCOUNTABILITY IS STRUCTURED, AND WHAT FINANCING PRINCIPLES UNDERPIN DELIVERY. THIS VISION PAPER SETS OUT FORUS’ COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES FOR SHAPING THE POST-2030 AGENDA.

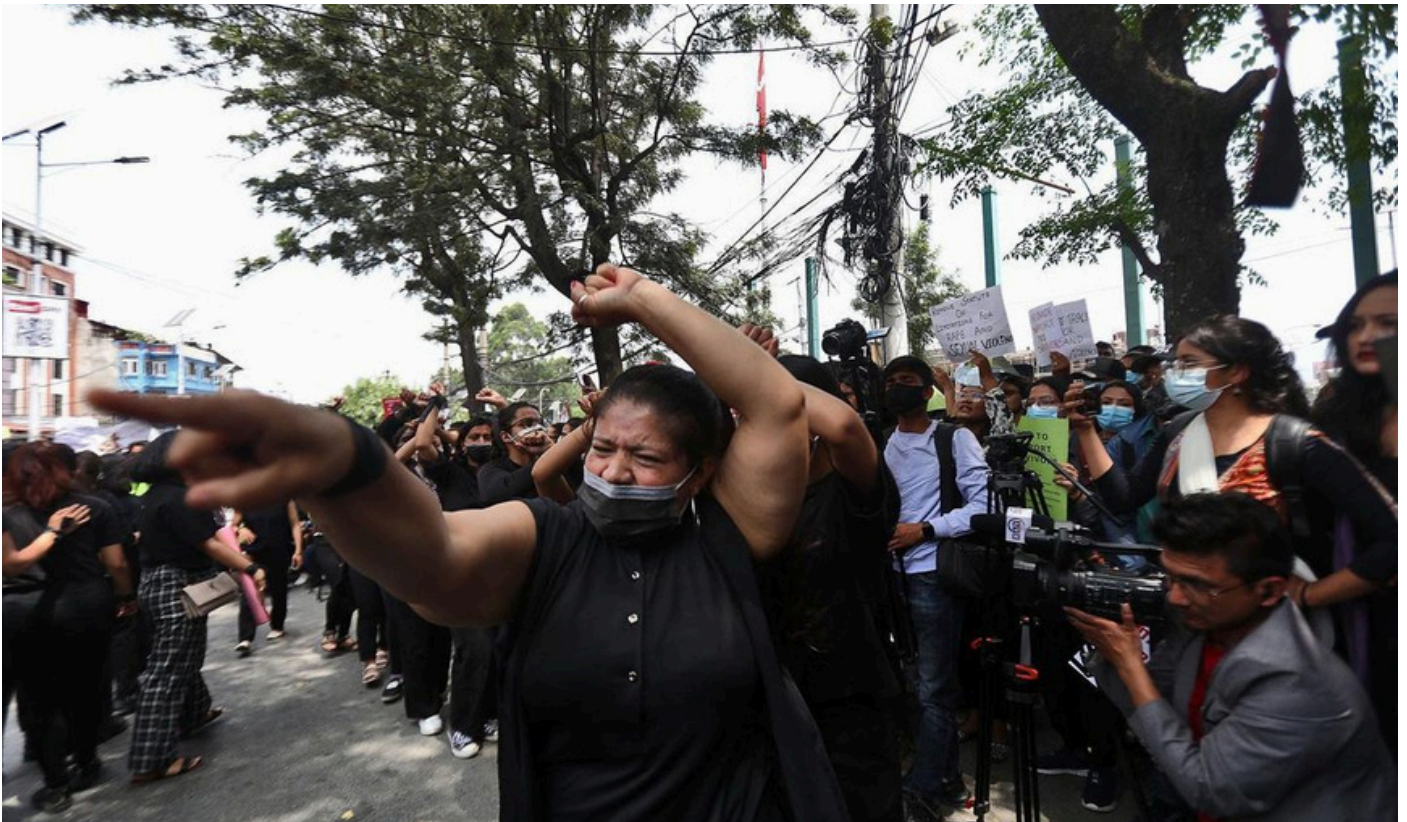


➔ IT IS NOT ONLY ABOUT WHAT MAY COME AFTER THE SDGS, BUT ABOUT WHAT MUST BE DEFENDED, WHAT MUST BE CORRECTED, AND WHAT MUST NOT BE LOST.

FORUS WILL DEFEND THE UNIVERSAL AND RIGHTS-BASED PROMISE OF THE SDGS, PUSH FOR A FRAMEWORK THAT ADDRESSES THEIR MAJOR SHORTCOMINGS – ESPECIALLY ON FINANCING, ACCOUNTABILITY, LOCALISATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION – AND RESIST ANY ATTEMPT TO DILUTE CORE COMMITMENTS FOR POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY.

➔ THE PAPER IDENTIFIES THREE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR HOW THE POST-2030 PROCESS MAY EVOLVE – (CONTINUITY), (RESET) AND (FRAGMENTATION).





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→ Scenarios

The paper identifies three possible scenarios for how the post-2030 process may evolve — continuity, reset and fragmentation — and proposes an approach that remains relevant across all three, while recognising continuity as the most likely baseline and fragmentation as a constant risk.

This approach, however, should not prevent civil society from articulating a more ambitious agenda. Even amid constrained political conditions, forward-looking proposals can shape narrative, open political space and lay the ground for future, deeper reforms, in particular on financing and long-standing structural inequalities.

→ Forus' position

Forus' position is clear: the post-2030 process must not become a vehicle for lowering ambition, weakening rights or shrinking accountability. It must be an opportunity to correct the implementation, financing and participation gaps that have limited the SDGs, while defending their universal and transformative promise.

This Vision Paper has been developed in close consultation with the Forus network as a whole, as well as development experts from the UN, civil society, academia, think-tanks and philanthropy. It reflects regional nuances and a diversity of perspectives, while setting out a way forward that is globally relevant.

THE VISION: WHAT WE DEFEND, DEMAND AND DECLINE

Overall Vision

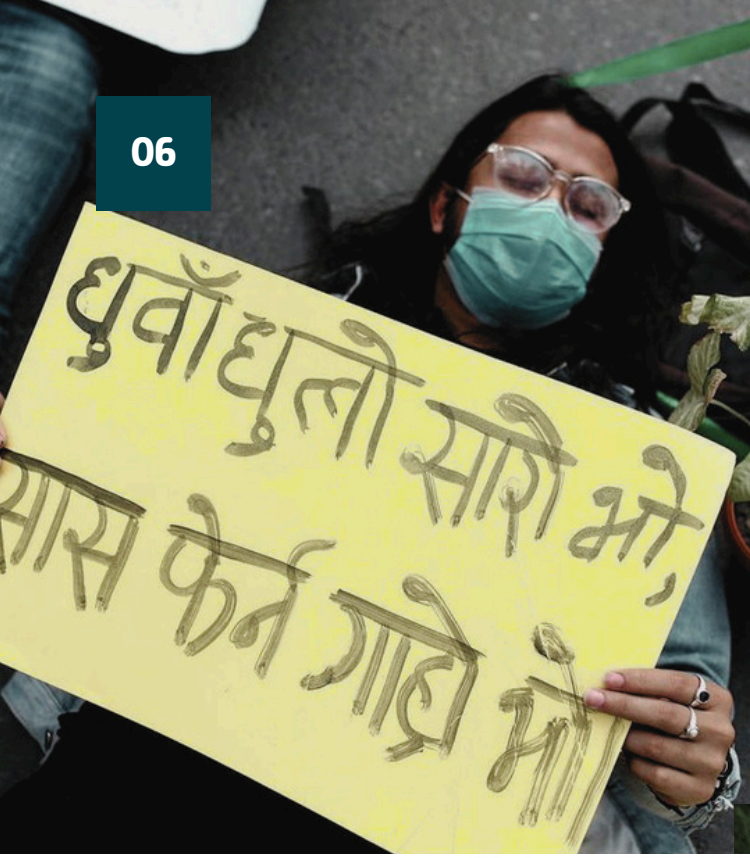
An ambitious post-2030 global development framework rooted in human rights, universality and justice; responsive to today's interconnected crises; backed by credible financing and accountability; and shaped through meaningful civil society participation, with greater power for local actors.

The future framework must therefore preserve the universal and rights-based promise of the SDGs while addressing the weaknesses that limited their implementation. It should place financing reform, accountability, civic space and localisation much more centrally, and ensure that civil society can participate meaningfully and safely in both shaping and monitoring the agenda.

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"[There is a need to] take stock of what is working, why and where."



WHAT WE DEFEND



- The normative gains of the SDG era, including the recognition that sustainable development must integrate social justice, equality, environmental sustainability, peace and human rights.



- Civic space as a public good and an enabling condition for participation, accountability and implementation.



- A universal and rights-based global development agenda that leaves no one behind and protects the dignity, agency and rights of those most exposed to poverty, exclusion, discrimination and crisis.



- A strong and effective multilateral system capable of coordinating collective responses to global challenges and upholding international commitments.



- Local leadership, with real resources, recognition and decision-making power for those actors closest to communities and most directly engaged in delivering change.



WHAT WE DEMAND



- A post-2030 framework that preserves the universal ambition of the SDGs while correcting their major weaknesses — especially on financing, accountability, localisation and implementation.



- A formalised, meaningful and safe role for civil society in both negotiation and implementation, with particular attention to the participation of local actors and groups facing political or structural exclusion.



- A framework better equipped to respond to today's realities, including climate breakdown, democratic erosion, inequality, conflict, and the risks and opportunities created by emerging technologies.



- Financing reform at the centre of the framework, including debt restructuring and relief, more equitable lending terms, increased concessional finance, stronger domestic resource mobilisation, tax justice, policy coherence, and predictable support for civil society.



- A framework that reflects differentiated responsibilities and universal obligations, including the need for high-income countries to transform unsustainable economic, financial and development models and to strengthen policy coherence at home as well as internationally.



- Stronger accountability through mandatory, transparent and regular reporting and review, with independent oversight and a formal role for civil society and local actors in monitoring progress and identifying implementation gaps.

A CREDIBLE POST-2030 AGENDA MUST THEREFORE PRESERVE UNIVERSALITY AND THE COMMITMENT TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND; ADDRESS STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES; PLACE FINANCING REFORM AT THE HEART OF IMPLEMENTATION; STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH MANDATORY, TRANSPARENT AND REGULAR REPORTING AND REVIEW, WITH INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT AND A FORMAL ROLE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND LOCAL ACTORS; PROTECT CIVIC SPACE AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION.



→ **AND RECOGNISE LOCALISATION, PEACE, RIGHTS AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AS ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**



→ WHAT WE DECLINE

- A watered-down framework that sacrifices universality, a rights-based approach, gender equality, civic freedoms or climate ambition for the sake of political expediency.



- Accountability mechanisms that remain voluntary, selective or performative, without meaningful follow-up, transparency or correction.



- Development governance that expands the role of private or philanthropic actors without clear public-interest safeguards, democratic oversight and accountability.



- The continuation of a financial status quo in which unjust debt arrangements, unequal fiscal space and weak financing commitments undermine implementation and deepen inequality.



- Tokenistic inclusion that brings civil society or local actors into high-level spaces for appearance's sake while excluding them from agenda-setting, decision-making and follow-through.

INTRODUCTION



©Forus members Power Mapping

The post-2030 agenda will be negotiated in a fundamentally different environment from the one that shaped the SDGs in 2015. Geopolitical tensions are rising, armed conflicts are intensifying, and international cooperation is increasingly shaped by transactional politics rather than shared norms or solidarity. The global institutions and legal frameworks that have long underpinned international cooperation are under strain. At the same time, many governments are openly hostile to the core principles that should anchor any future framework, including human rights, gender equality, civic freedoms, the protection of minorities, and action on the climate crisis. The SDGs themselves have been swept up in these “culture wars”, with public support for global development under pressure in many contexts, often shaped by rising cost-of-living concerns, economic insecurity, and the politicisation of international cooperation. There is a real risk that even if a new framework is secured, it will amount to a diluted version of the SDGs that erodes ambition, accountability and inclusion.

Civil society will also enter negotiations in a much-diminished position compared to 2015. Civic space has shrunk alarmingly over the past decade, amid rising authoritarianism and state repression in both the Global South and North, often relying on legislation and bureaucratic impediments. A sharp reduction in funding – through ODA or other channels - has also significantly reduced many development organisations’ capacity to both operate and advocate. At the same time, civil society is increasingly shut out of global forums, in sharp contrast to the inclusiveness and transparency that defined the SDG negotiation process. Against this background, the United Nations is facing both a financial crisis that threatens its capacity to operate, and a legitimacy crisis that could undermine its role as the likely arbiter of the post-2030 negotiations.

In this context, a united and forceful civil society voice is crucial to ensure that a new, post-SDG framework is not only adopted, but remains ambitious, inclusive, relevant and consensual.

©Both Nomads/Forus - Environmental activist Zeinab Moukalled in Arab Salim, Lebanon

BACKGROUND: THE POST-2030 CONTEXT

This section examines the broader, global trends that will shape the post-2030 negotiations, drawing on inputs from consultations with Forus members and other stakeholders at a global and regional level. For a more in-depth look at the political, financial and civic context, and Forus' analysis of how scenarios could unfold, see the Political & Scenario Mapping Report (Annex II).

Geopolitical fissures and norms under threat

The global political environment is increasingly marked by tension and uncertainty. Conflict and humanitarian crises have increased in recent years, while becoming longer and more protracted. Inter-state relations are increasingly transactional, with less emphasis on the international law and institutions – no matter how flawed – that have underpinned the global order over the past decades. The UN is also facing what amounts to an existential crisis. Its operational capacity has been strained to breaking point by a liquidity crisis, while reform debates (including the contested UN80 process) and the election of a new Secretary-General is adding to a sense of uncertainty – and broader questions over the UN's legitimacy. In this context, there are serious questions over the UN's capacity to shepherd a successful negotiation process for a new global development agenda. Beyond these tensions, the norms that have underpinned the global development agenda are increasingly under assault. Many governments, in both the Global South and North, are openly hostile to ideas around universality, including around human rights, gender equality and identity, the climate crisis, and civic participation. At both global and national level, the SDGs are increasingly becoming part of the "culture wars".

These developments have fundamentally undermined the global consensus around development, and the spirit of cooperation, that allowed the SDGs to be adopted. As one commentator put it, there is a sense "that the high-water mark of multilateralism was the agreement of 193 countries to the SDGs in 2015, a moment that, by 2026, feels like it belongs to another era."¹ The erosion of respect for international law and multilateral norms is not separate from the development crisis; it directly undermines the conditions for peace, rights protection, accountability and shared global action. In this context, there is a real risk that continuity becomes dilution: a thinner, weaker framework that preserves the appearance of consensus while eroding ambition, accountability and inclusion. Forus – and civil society as a whole – has a critical role to play in defending not only the substance of a future framework, but also the political conditions that would enable it.



©Forus Journalism Programme Fellow - Sanjog Manadhar, Gen Z protests in Nepal

Weakened civil society

Several overlapping trends have contributed to undermining civil society compared to the pre-2015 period. Most notably, civic space has reduced sharply amid a rise in authoritarianism and the erosion of democratic institutions. Civil society in both the Global North and South is increasingly facing a double-edged sword: on the one hand, openly repressive tactics including arbitrary arrests, harassment, threats or even killings; and on the other, a more sophisticated form of repression, relying on legislation or bureaucratic impediments to restrict both activities and funding flows.² Forus members in both the Global South and North highlighted how they are facing a more restrictive operating environment, although with regional nuances.³

Similarly, the sweeping foreign aid cuts imposed by many traditional donors since at least 2024 have had a devastating effect on civil society, in particular in the Global South. Global ODA is projected to have dropped by as much as 17% in 2025 – this comes on top of reduction by 9% in 2024.⁴ This abrupt drop in funding has impacted not just the capacity of Forus and its members to programme and deliver development solutions, but also to advocate forcefully. As the official post-2030 negotiations approach, fewer civil society actors will have the resources and protection to engage — increasing the risk that the process is shaped by a narrower set of interests.

1. Andrew Sherriff, "Europe and the post-2030 agenda: A call for action", for ECPDM, 14 January 2025, available at: <https://ecdpm.org/work/europe-and-post-2030-agenda-call-action>

2. According to CIVICUS, civic freedoms were being curtailed at unprecedented intensity in 2025, with civil society "under severe attack" in 122 of 198 countries and territories globally, https://monitor.civicus.org/globalfindings_2025/

3. See regional consultation summary in Annex X.

4. OECD, "Cuts in official development assistance: OECD projections for 2025 and the near term", 26 June 2025, available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/06/cuts-in-official-development-assistance_e161f0c5/full-report.html

©Forus at the Financing for Development Conference in Sevilla



“Civil society is in a different place from last time, [when it] was riding high in 2012. If civil society groups want to engage and have a role, they need to approach in a very different way.”

At the same time, a trend towards less inclusive international forums has marginalised civil society on the global stage. Recent high-level events, such as the Summit of the Future, have been marked by relatively limited space for NGOs and restrictive information sharing. This is in stark contrast to the SDG negotiations, where civil society had a formalised and influential role, and the process was defined by openness.

As the post-2030 process approaches, civil society will be expected to do more with less. This makes it all the more important for Forus to act collectively, create stronger coordination across levels, and develop advocacy strategies that are adaptable to constrained environments.

A fundamentally changing funding landscape

The development financing landscape is changing rapidly. Traditional ODA is under pressure, with many donor governments are retreating from earlier commitments. Both emerging and traditional donors are increasingly looking at more transactional forms of aid, with a focus on mutual return of investment – exemplified by the EU’s Global Gateway, China’s Belt and Road Initiative and similar initiatives. Traditional donors have continued to redefine what counts as ODA, including through meeting in-country refugee needs or controlling migration flows. At the same time, the influence of Multilateral (MDBs) and Public Development Banks (PDBs), philanthropy and private actors is growing.⁵

While ODA was arguably never the key driver of the SDGs, this fundamental shift in funding will still have significant implications for how civil society engages in development efforts leading up to, and beyond, 2030. At the same time, this shifting donor landscape has brought long-standing financial inequalities into sharp focus.

Forus members across regions consistently identified financing not as an auxiliary issue, but as one of the central political battlegrounds of the post-2030 agenda. Key facets include debt burdens, tax justice, concessional finance, domestic resource mobilisation, predictable funding for civil society and the broader terms of the global financial architecture.

This also reinforces the universal character of the post-2030 agenda: responsibility does not lie only in financing development elsewhere, but also in transforming the domestic policies, consumption patterns and economic models of high-income countries that continue to drive inequality, exclusion and ecological harm.



“Financing is not an end in itself, but it is a critical aspect to any Agenda. this starts from local sources (taxes, inter- governmental frameworks) - this needs to be seen as a solution to the complicated context we live in.”

Lessons from the SDGs

Global support for the SDGs is at a low ebb. Media coverage tends to focus on the relative lack of progress, with only 35% of goals on track or making modest gains as of late 2025, while often overlooking their very real normative and practical gains⁶. The SDGs have created a universal agenda, a shared language of accountability, and a global commitment to leave no one behind, which inspired and guided sustainability initiatives, including at the local level. At the same time, the SDGs also revealed major weaknesses: weak accountability, insufficient localisation, inadequate financing, and the persistent gap between rhetorical participation and real power.

Forus should therefore defend the SDG legacy not by denying its shortcomings, but by protecting its core promise while correcting what prevented the goals from being fully realised. The new framework should strike the right balance between realism and ambition, setting targets that are both aspirational and achievable, as was emphasised by Forus members from Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, in particular.

5. Raj Kumar, "The old aid model is dead. Now comes the fight over what replaces it", for Devex, 16 January 2026, available at: <https://www.devex.com/news/the-old-aid-model-is-dead-now-comes-the-fight-over-what-replaces-it-111648>

6. UN, "The Sustainable Development Goals", available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-goals/>

WEIGHING UP POSSIBLE FUTURES

For the purposes of this Vision Paper, Forus developed and stress-tested three possible scenarios for how the post-2030 process could unfold.

- ***Continuity***
- ***Reset***
- ***Fragmentation***

Across the consultation process, continuity emerged as the most likely baseline, though fragmentation was consistently seen as a credible risk. While many members saw a more ambitious, reset scenario as desirable, they also cautioned against “aiming too high” and coming across as unrealistic, in particular in the current, fraught political context. This Vision Paper uses this assumption as its baseline – a likely continuity of the SDGs but with a high risk of something more fragmented – but also stresses that Forus should prepare for a fluid process. It sets out an approach that focuses on defending core principles across all scenarios, with pathways for how the strategic approach could change under different trajectories. For more on the scenario development process, see Annex III: Consultation summary.



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Recognising continuity as the most likely baseline should not prevent civil society from articulating a more ambitious horizon. Even where political conditions are constrained, more forward-looking proposals can still play an important strategic role: shaping narratives, widening the space for debate, building alliances and helping prepare the ground for deeper reforms over time — especially on financing, structural inequalities and accountability.



→ THREE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

CONTINUITY



- An extension of the SDGs with selective refinements. It would preserve a shared global framework while allowing some room for targeted improvements, especially on financing, accountability, climate, localisation and emerging technologies.

RESET



- A more ambitious and justice-oriented rethinking of the framework, opening greater space for structural reform, stronger accountability, deeper localisation and more transformative financing principles.

FRAGMENTATION



- A weaker, more selective or regionally fractured outcome driven by geopolitical tensions, weakened multilateralism and declining trust, putting universality, accountability and meaningful participation under serious pressure.

THE VISION: WHAT WE DEFEND, DEMAND AND DECLINE

Overall Vision

An ambitious post-2030 global development framework rooted in human rights, universality and justice; responsive to today's interconnected crises; backed by credible financing and accountability; and shaped through meaningful civil society participation, with greater power for local actors.

Forus' vision is built around three core commitments — the 3Ds: What We Defend, What We Demand, and What We Decline.

What we defend

- A universal and rights-based global development agenda that leaves no one behind and protects the dignity, agency and rights of those most exposed to poverty, exclusion, discrimination and crisis.
- A strong and effective multilateral system capable of coordinating collective responses to global challenges and upholding international commitments.
- Civic space as a public good and an enabling condition for participation, accountability and implementation.
- Local leadership, with real resources, recognition and decision-making power for those actors closest to communities and most directly engaged in delivering change.
- The normative gains of the SDG era, including the recognition that sustainable development must integrate social justice, equality, environmental sustainability, peace and human rights.



“Organisations will need to be more focused and targeted, and focused on outcomes.”

What we demand

- A post-2030 framework that preserves the universal ambition of the SDGs while correcting their major weaknesses — especially on financing, accountability, localisation and implementation.
- Financing reform at the centre of the framework, including debt restructuring and relief, more equitable lending terms, increased concessional finance, stronger domestic resource mobilisation, tax justice, policy coherence, and predictable support for civil society.
- A formalised, meaningful and safe role for civil society in both negotiation and implementation, with particular attention to the participation of local actors and groups facing political or structural exclusion.
- Stronger accountability through mandatory, transparent and regular reporting and review, with independent oversight and a formal role for civil society and local actors in monitoring progress and identifying implementation gaps.
- A framework better equipped to respond to today's realities, including climate breakdown, democratic erosion, inequality, conflict, and the risks and opportunities created by emerging technologies.
- A framework that reflects differentiated responsibilities and universal obligations, including the need for high-income countries to transform unsustainable economic, financial and development models and to strengthen policy coherence at home as well as internationally.

What we decline

- A watered-down framework that sacrifices universality, a rights-based approach, gender equality, civic freedoms or climate ambition for the sake of political expediency.
- The continuation of a financial status quo in which unjust debt arrangements, unequal fiscal space and weak financing commitments undermine implementation and deepen inequality.
- Accountability mechanisms that remain voluntary, selective or performative, without meaningful follow-up, transparency or correction.
- Tokenistic inclusion that brings civil society or local actors into high-level spaces for appearance's sake while excluding them from agenda-setting, decision-making and follow-through.
- Development governance that expands the role of private or philanthropic actors without clear public-interest safeguards, democratic oversight and accountability.

This framing is intentionally political. It should sit alongside — not replace — a proactive account of how Forus and its members will act. That proactive dimension is reflected in the sections below on engagement, tools, coalition-building and adaptive support.



©Forus/Sebastian Barross - feminist march in Colombia

KEY ASKS: MUST-HAVES AND RED LINES FOR THE FORUS NETWORK

Forus has identified a set of non-negotiable principles, must-haves and red lines to guide its advocacy on the post-2030 agenda. Taken together, these reflect a collective political position: a future framework must be inclusive in process, universal and rights-based in principle, and credible in implementation.

Pillar 1: An inclusive process

→ *Forus calls for*

- **A formalised, meaningful and protected role for civil society throughout the negotiation process**, building on the strongest participatory practices that characterised the SDG negotiations.
- **Structured pathways for participation beyond New York**, including regional consultations, decentralised engagement and stronger remote participation.
- **Protection of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly** as preconditions for legitimate negotiations and meaningful implementation.
- **Safeguards against reprisals, exclusion and political risk for participants operating in restrictive environments**, including women, youth, grassroots actors and marginalised communities.

→ *Forus challenges*

- Participation processes that are symbolic, tightly controlled or inaccessible to those without a presence in major diplomatic centres.
- Any negotiation architecture that excludes civil society from shaping outcomes.

Pillar 2: Universal, non-negotiable principles

→ *Forus calls for*

- **A universal framework that leaves no one behind**, with stronger attention to poverty eradication, discrimination, exclusion and inequalities within and between countries.
- **Genuine localisation**, with local actors and communities recognised not only as implementers but as decision-makers, knowledge holders and accountability actors, leveraging the lessons learned from the Voluntary Local Reviews.
- **Accountability beyond voluntary self-reporting**, through mandatory, transparent and regular reporting and review, with independent oversight and a formal role for civil society and local actors.
- **Ambition combined with credible implementation pathways**, including milestones that support real progress in diverse contexts.

→ *Forus challenges*

- A watered-down framework that sacrifices universal, rights-based commitments for political expediency, leaving the most at-risk populations behind.
- Accountability systems that remain voluntary, opaque, selective or purely presentational.
- Symbolic localisation without resources, recognition or decision-making power.

©Both Nomads/Forus - women's cooperative in Marzuga



Pillar 3: A fit-for-purpose framework adapted to a rapidly changing world

→ *Forus calls for*

- **Addressing structural inequalities, not just symptoms**, including unequal fiscal space, debt burdens, power asymmetries in global governance and unequal access to technology and resources.
- **Structural financing reform**, including debt restructuring and relief, improved lending terms, stronger domestic resource mobilisation, tax justice, better regulation of blended finance, policy coherence and predictable support for civil society.
- **Climate justice**, including stronger commitments on adaptation, resilience, just transitions, and recognition of Loss and Damage.
- **Governance of emerging technologies**, including safeguards against surveillance, mis- and disinformation, unequal access, digital exclusion and unregulated AI-related harms, while also promoting equitable and accountable uses of technology for sustainable development.
- **Public accountability in partnerships**, ensuring that the growing role of private and philanthropic actors does not weaken rights, transparency, democratic oversight or public obligations. The post-2030 framework must ensure that public obligations, transparency, rights and accountability are not weakened or displaced.
- **Universality through differentiated responsibility**. The framework should reflect that all countries have obligations, while recognising the disproportionate historical and ongoing responsibilities of high-income countries for ecological harm, financial imbalances and unsustainable development pathways.
- **Recognition of peace, conflict prevention and respect for international law as essential conditions for sustainable development**. A credible post-2030 framework cannot ignore the impact of armed conflict, militarisation and impunity on development outcomes and multilateral legitimacy.

→ *Forus challenges*

- A framework that ignores structural financial injustice while continuing to rely on inadequate or inequitable financing.
- Any attempt to outsource public obligations through opaque, weakly regulated or purely transactional partnerships/deals.
- Silence on conflict, peace and legal accountability in a context of escalating violence and institutional erosion.

What this means for National Platforms



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National Platforms, which make up the core of the Forus membership, will be central to shaping the post-2030 process. Their role is not only to translate global messages into national and regional advocacy, but also to track political signals in their own contexts, identify openings and risks in civic space, influence national and regional positions, and bring grounded evidence and community priorities into broader advocacy. Forus should support this role through shared messaging, political analysis, coordination and differentiated support adapted to members' contexts and capacities.



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ENGAGEMENT: TACTICS AND FUTURE-PROOFING

Given the high level of uncertainty surrounding the post-2030 process, Forus should not anchor its strategy to a single expected outcome. Instead, it should adopt a resilient approach that remains politically relevant across continuity, fragmentation and reset scenarios. Consultations across the network point to a small number of all-weather functions for Forus: providing leadership and political sense-making, convening and coordinating the network, amplifying collective positions, building strategic alliances, and supporting members operating in constrained environments.

Leadership

Forus is uniquely positioned to assume a leading role in shaping the post-2030 discussions, including by contributing expertise and innovation, and playing the role of a watchdog. Forus has built up an impressive track record of engagement with the SDGs, while its global reach means it can advocate nationally, regionally and globally, leveraging the strengths of both the Secretariat and members.

Seize the initiative early

The period leading up to the start of formal negotiations in 2027 is critical to shape the negotiation process. It should be used to shape the terms of the debate, define red lines and must-haves, influence participation architecture, and identify likely allies and pressure points.

Connect local to global

Forus' global presence will allow it to both shape debates at a national level directly with Member States, while ensuring that local and regional voices are genuinely reflected in high-level, international forums. This must also account for the diversity of territories and contexts within nations, ensuring that subnational and local realities, not only national-level positions, are reflected in global advocacy

Build politically smart coalitions

In an increasingly fraught global environment, identifying allies and building coalitions will be more important than ever, across civil society and with local governments, thematic networks, trade unions, youth and feminist movements, rights-based actors, and supportive Member States and regional blocs.

Adapt to context and risk

Forus must ensure that its advocacy approach is flexible enough to support members working across very different civic and political environments. In some contexts, public campaigning may be effective; in others, quieter, indirect or coalition-based engagement may be safer and more strategic.

Monitor developments, remain flexible

While these broad tactics will remain relevant across scenarios, Forus will need to remain flexible and adapt tactics depending on how negotiations play out. The below table sets out how tactics will shift under different scenarios:

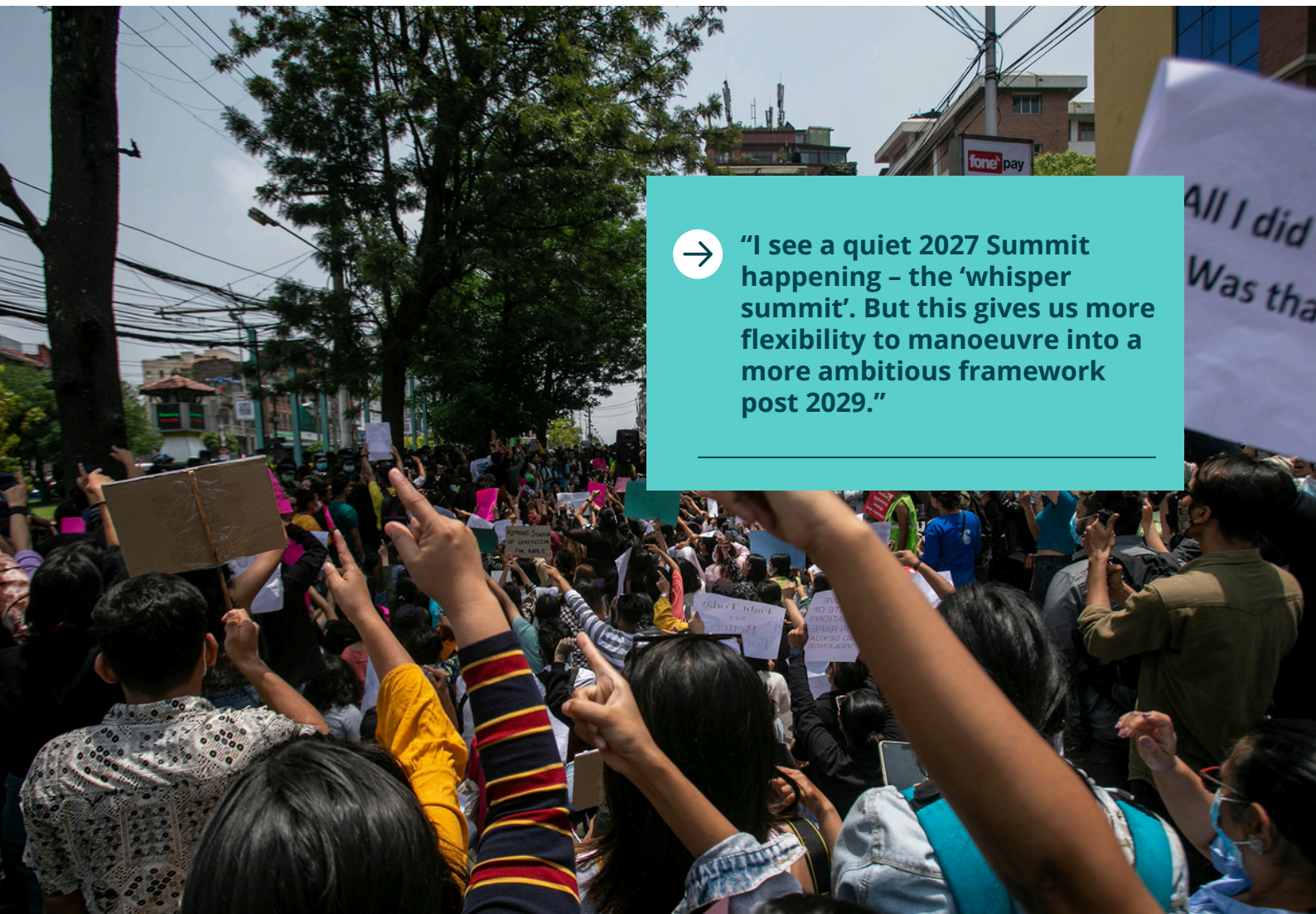
| Tactic | Fragmentation | Continuity | Reset |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Leadership | Identify salvageable, thematic priorities and prevent negotiation collapse. | Defend ambition and prevent dilution. | Set ambitious, innovative standards and prevent backsliding. |
| Early initiative | Identify issue -based coalitions to safeguard non-negotiable, "must-haves." Identify early, major challenges preventing an agreement and propose solutions. | Set out clear positions and messaging, defending the SDGs and identifying gaps. | Consult broadly with membership to identify innovative, new approaches. |
| Local-to-global | Explore how to better include local voices in regional structures. | Elevate national and local voices to global forums. | Seize on the reset to push for genuine, structural reform in favour of localisation. |
| Allies and coalitions | Emphasise regional and thematic groupings to salvage "must-haves". | Balance high-level coalition building to influence process, with relevant issue-based coalitions. | Identify and engage new, emerging blocs, building coalitions to prevent backsliding. |
| Finding the right balance | Prioritise private engagement on less "sensitive" issues in more closed environments, to reduce the likelihood of reprisals. | Ensure advocacy approach is flexible and can be adapted to all contexts ,open and closed. | Emphasise forceful public advocacy in more open environments while safeguarding space for those facing political risk. |

To remain flexible, it is critical to monitor **signals**, or indicators that point to the negotiation environment shifting between scenarios, including deterioration in multilateral negotiations, worsening civic space or reprisals, shifts in Member State positions following elections or crises, and openings for stronger regional leadership or new alliances. These could include, but are not limited to:

- **Negotiation progress:** Indications that negotiations are fraught, or even on point of breakdown, such as the withdrawal of major powers, significantly lowered ambitions, or significant unilateral political action apparently aimed at derailing dialogue or seizing control of the agenda .
- **Inclusivity:** A further weakening of the role of civil society, such as deliberate exclusion from parts of negotiations, or significant deterioration in civic space at regional or national level in key constituencies.
- **Political developments:** Regional or national political developments that indicate Member State support for an ambitious, new agenda is waning, such as the election of leaders openly hostile to multilateralism or the SDGs.

This suggests a role for Forus in ongoing horizon-scanning and internal alerting: helping members interpret political shifts, identify openings or risks early, and adapt advocacy accordingly.

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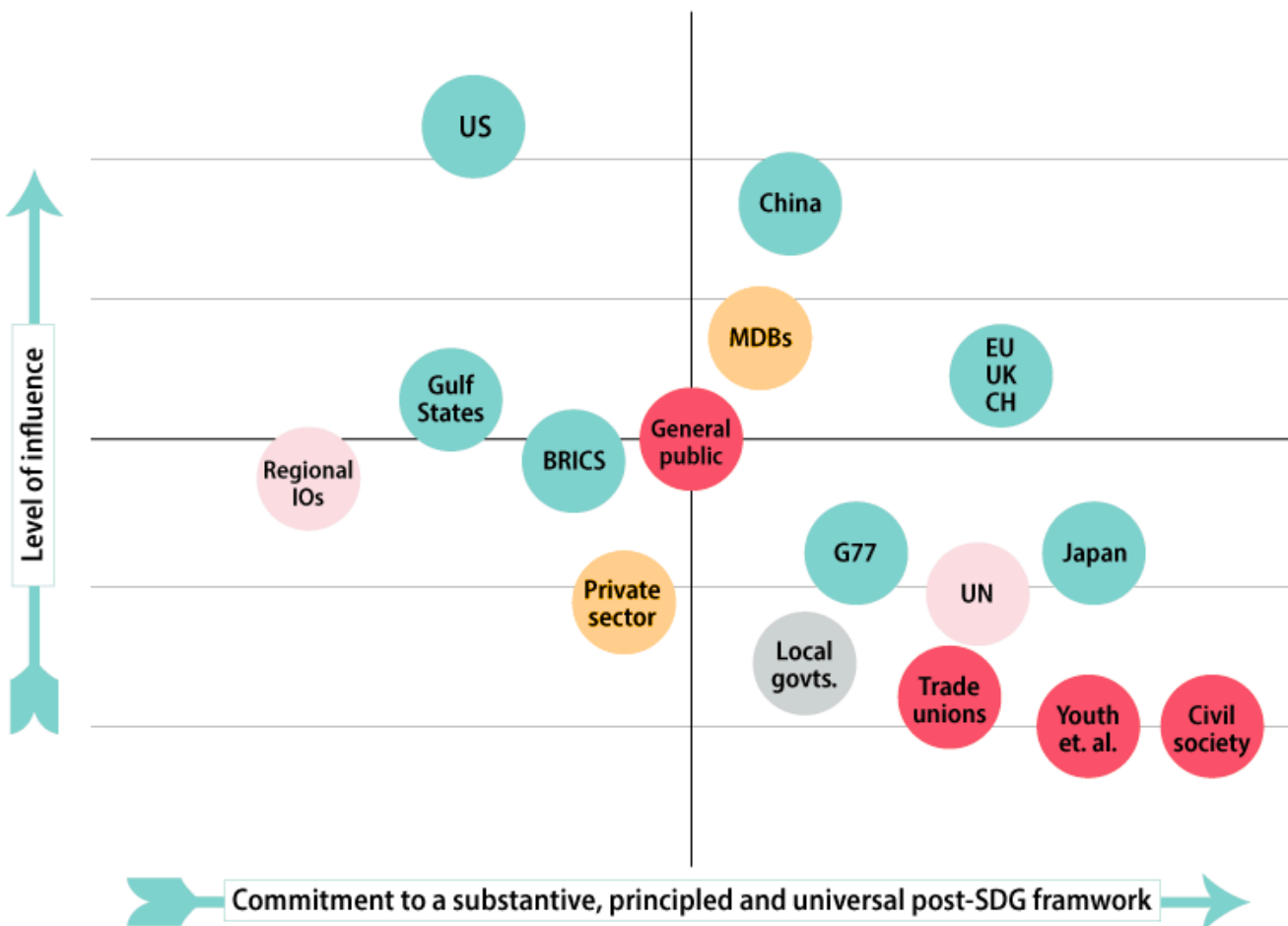


"I see a quiet 2027 Summit happening - the 'whisper summit'. But this gives us more flexibility to manoeuvre into a more ambitious framework post 2029."

STAKEHOLDERS AND INROADS

A broad range of actors will shape the post-2030 process, and their positions are likely to shift over time. Identifying who these are, and how they can be influenced, will be key to shaping the process – as will ensuring that Forus’ messaging is not just targeting already established allies, but also winning over actors who are more skeptical. Their positions will not be fixed, and alliances are likely to shift over time. Forus therefore needs a stakeholder approach that is politically alert, regularly updated, and differentiated across regions and issues.

Influence map of key actors



Member States and Member State blocs

Many traditional donor states are either increasingly indifferent to the global development agenda, or openly hostile to it. These traditional OECD-DAC donor governments may remain influential but are increasingly constrained by domestic politics, shrinking political will and more transactional approaches to development cooperation. At the same time, actors such as the G77, BRICS, emerging middle powers and Gulf states are likely to play a growing role in shaping the political direction of the process. Forus should therefore avoid relying only on traditional allies and instead pursue overlapping constellations of support around core asks.

| Actor | Areas of influence | Incentives and red lines | Forus inroads and asks |
|--|---|--|--|
| US | Arguably the single most influential actor for the global development agenda; previously key to financing and political support for a new framework. | Current administration openly hostile to multilateralism in general and SDGs in particular. Commitment to financing and a new universal framework highly uncertain, but could evolve depending on key election results. | Identify issues of interest to current US administration, such as public health. Reassess and adapt advocacy based on 2028 election outcomes. |
| EU states, Norway, Switzerland and the UK | Traditional pillars of global development agenda, but domestic political and financial reasons mean they are likely to play a less influential role compared to SDGs. | Likely supportive of continuing the SDGs, with emphasis on rights and universality; strong commitment to green and digital economic transformations; increasingly transactional development approach (e.g. Global Gateway). | Ideologically aligned, but questions over political will and financial incentives. Engage in coalition-based campaigning to create public pressure. For advocacy with high-income countries, Forus should combine external financing asks with stronger calls for domestic transformation, policy coherence and responsibility for unsustainable development pathways. |
| China | Hugely influential in financing and political leadership. Buy-in critical for new development agenda. | Supportive of the UN, international cooperation / multipolar order, and development agenda. Can play a key role on climate action and digital / AI framework creation. But will likely resist human rights-based language or perceived efforts to undermine "sovereignty". | Direct advocacy channels can be limited, but national platforms may have contextual entry points. Forus should combine principled positioning on rights with practical engagement on shared priorities, such as climate and gender issues. |

| Actor | Areas of influence | Incentives and red lines | Forus inroads and asks |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| G77 | Likely to play a more influential role than during SDG negotiations, key to ensuring broad-based continued global support for post-SDG framework. | Broadly supportive of global development agenda but interest in addressing Global South/North inequalities. Strong commitment to levelling financial playing field, including debt relief and restructuring, and improving domestic revenue generation. | Identify regional champions that are supportive of development agenda, such as Colombia. National advocacy to support Forus' calls on financial reform. |
| BRICS | The expanded BRICS include a growing cohort of "middle-powers" that carry increasing political weight. | Commitment to global development agenda varies between member states, although overall commitment to a multipolar global governance and reduction of reliance on Western financial institutions. | Look for common ground on financial reform issues and other thematic priorities, such as poverty eradication and education. |
| Japan | Influential on both substance, such as disaster risk reduction, global health, water and sanitation, and negotiations, as has volunteered to lead the process. | Supportive of continuation of SDGs and incentivised to see a successful outcome. | Focus early advocacy on the need for an inclusive process with strong civil society presence. |
| India | Global South leadership. | Reform-driven structural challenger (e.g. strongest advocate for permanent Seat – G4). Likely to play a key role on structural reforms and representation of Global South, debt justice, and climate finance. | Direct advocacy channels can be limited, but national platforms may have contextual entry points. |
| Gulf states | Increasingly assertive in global political and development cooperation forums. | Interest in showing leadership and exerting influence as donors, though likely to resist rights-based, inclusive agenda. | Explore advocacy on common thematic issues, such as education. |

International and regional organisations and bodies

| Actor | Areas of influence | Incentives and red lines | Forus inroads and asks |
|---|---|---|--|
| UN | Likely to lead negotiations, although influence undermined by financial constraints and uncertain reform process. Influential as a forum to set standards on rights and development targets, but less on finance. | Strong commitment to seeing a continuation of SDGs. New Secretary-General likely incentivised to see through successful negotiations process. | Forus should engage early, in coalition with other NGOs, to ensure an inclusive negotiation process. |
| Regional IGOs (incl. AU, EU, OAS), including subregional organisations (incl. ASEAN, ECOWAS, ECCAS, SAARC) | Influential to develop regional consensus. Likely to become more critical in case of negotiations breakdown / regionalisation of development agenda. | Very diverse and difficult to generalise, but broadly supportive of development agenda with regional differences in emphasis. | Engage during regional consultation processes. Advocate for developing regional development agendas. |
| Inter-governmental thematic bodies and forums, such as COP | Unlikely to be directly involved in negotiations, but could assume significance in particular if negotiations break down under a “fragmentation” scenario. | Interest in rallying global support for thematic issues, such as the climate crisis, nutrition, or energy. | Build alliances with issue-based CSO coalitions to explore joint advocacy. |



“Gather, evidence, map what is there and works well and scale it up, and develop a narrative - this should be the basis at legislative and policy level.”

Subnational state actors

| Actor | Areas of influence | Incentives and red lines | Forus inroads and asks |
|---|--|---|---|
| Local governments, municipalities and mayors | Key to “last mile” implementation, but often neglected in negotiations or high-level political forums. | Supportive of financial reform and localisation, ensuring resources directly to local actors. | Allies in push for localisation and strengthening monitoring and reporting frameworks at local level. |

Financial actors

| Actor | Areas of influence | Incentives and red lines | Forus inroads and asks |
|--|--|---|--|
| Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and Public Development Banks (PDBs) | Important actors in development financing, implementation and reform debates, especially as traditional ODA declines and new financing models gain prominence. | Broadly supportive of development financing reform and increasingly engaged on climate, resilience and blended finance, though often cautious on proposals that challenge prevailing financial governance models. | Engage on debt, concessional finance, blended finance safeguards, climate justice and alignment with public-interest development goals. Advocate for transparency, accountability and financing approaches that expand rather than constrain fiscal space. |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| Private sector | Likely to increasingly shape development governance and financing debates. While some may align around climate standards, sustainability or investment frameworks, their growing influence also raises concerns around corporate capture, weak accountability and the displacement of public obligations. Forus should therefore engage selectively, defend strong public-interest safeguards, and monitor risks closely. | Interested in maintaining a stable, global financial environment. Increasingly engaged as development partners by traditional donors. | Engage selectively on public-interest standards, climate responsibility, accountability and regulation, while monitoring closely for risks of corporate capture, greenwashing and the displacement of public obligations. |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|

Actor
Areas of influence
Incentives and red lines
Forus inroads and asks
Philanthropy

Rising to prominence as a new development finance actor, alongside the private sector, MDBs and PDBs, as traditional ODA declines.

Mission-driven and generally supportive of development agenda, but with own strategic priorities. May resist politicisation of grant-making.

Explore as a potential funder of civil society capacity for post-2030 advocacy. Monitor for corporate capture risks in the development agenda.

IMF

Key actor in debt restructuring frameworks and concessional lending conditions, which directly affect fiscal space available to Global South governments for development spending. Significant influence on national policy space.

Committed to macroeconomic stability; increasingly engaged on climate-sensitive finance. Likely to resist language framing debt as a justice issue or challenging its structural conditionality model.

Advocate for safeguards that protect social spending, civic space, and inequality-reduction measures; push for transparency and participation in programme design; align with debt reform advocacy. Engage through CSO coalitions working on debt justice and financial reform. Amplify voices of Forus members from heavily indebted countries. Push for IMF reform that addresses fiscal space constraints and domestic resource mobilisation, as identified by Forus members across all regions.



Others

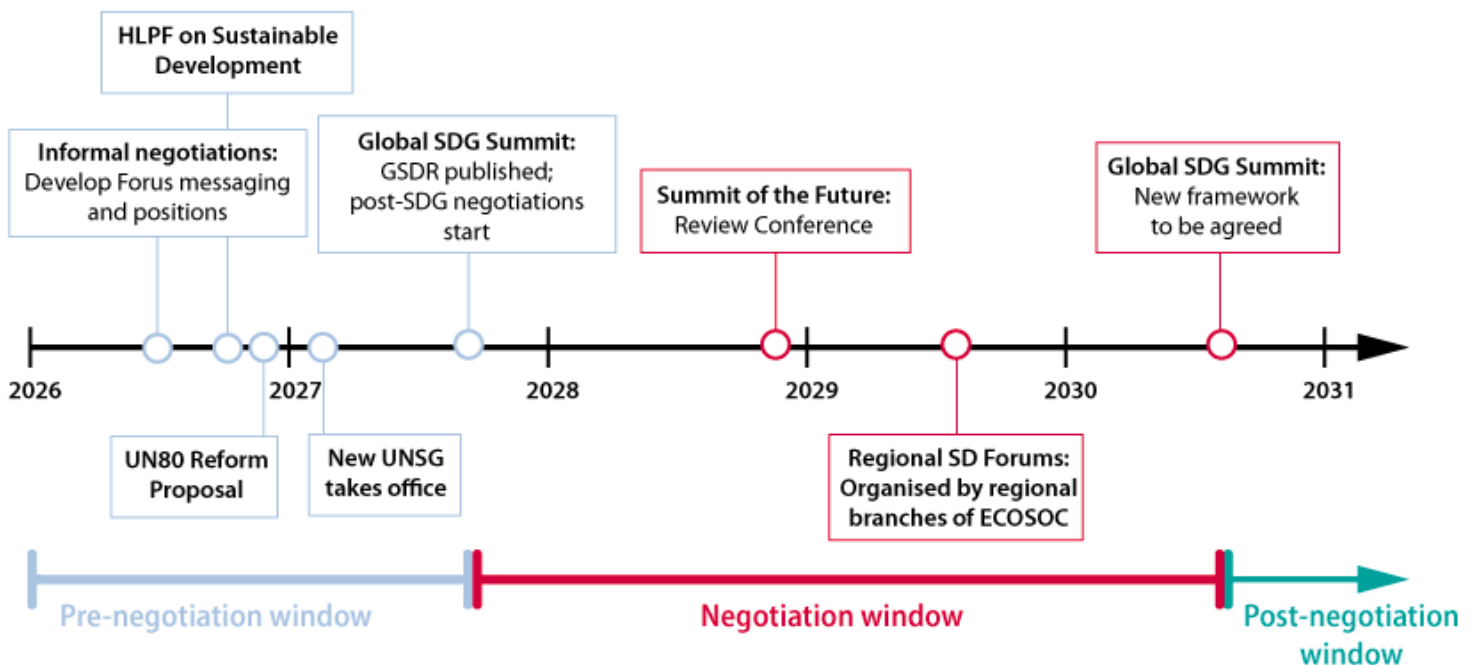
| Actor | Areas of influence | Incentives and red lines | Forus inroads and asks |
|---|--|---|---|
| Civil society organisations and movements aligned with inclusive, rights-based and accountable development | Diminished influence compared to SDG negotiations, but remains a key actor to push for principled and inclusive post-2030 framework. | Incentivised to push for inclusive process. Diminished advocacy capacity means likely open to broad-based coalitions. | Identify allies, including issue-based coalitions. Ensure that Forus complements other advocacy efforts by centring local voices. |
| Youth groups and other interest groups, such as women's organisations | Often highly organised, but with relatively limited influence over negotiations. Potential allies of NGOs. | Incentivised to push for inclusive process, and a continued universal development agenda. | Identify allies in pushing for inclusive process. |
| Trade unions | Influential through the "Workers and Trade Unions" major group. | Incentivised to ensure post-2030 framework contains guarantees for "decent work" (SDG8). | Allies in push for financial justice, freedom of association and right to work. |
| General public | Key to creating public pressure at a national level in both Global South and North for global solidarity. | Global upheaval has diminished public support for international cooperation and development support. | Public advocacy focused on highlighting achievements of SDGs and making "investment case" for an ambitious global framework. |



"Fragmentation isn't the worst thing in the world – regionalisation could be the best way to achieve [the existing goals]."

KEY ADVOCACY WINDOWS AND MOMENTS

Influencing the post-2030 framework will require Forus to combine long-term positioning with timely intervention around key advocacy windows. Formal multilateral processes will matter, but they will not be sufficient on their own. Influence will also depend on advocacy in national capitals, engagement through regional bodies, coalition work with civil society and social movements, and the ability to respond quickly to political openings or threats.



Key windows

There are broadly three advocacy windows for Forus and its membership to target related to the post-2030 agenda, with shifting tactics and priorities for each:

Pre-negotiation window (before September 2027)

This is the most important window for shaping both the terms of the debate and the rules of the process. Forus can prioritise advocacy on participation, transparency and inclusion, while also defining clear network-wide messages on red lines, must-haves and substantive priorities. This period should be used to hold informal discussions with allies across Member States and civil society, shape expectations around the negotiation process itself, and begin positioning Forus' core asks early. This should include identifying national and regional openings where members can already begin influencing government positions, narrative framing and expectations around civil society participation.

Negotiation window (September 2027–September 2030)

The actual negotiation period is crucial to formulating the language, goals and commitments forming the bulk of the post-2030 global development framework. Forus and its members can seek to influence through several channels: engagement in the formal negotiations at UN level, utilising established channels for CSOs; informal, high-level negotiations with Member States and other actors in New York and beyond; and private and public advocacy at national level, as decision-making on the post-2030 framework ultimately rests in Member State capitals. During this phase, Forus should also focus on refining its messaging and policy positions, making them more tangible and detailed to directly influence language in the future framework. If possible, Forus could also explore strengthening staff capacity in New York during negotiations.

Post-negotiation window (after 2030)

Once a framework is agreed, the focus should shift to accountability, implementation and follow-up. Forus should be well positioned to combine global leadership with locally grounded data, monitoring and pressure for fair and inclusive delivery. The nature of this advocacy will depend on reporting mechanisms and other dynamics established in the new agreement, but Forus' broad reach – with a strong regional and national presence – puts it in a strong position to combine global leadership with elevating local data and voices.

©Forus General Assembly 2026



Key moments

There are several key moments to target for advocacy leading up to 2030 at the international, regional and national level. These include:

| Level | Moment |
|----------------------|---|
| International | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level global development forums, including the annual High-level Political Forums on Sustainable Development, the SDG Moment during UNGA High level week, the SDG Summits in 2027 and 2030, the follow-up conference to the Summit of the Future in 2028, and the launch of the Global Sustainable Development Report in 2027. • Thematic global forums, such as annual COPs, the 2026 UN Biodiversity Conference, or the 2026 UNCCD COP. • Standing, high-level international political forums, such as the UN General Assembly, sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, and relevant G20/G7 processes, as well as the World Economic Forum (WEF) as a convening space where narratives and alliances are shaped. |
| Regional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, organised through regional branches of ECOSOC. • Standing, high-level summits of regional inter-governmental organisations, including the African Union, OAS, ECOWAS, ECCAS, ASEAN and SAARC. |
| National | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National development forums and monitoring processes, including the development and submission of VNRs and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). • National SDGs Forums, especially where governments are preparing or presenting VNRs. • National elections should be engaged in strategically and based on thorough risk assessments given political sensitivities. Such advocacy can be sensitive, in particular if viewed as politicising the development agenda. Engagement methods could include setting out public development “check lists” for all parties during campaigning, or targeted, private post-election advocacy with incoming officials. |

For a detailed timeline of key international and regional moments, and how Forus can engage with these, see *Annex I: Advocacy roadmap and implementation note*.



TOOLS, PRODUCTS AND ACTIONS

To influence a new global development framework, Forus' members identified a range of products, tools and other actions the network can deploy. To support network-wide advocacy across countries, regions and scenarios, global products should be flexible and adaptable to relevant contexts. For a detailed timeline of how and when to deploy the different initiatives, see *Annex I: Advocacy roadmap and implementation note*.

Initiative

Areas of influence

Incentives and red lines

Mapping member advocacy capacity and priorities

Forus should map the engagement capacity, political space and priorities of members early in the process. This would help identify where leadership, coordination and support are most needed, and where differentiated strategies are required for more restricted environments.

Similarly, mapping the priorities of Forus' members would help refine and add to advocacy asks, ensuring that national and local voices are at the core of Forus' influencing work.

These could form the basis for an internal Forus Post-2030 Vision Working Group, to provide leadership and coordinate the network's influencing work leading up to 2030.

Initially largely internal – but the mapping, messaging and coordination would form the basis of all future advocacy leading up to 2030.

Initiative
Areas of influence
Incentives and red lines

Network-wide messaging Forus should develop concise, high-impact network-wide messaging that combines a small number of common political asks with enough flexibility to adapt to regional realities and different scenarios. These messages should broad top-line messaging at the beginning, setting out priorities and must-haves, and gradually be refined throughout the process.

Messaging should remain disciplined and memorable, allowing members to speak with a common voice while allowing for regional nuances.

Membership; civil society; Member States; UN and other global and regional inter-governmental organisations.

Messaging can be used across all advocacy opportunities, public and private.

Policy briefings and position papers

The Vision Paper should be followed by more detailed policy products that sharpen specific asks on participation, financing, accountability, localisation, climate justice, technology governance and stakeholder engagement. These briefings should be sharp, engaging and focused, to cut through the noise and reach busy policymakers with limited bandwidth, while drawing on Forus' existing and extensive body of research. As with the messaging, ensure policy products are adaptable to different contexts and scenarios, and gradually move from topline to more detailed products as the process unfolds.

Membership; civil society; Member States; UN and other global and regional inter-governmental organisations.

Targeted evidence generation

Forus should identify a limited number of strategic evidence gaps where it can add value — particularly on financing, civic space, accountability, localisation and what has worked in SDG implementation — and generate products that are directly usable in advocacy.

Membership; Member States; UN and other global and regional inter-governmental organisations; private sector and other interest groups.

Initiative

Areas of influence

Incentives and red lines

Public campaigning

Forus can play a lead role to ensure public support for multilateralism and global solidarity has weakened in many contexts. A future public campaign should not simply promote the SDGs, but make the political case for why a universal, accountable and well-financed development agenda still matters — and why weakening it would deepen inequality, instability and exclusion. The campaign could be deployed from 2027 to add to pressure for Member States during negotiations.

General public; Member States; private sector.

Coalition-building and alliance mapping

Amid a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape, identifying allies and building coalitions will be hugely important. Forus should identify where alliances are strongest or most needed — across civil society, with local governments, within regional blocs, and with supportive state and non-state actors.

Civil society networks; Member States, including regional champions. All advocacy windows, national, regional and multilateral.

Monitoring, learning and adaptive support

As the political context evolves, Forus will need to monitor changes in the negotiation environment, civic space and alliance opportunities, while also learning from what advocacy approaches are working across different regions and contexts. This would help keep the Vision Paper alive as a strategic reference point rather than a one-off publication.

Primarily internal at first — for National Platforms, Regional Coalitions and the Secretariat — but with potential to inform external positioning, rapid responses and the updating of advocacy products over time.

©Forus at the Finance in Common Summit in Cape Town, South Africa



CONCLUSION

The post-2030 process will unfold in a harder and more contested political environment than the one that produced the SDGs. That makes early, strategic and collective civil society engagement not less important, but more important than ever.

Forus is well placed to help shape this moment: to defend the universal and rights-based gains of the SDG era, to push for a more credible framework on financing, accountability and localisation, and to ensure that communities and civil society are not pushed to the margins of decisions that affect their futures.

The struggle over the post-2030 agenda is not only about goals, targets or institutional design. It is also a struggle over political space, public accountability and the values that will underpin international cooperation in the years ahead. Forus should approach this moment with clarity and resolve: defend what must not be lost, push for what must change, and help build a post-2030 agenda that is more just, more accountable and more grounded in the realities of people's lives.



ANNEX I: ADVOCACY ROADMAP AND IMPLEMENTATION NOTE

This advocacy roadmap complements sections 6-8 above by setting out a **concrete action plan for when, how and why** the Forus network can influence the post-2030 negotiation process.

| Key moment | Why is it important? | Forus objective | Priority allies | Forus products or actions |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Pre-negotiation window (before 2027 SDG Forum) | Period before formal negotiations begin key to shaping process, establishing coalitions and establishing positions | Ensure open and inclusive post-2030 negotiation process; set out clear positions for the network; assume leadership role. | Forus members at national and regional level; friendly Member States; UN bodies incl. DESA | Position and policy papers setting out demands for 1) negotiation process; and 2) core of post-2030 framework; Consult membership to map engagement capacity and refine messaging. |
| Regional Forums on Sustainable Development , various locations, leading up to 2030, including in LAC (Chile, April 2026), Europe and Central Asia (Switzerland, April 2026) and Africa (Ethiopia, April 2026) | UN-hosted platforms for Member States and interest groups to share regional perspective on development agenda. | Key moments to begin regional push for Forus' advocacy must-haves and red lines. | Regional IOs; civil society; local government and LNNGOs on localisation. | Side events and participation in panel discussions; "regionalised" versions of messages and position papers. |
| High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development , New York, July 2026 | Annual review of SDG process, with in-depth review of SDG6. Forum for informal post-2030 talks. | Identify allies among civil society and Member States; begin conversations on inclusive process. | Forus members attending; other CSOs and interest groups; DESA, UNDP and other UN agencies. | Side event on post-2030 agenda; messaging document for members. |
| Launch of UN80 reform proposal (on the sidelines of UNGA) , New York, Oct 2026 | SG to present findings and UN reform proposal to Member States. | Ensure continued substantive focus on development, CSO involvement in high-level processes. | Civil society. | Reactive media and advocacy work. |

| Key moment | Why is it important? | Forus objective | Priority allies | Forus products or actions |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| New UN Secretary-General takes office , 1 January 2027 | New SG will play leading role in post-2030 talks; incentivised to ensure successful outcome. | Commitment from UNSG's office to key Forus asks on process and substance of post-2030 agenda. | UNSG's office and related UN agencies. | Public positioning – opinion pieces or policy brief – setting out development priorities for new SG. |
| Global Sustainable Development Report , New York, September 2027 | Final pre-2030 GSDR, key to agenda setting for framework negotiations. | Inclusion of language reflecting Forus core priorities. | Independent Group of Scientists (report authors); DESA, UNCTAD, UNDP and other UN agencies; civil society. | Engagement with IGS and shadow reporting throughout 2026 & 2027 drafting window; reactive advocacy and media on release. |
| SDG Summit , New York, September 2027 | Launch of GSDR and official start of negotiations for post-2030 framework . | Forus core asks reflected in early discussions; a negotiation process with a seat at the table for civil society. | UNSG's office; friendly Member States; civil society. | Side event and other advocacy on the sidelines of Summit. |
| Post-2030 framework negotiation process , likely New York, throughout 2027-2030. | The forum for negotiating language, targets and commitments in new post-SDG framework. | The post-2030 framework should reflect Forus' core advocacy asks; civil society to play active role in discussions. | Friendly Member States; civil society; other interest groups and stakeholders (through Major Groups coalition). | Monitor negotiations; influence through formal channels and private advocacy at both NY-level and in capitals and regional forums; consider options for sustained Forus presence and coordination support in New York during the negotiation period |
| Public campaign: Defending development , 2027- | Forus-led campaign to rally public support for the SDGs and a new agenda | Public support increases for a robust new agenda, adding pressure on Member States | General public; all Member States (allies and blockers); other interest groups. | Public campaigning assets: social media, media material; eye-catching launch material. |

| Key moment | Why is it important? | Forus objective | Priority allies | Forus products or actions |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Summit of the Future Review Conference , TBD, 2028 | High-level assessment of progress on commitments like the Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations. Likely informal forum for post-SDG agenda discussions. | Ensure progress review realistic and reflecting views from local and national actors. Link achievements and stumbling blocks to post-SDG discussions. | UNSG's office; friendly Members States; civil society. | Conduct local and national consultations and data gathering for shadow reporting and other policy documents around Summit. |
| SDG Summit , TBD, 2030 | The end goal: agreement and presentation on new global development framework. | Post-2030 framework to reflect Forus core advocacy asks. | Friendly Member States | Extensive public and private advocacy during "final push" for finalising agreement. |

- **G7 Presidencies** - France (2026), US (2027), UK (2028), Germany (2029), Japan (2030)
- **G20 Presidencies** - US (2026), UK (2027), South Korea (2028), Saudi Arabia (tbc)
- **BRICS Presidencies** - India (2026)

ANNEX II: METHODOLOGY

This Vision Paper has been developed by a team of consultants - Valentina Batrinu, Olof Blomqvist and Gareth Mace - in close cooperation with the Forus Secretariat and Steering Group (ACCIÓN - Chile, Fingo - Finland, Janic - Japan, PIANGO - Pacific Islands, UNNGOF - Uganda), as well as the wider Forus network. The development process has emphasised inclusivity and consultation, ensuring that the findings reflect the views of the Forus membership, with particular attention to regional nuances. The Vision Paper has been developed from November 2025 to March 2026 through three distinct phases:

1. **Scenario mapping:** Based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a consultation group consisting of 13 individuals, including development experts from the UN, civil society, academia, think-tanks and philanthropy. The individuals were selected in consultation with the Forus Steering group, with an emphasis on geographical and gender diversity. In addition, the scenario mapping drew from an extensive desk review of public sources from academia, think-tanks, UN agencies, civil society and political analysis, as well as Forus' own internal and public material. The consultants produced a final Political & Scenario Mapping report, which went through a QA process with Forus staff and membership. The final Scenario Mapping report, which includes further details on the methodology, is available [here](#).
2. **Forus membership consultation:** Building on the Political & Scenario Mapping, Forus undertook a structured, multilingual consultation with its members to ground this analysis in regional and national realities. The membership consultation process consisted of three main tools:
 - a. Six regional and common-language based FGDs (Africa EN, Africa & MENA FR, Asia, Pacific, LAC and Europe and North America);
 - b. Nine in-depth semi-structured interviews with Forus members, selected on a regionally and gender-representative basis KIs; and
 - c. a multilingual survey dataset combining English/French/Spanish responses (36 responses across all regions out of 82 registered Forus members)

Findings from the different consultation tools were analysed by the consultants and validated through meetings with Forus staff members. It was then presented in a Consultation Dossier, summarising the main thematic findings and implications for Forus' engagement, as well as a Regional Insights Note that highlighted convergence and divergence between the regions. These outputs, which contain further details on the methodology, [are available here](#), while a summary of the consultation findings is also available in Annex III below.

3. **Developing the Vision Paper:** The Vision Paper was developed by the consultants following extensive analysis of findings from the two previous phases, as well as consultation with Forus on the final structure. The draft Vision Paper was reviewed through three rounds of feedback with Forus staff and Steering Group. In addition, the findings were presented to the membership in three multilingual (English, French and Spanish) validation workshops, as well as the Forus membership at the organisation's General Assembly in Cambodia in the week of 23 March, 2026. All feedback was taken on board and reflected in the final report.

Ethical considerations

All interviews were conducted in line with a clear ethical protocol grounded in informed consent and a do-no-harm approach. Participants received information about the purpose and use of the research in advance and provided consent prior to interviews commencing. Interviewees were offered the option to contribute anonymously or off-record, and all attributed quotations were double-checked with explicit permission secured before publication; where permission was not granted or was later withdrawn, contributions have been included anonymously. Interviews were scheduled at times convenient to participants, with particular care taken to ensure that engagement did not create risk for those operating in politically restricted or fragile contexts. Sensitive information has been treated confidentially and stored securely, with ethics and accessibility embedded throughout the process. Individual sources have been anonymised throughout this report to reflect that the recommendations and analysis reflect the consensus of the Forus network as a whole.

ANNEX III: CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Introduction and objective

Building on a prior Political & Scenario Mapping exercise (see Annex II), which identified three plausible trajectories for the post-2030 agenda—continuity, fragmentation and reset—Forus undertook a structured, multilingual consultation with its members. This consultation phase aimed to: ground the political and scenario analysis in lived regional and national realities; identify shared must-haves, red lines and advocacy priorities across the network; clarify where Forus and its members can add the most value; ensure the final Vision Paper captures regional dynamics and nuances.

Methodology

The membership consultation process consisted of three main tools:

- Six regional and common-language based FGDs (Africa EN, Africa & MENA FR, Asia, Pacific, LAC and Europe and North America), with on average 6-8 participants per workshop. The workshops lasted for 1.5 hours and used both verbal and written feedback, as well as a meeting facilitation tool (Mural), to capture inputs from participants;
- Nine in-depth semi-structured interviews with Forus members, selected on a regionally and gender representative basis; and
- A multilingual survey dataset combining English/French/Spanish responses (36 responses across all regions out of 82 registered Forus members).

While KIIs and FGDs were intended to be complementary in nature, some respondents in KIIs were also participants in FGDs. Facilitators were intentional about ensuring their inputs added to the diversity of perspectives, encouraging balanced feedback. The consultation was guided by principles of inclusivity, participation, non-attribution and safety.

Global findings

Scenarios: Across regions, members broadly agreed that, of the possible scenarios, a version of “continuity” was the most likely outcome. At the same time, “fragmentation” was also seen as a real risk and credible possibility, with members pointing to geopolitical tensions, financing pressures, and shrinking civic space in many contexts. Overall, there was a strong sense that the post-2030 landscape is politically constrained and increasingly contested.

Financing: Financing reform emerged as the most consistent cross-regional priority, seen as an essential focus issue for Forus’ post-2030 engagement rather than an optional “add-on”. Across all consultation formats, members identified debt burdens, fiscal space constraints, concessional finance, domestic resource mobilisation, tax justice and predictable funding for civil society as central concerns.

Civic space: Civic space was consistently treated as an enabling condition for negotiation legitimacy, accountability and implementation. Survey responses and FGDs reflect widespread concern about shrinking or uneven civic space, though the form differed by region: some regions emphasised how political volatility affected civic engagement, others increasingly arbitrary and restrictive legal frameworks, and others a cultural backlash against rights-based language or norms around diversity.

Accountability: There was broad agreement that voluntary accountability mechanisms under the SDG framework have proven insufficient. Members call for stronger transparency, independent monitoring and mechanisms that better translate commitments into practice.

Role of Forus: Across all consultation instruments, members converge on a clear set of expectations, and saw it imperative for Forus to play a leading role in the post-2030 negotiation. Forus is expected to convene and coordinate, provide strategic political analysis and sense-making, advocate and amplify collective positions, build alliances and support members operating in constrained civic environments.

Regional divergence and convergence

While there was broad agreement on the role of Forus in the post-2030 engagement, and the thematic focus areas to guide its advocacy, several important nuances also emerged during the consultation. These include:

- **Africa:** Identified “continuity” as the most likely scenario, although stressed the need to monitor negotiations closely. Prioritised finance as a thematic area, with particular emphasis on addressing structural inequalities between Global South and North, including through debt reform. In terms of civic space, several members noted a restricted environment, with arbitrary legislation and ongoing security challenges (incl. through armed conflict) being particularly influential. Saw collective, regional engagement as crucial, including by forging consensus through the African Union and sub-regional bodies. Stressed the need for Forus to prioritise support for national members during the post-2030 process.

- **Asia:** Reflecting the diversity of the enormous Asia region, members were split between “continuity” and “fragmentation” as the most likely scenario. Members were, however, united on the need to emphasise advocacy on CSO funding and debt relief. Several also highlighted civic space restrictions, and rang alarm bells about increasing signs of corporate capture of the development agenda. Stressed the need for Forus to show leadership on global advocacy leading up to 2030, and to build alliances with members beyond the “usual suspects” in civil society.
- **Europe and North America:** Overall, saw “fragmentation” as the most likely, reflecting increasingly fraught regional politics where many traditional leaders of the development agenda were consumed by domestic financial and political issues. Saw funding as a priority, with an emphasis on CSO funding and concessional finance. Emphasised regional CSO coalitions and engagement through the EU to influence post-SDG agenda. Saw Forus’ role as providing strategic analysis and convening coalitions.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Like Europe, views on the scenarios were mixed, although “fragmentation” was slightly more favoured as the most likely over “continuity”. The region was, alongside Africa, where structural financial reform was the most emphasised, while several members also stressed the crippling impact on CSOs of recent drops in ODA. Members also emphasised how civic space had increasingly shrunk over the past decade, with a fear this trend would continue amid recent rise in far-right governments. Saw Forus’ role as chiefly providing advocacy leadership up to 2030, including by convening coalitions.
- **Pacific:** Saw continuity as the most likely scenario. Financing issues were prioritised, but mostly through a climate lens, with a focus on funds for adaptation and Loss & Damage compensation. Unlike other regions, Pacific members felt that they operated in a relatively open civic environment, although raised concerns about increasing marginalisation from official processes. Saw alliance-building as key to influencing post-SDG agenda, in particular to amplify voices of smaller states. Wants Forus to play a role in global advocacy, coupled with regional coordination and strategic analysis.

For a more detailed analysis of the methodology and findings from the consultation phase, see the Membership Consultation Dossier. In addition, a [Regional Insights Note](#) provides further details on how findings differed between regions.

ANNEX IV: FEEDBACK TRACEABILITY MATRIX

This traceability matrix identifies how much of the analysis and many of the recommendations in this Vision Paper were identified through the consultation phase with Forus' membership. Given the sheer scope of the membership consultation, this matrix is not exhaustive. It does, however, provide a representative snapshot of how membership feedback contributed substantively to the Vision Paper's key themes. For more on the consultation process, see Annex III and the separate Consultation Dossier and Regional Insight Note (linked below).

| Theme | Consultation evidence | Implication for final Vision Paper text |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Scenario analysis | <p>“Across regions, members broadly agreed that, of the possible scenarios, a version of ‘continuity’ was the most likely outcome. At the same time, ‘fragmentation’ was also seen as a real risk and credible possibility, with members pointing to geopolitical tensions, financing pressures, and shrinking civic space in many contexts.” (Consultation dossier, p. 4)</p> <p>Survey responses indicated that a majority of respondents ranked “continuity” as the most likely scenario, while simultaneously flagging fragmentation risks linked to geopolitical tensions and declining global cooperation. While this was a ranking question not consistently filled out by respondents (only 25 identified a most likely scenario), a consistency methodology was applied to extrapolate a conclusion, which was also balanced with FGD and KII perspectives. (Survey dataset)</p> | <p>Added “Weighing up possible futures” section in Exec Sum; used “continuity with risk of fragmentation” as overall lens for Vision Paper; and reflected in scenario discussion in 5: Engagement – Tactics and future proofing.</p> <p>Varied perspectives across KIIs, FGDs and Survey data were also balanced in the scenario ranking and engagement sections.</p> |
| Scenario analysis | <p>LAC FGD said strong anti-SDG sentiments by many governments. (FGD note)</p> <p>Africa FGD participants broadly considered “continuity” the most likely scenario, but emphasised that geopolitical tensions and financing pressures could push negotiations toward fragmentation if structural inequalities in the global system remain unaddressed. (Africa EN FGD notes)</p> <p>Participants in the Europe & North America FGD considered fragmentation the most plausible scenario, citing declining political commitment to multilateralism, domestic political pressures and reduced development financing among traditional donor governments. (Europe & North America FGD notes)</p> | <p>Added reference to governments being hostile to development norms in 3. Background, p. 5.</p> <p>Informed emphasis on financial reform and Global South–North structural inequalities in Sections 1 and 4.</p> <p>Strengthened references to waning political support for the global development agenda among traditional donors in Section 3: Background and the stakeholder analysis in Section 6.</p> |

| Theme | Consultation evidence | Implication for final Vision Paper text |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Scenario analysis | <p>LAC KII said while many govts turning against FGD, there are still champions among regional middle powers. (KII notes)</p> <p>One English-speaking Africa key informant had a significantly different perspectives than peers in FGD, strongly favouring fragmentation as the most likely scenario. Highlighted AU and national governments shift away from a backing of current status quo of global agreements, matching US posture and decreased trust in the West maintaining current direction for preserving the SDGs (KII notes)</p> <p>KIIs in Europe and N America highlighted that, despite growing geopolitical fragmentation, some form of continuity of the SDG framework may remain the most viable basis for sustaining global cooperation. (KII Notes Europe & N America)</p> | <p>Added analysis on G77, BRICS, China and the US in Section 6, and on building Member State coalitions in Section 5. Engagement: Tactics and future proofing.</p> |
| Financing | <p>“Financing reform emerges as the most consistent cross-regional priority, seen as an essential focus issue for Forus’ post-2030 engagement rather than an optional ‘add-on’. Across all consultation formats, members identified debt burdens, fiscal space constraints, concessional finance, domestic resource mobilisation, tax justice and predictable funding for civil society as central concerns.” (Consultation dossier, p. 6)</p> | <p>Added reference to finance as advocacy priority in “What we demand” (p.4), “Must haves and red lines” (p.7) and elsewhere throughout text.</p> |
| Financing | <p>LAC FGD called for targeted advocacy on financing, in particular debt relief. Survey responses ranked debt relief/restructuring, domestic resource mobilisation and tax justice among the top financing priorities for members. (Survey dataset)</p> | <p>Added references to debt relief as priority ask throughout document, including in “Must haves and red lines” (p.7). Strengthened emphasis on structural financial inequalities and tax justice in Pillar 3 (“A fit-for-purpose framework”) and in the Background section discussing financing architecture.</p> |

| Theme | Consultation evidence | Implication for final Vision Paper text |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Civic space | “Civic space is consistently treated as an enabling condition for negotiation legitimacy, accountability and implementation. Survey responses and FGDs reflect widespread concern about shrinking or uneven civic space, though the form differs by region.” (Consultation dossier, p. 6) | Added recommendations on civic space and inclusion in “What we demand” (p.4), “Must haves and red lines” (p.7), and as key theme in 3. Background (p.5) |
| Accountability | “There is broad agreement that voluntary accountability mechanisms under the SDG framework have proven insufficient. Members call for stronger transparency, independent monitoring and mechanisms that better translate commitments into practice.” (Consultation dossier, p. 8) | Added recommendation on mandatory reporting in What we demand” (p.4) and “Must haves and red lines” (p.7) |
| The role of Forus | “Across all consultation instruments, members converge on a clear set of expectations. Forus is expected to convene and coordinate, provide strategic political analysis and sense-making, advocate and amplify collective positions, build alliances and support members operating in constrained civic environments.” (Consultation dossier, p. 10) | Added references to Forus taking a leading role in Exec Sum (p. 2) and 5. Engagement: Tactics and future proofing (p. 8) |
| The role of Forus | Francophone Africa FGD emphasised evidence generation and research as key to advocacy. (FGD note) | Added “Evidence generation” under 5. Tools, products and actions, p. 15 |
| The role of Forus | In LAC FGD, several participants stressed key role of Forus as convener of civil society groups (FGD note) Survey respondents ranked regional coordination, national-level member support and alliance-building beyond civil society among the most important roles for Forus. (Survey dataset) | Added reference to Forus leadership role in bringing CSOs together and to highlight local voices in 5. Engagement: Tactics and future proofing (p. 8) Strengthened emphasis on coalition-building and connecting national-to-global advocacy in Section 5: Engagement. |
| Financing / Climate | Pacific FGD participants prioritised financing through a climate lens, with specific emphasis on adaptation funding and Loss & Damage compensation. (Pacific FGD notes) | Should be reflected in Pillar 3 climate bullet in Section 4 can we add Loss & Damage compensation as a specific ask from Pacific members.? |

CONTACT US

JOIN THE LAUNCH OF THE FULL REPORT!

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About Forus

→ **Forus** is an innovative global network supporting civil society for effective social change gathering 74 National NGO Platforms and 8 Regional Coalitions, representing over 24,000 NGOs

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