

STRATEGY CONSULTATION | DISCUSSION NOTE

The Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) is an international NGO that leverages the power of human rights to inspire fairer and more sustainable economies. We collaborate with partners across movements to expose the injustice of economic policies that systematically undermine rights and to support innovative advocacy for reform.

Our 2020-2023 strategy focused our advocacy on two principal axes: advancing fiscal justice and articulating a vision of a rights-based economy. We've played a widely recognized role in bringing together the human rights and economic justice fields. We've increasingly focused on debt and resources for climate action, given the significant impact they have on fiscal space, particularly in the Global South. To date, that work has focused on increasing awareness about how these policies affect people's rights and contributing a rights perspective to collective advocacy efforts.

Based on reflections from our current strategy, as well as initial external and internal conversations about the next one, we see a number of opportunities and challenges. This note shares and invites feedback on the insights gathered, which formed the basis of a series of thematic and regional consultations we conducted in June and July 2023. **Summaries from each of those consultations can be found below.**

Opportunities and challenges in the current landscape

Momentum and opportunities for systemic reforms to global financial architecture:

- A strong push for urgent reforms to the global financial architecture, with some proposals gaining political momentum among civil society coalitions and governments regionally and internationally (e.g., a UN Tax Convention, Loss and Damage Fund, the V20's Accra-Marrakech Agenda).
- Shifts away from a narrow framing of critical issues such as climate finance in international negotiations, with governments from low- and middle-income countries pushing for discussions around structural barriers which are impeding their access to resources. However, proposals on the table still do not go far enough in terms of calls for systemic reforms.
- A number of key events in the coming years (e.g., the Summit for the Future and World Social Summit) where systemic reforms can be pursued, but these will require significant cross-movement collaboration, given the influence of corporate interests and reluctance of global north countries to shift power.

Greater cross-movement mobilization but silos and barriers need to be addressed

- Civil society groups increasingly emphasizing (and organizing around) the connections between climate financing and reforms to tax and debt—and adopting decolonial, feminist, and green lenses on these issues. However, we see a need for these efforts need to be amplified, including by breaking down silos and identifying synergies and shared priorities across agendas.

- There are more advocacy spaces than ever around issues of social, economic, and climate justice. This is both a good and bad thing for civil society. While it presents more opportunities to promote our messages, it also makes it difficult to know where to focus our energies and to pursue systemic, rather than piecemeal, reforms.
- The highly technical nature and narrow framing of some critical discussions as well as the logistical barriers to participation in key international negotiations continue to impede the ability of many movements and NGOs to fully engage with such discussions.
- Prominent economic alternatives are being articulated in a top-down manner and primarily discussed within academic, policy, NGO and UN circles in the Global North, instead of building on people's lived experiences and on the demands of social movements who have pushed for these alternatives for decades.
- Across the globe, we are seeing a rise in right-wing movements, increased authoritarianism, and a pushback against multilateralism. This leads to breaks in global solidarity at the international level and an increase in populist rhetoric that co-opts economic messaging at the national level. Finding rights-based messaging to combat these trends and win over the people who support them can lead to a breakthrough in the push for a more equitable economy.

A battle of narratives supported by deeply entrenched corporate interests:

- The current polycrisis has exposed the flaws of neoliberalism. An increasing number of actors are calling for a new system to replace it. However, we cannot underestimate the power of conservative economic ideology and while there may be a lot of agreement on the problem, there is less on the solution.
- Narratives of scarcity and market-based efficiencies continue to be advanced across all fora. They posit that governments cannot generate the necessary resources to save nature, avert the climate crisis, and meet development needs and must attract private capital by making these issues more profitable or less risky (or both) to investors.
- A strong push towards greater financialization (blended finance, de-risking private investments, creation of new financial instruments and markets with nature and infrastructure as new asset classes) in key proposals for reforms to multilateralism, climate, biodiversity and development financing.
- This is closely linked to and exacerbated by the outsized, deeply entrenched, and often opaque influence of corporate interests in international negotiations and corporate funding of massive lobbying, public relations and advertising efforts to promote such narratives and policies.
- A rights-based framing could help make an overarching case for action across issues. We're seeing uptake of rights arguments in support of progressive reforms among civil society, although this has largely been at a conceptual level; we've seen less elaboration of what a rights-based transformation of the global financial architecture would look like. Moving from the conceptual to the concrete would be helpful in galvanizing broader support for reforms that can shift power but this also requires an honest engagement with concerns around delays by the international human rights movement in tackling issues such as inequality and colonization.

How CESR can respond to these opportunities and challenges:

Feedback from our partners and allies indicates that CESR is valued for its knowledge production, thought leadership, and movement-bridging roles. Partners say this has helped equip them with new ways to look at economic issues; new ideas about how to leverage human rights in their work; and form new relationships across different sectors. What these roles might translate into, in terms of our new strategy, could include:

- Strengthening the normative arguments that states' human rights obligations extend to taking collective action to mobilize resources, including through tax and debt reforms and reparations, for truly sustainable development and to achieve climate justice. This includes radically shifting power relationships between high- and low- and middle-income countries, as well as between states and private capital.
- Being propositional about what rights-based reforms look like concretely (e.g., to debt sustainability analysis, the UN Tax Convention, etc.)
- Identifying synergies between different agendas for reform of the global financial architecture and alternative economic models, particularly feminist, decolonial, green, and rights-based agendas (in partnership with groups and movements advancing these reforms). Translating these to shared priorities to enable more coordination on and amplification of advocacy and campaigning.
- Producing materials that analyze and demystify proposals for reforms to global financial architecture, which promote financialization, and for raising resources for climate justice, in order to bridge movements working on human rights, economic justice, tax, debt, development, gender, labor, and climate justice.
- Producing collaborative case studies that build a more comprehensive body of evidence, based on people's lived experiences, that shows the concrete ways the status quo harms people's rights as well as the risks around proposals which further entrench market-based approaches.
- Challenging narratives that underpin the promotion of financialization and instead advance alternate proposals and economic visions for generating resources for climate justice and sustainable development.
- Facilitating mutual learning across movements in different regions and sectors, in order to deepen collaboration and amplify strategies.

The questions we explored in our consultations included...

- *Do the opportunities and challenges presented on this issue resonate? Is there anything you would change or nuance or add? Do you see these playing out differently across regions?*
- *What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of leveraging rights for the opportunities and challenges we have discussed, and the specific approach we've set out for doing so?*
- *How do you think CESR might add value to or complement existing work? What might CESR need to put in place (in terms of its presence, capacity and ways of working) in order to add value to existing initiatives and to expand its work with movements?*

Read the summary of feedback we received from partners and allies during our thematic consultations on:

1. [Catalyzing progress on alternative economic models](#)
2. [Transforming the global financial architecture](#)
3. [Challenging the financialization of development, climate action, and the protection of biodiversity](#)
4. [Resourcing Climate Justice](#)

Read the summary of feedback we received during our regional consultations from partners and allies from:

5. [Asia-Pacific](#)
6. [Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
7. [South West Asia and North Africa](#)
8. [Sub-Saharan Africa](#)

1 | THEMATIC CONSULTATION ON CATALYZING PROGRESS ON ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC MODELS

Feedback we heard on opportunities and challenges:

Focus more on dynamics between the Global North and the Global South:

- As an ongoing legacy of colonialism, global rules for macroeconomic policy continue to be made in the Global North and imposed on the Global South; these asymmetrical power relations don't 'enable breathing room' for alternatives, so they remain marginal.
- We need to be influencing the Global North as a place where change happens, but bringing in perspectives of the Global South. Without this perspective, there is a risk that discussions about alternatives such as degrowth ignore the needs of Global South countries, don't challenge power, and replicate patterns of neocolonialism. Examples shared included:
 - The push from the Global North for mineral extraction needed for a green transition (e.g. lithium extraction from water scarce regions needed for electric cars).
 - The near absence of Global South voices in key debates happening in the Global North.
 - The size and scale of the Inflation Reduction Act, which allows the US to get 'all the best bits of global value change for itself'.
- The relationship between China and the US is leading to global tensions, which can allow the Global South to have more negotiating power.
- South-South coordination has declined in recent years, but there is renewed opportunity for this, including the new 'pink tide' in Latin America. What conditions are needed to make this happen and how can we set up better networks to facilitate it?

- To leverage this opportunity, supporting Global South movements – including environmental, anti-racism and decolonial movements – is really important. Critiques of the extractive resource-based global development model from Global South actors need to be amplified. The role of global north movements, NGOs and unions is also a critical component in this shift.

Don't underestimate the resilience of dominant ideologies:

- Neoclassical economics is tremendously powerful and unbelievably persistent. The knowledge creators within the economy perpetuate this. So, alternative models are 'unable to reach a critical momentum'.
- In some countries, neoliberalism is being replaced with ethnonationalism; the rise of the right is very much around the corner; this makes the gains over the last decade very fragile (Brazil an illustrative example of this as progress on the solidarity economy in the early 2000s was undone when the far right came to power).
- Another tactic to be aware of is greenwashing and the co-option of human rights discourse by conservative actors.
- Policy networks that support neoliberalism still use the old strategy to divide and conquer.
- Resources are slim, civic space is shrinking; this creates competition among that makes it difficult to build unity among different alternatives.
- To effectively contest these dominant models, we need to understand the politics and power –as well as ideology – behind them.

Adopt a systems change perspective that looks for multiple leverage points:

- Systems change requires a multidimensional crisis. Is the current crisis what's needed to push out neoliberalism? The ecological crisis could be and we should focus on it more.
- A key issue is what degree of synergy is needed to achieve change. On the one hand, we need to be careful to not talk about one single alternative model. Alternatives have to be geographically, culturally, politically placed. On the other hand, coordination is important; we should avoid a multiplicity of proposals that aren't complementary.
- Thinking about the different 'leverage points' in the system could help in better visibilizing the complementary that already exists, as well as strengthening it further. These include:
 - Shifts in local innovations and smaller-scale initiatives. There is a lot to learn from the Global South about building social solidarity economies, which provide a major source of employment (in contrast to the Global North where earlier alternatives declined with the rise of the welfare state, but have not been revived since its rolling back).
 - Shifts in rules and institutions. It is necessary to "put more society in government" at the national, regional and global levels; so the fight for institutional mechanisms of social participation is also important.
 - Shifts in cultural influences.
 - We are seeing some shift in the narrative, as more actors become skeptical about the impact of and logic behind neoliberal approaches. In some ways, we can say the narrative has won. Politicians mostly do not support neoliberalism explicitly anymore but still promote its core tenets.

- Skepticism of neoliberalism will continue to gain traction. But we're not winning narratives on fatalism, which is as or more dangerous than the neoliberal narrative as it robs people of the idea that change is possible and worth fighting for. So, narrative change efforts need to be fed by evidence of the viability of alternatives.

Center social movements in efforts to build power:

- Debates about alternatives talk about shifts in ideas and shifts in narratives, but not enough about how to challenge power. Unless we grow our bases, we won't have real change.
- This points to the need to think through an effective strategy for advancing alternatives that includes mass organizing across movements, enabling identification of experiences as exploitation, building structural economic power, etc. People pointed to various positive examples of environmental and anti-racist movements such as indigenous movements in Brazil and the need to be bold in the support to such movements.
- At the moment, most policy and research work is divided from the work of grassroots activists and frontline movements.
- Real alliances with social movements are critical; we need to be building alternatives with them; it's time to be bold in the support we can give. Spaces for alliance building are limited. The World Social Forum used to play that role; Our Future is Public may offer this?
- Power bases include movements and civil society, but also governments and other powerful actors. Want to generate debate at different levels.

Feedback we heard on how to respond included:

Be thoughtful about how we're positioning ourselves:

- CESR sits at an interesting nexus as an NGO with some sense of a convening role; if ToC is to put the organization's power behind agendas that movements are driving, and accompanying them in that, this involves quite a radical shift in praxis, e.g. really having movements in the room, learning to work together, understanding different capacities and approaches.
- Movements don't need us, we need them. We therefore have to be humble and ask: how can we help? Some of what might be requested isn't possible to map out in advance. This can mean diverging from the organization's own prepared agenda. It is also vital that the ownership of ideas remains with organizations and movements from the Global South.
- Also important to recognize shifting forms of social movements; some aren't articulated around large scale structural change, but in reality they're doing that. Alliances can be diverse and unexpected and creative (e.g. alliances between domestic workers and housewives in Paraguay on valorization of care work).

Consider being more selective in what we're mapping:

- There are a lot of mapping initiatives; CESR can build on these – acknowledging where there's complementary – while recognizing different purposes and processes.
- Are clear areas of alignment between alternatives, including on: the purpose of the economy; the need to be preventative; the need to be regenerative; the need for more democratic processes. Conversation around values can create more alignment and convergence.

- Need to better understand what alliances look like, what brings them together, what sustains them, how they subvert oppressive structures in unexpected ways, etc.
- The process for doing this should include: checking in with others; enabling space for others to speak up; facilitating translation across languages, but also across issues and spaces, etc.

Keep sight of what human rights bring, including a focus on the state:

- To bring rights into the economy, it would be useful to look at the different alternatives out there and say whether and how they are actually grounded in human rights. A value CESR can add is showing how rights can be used to enhance these visions.
- We don't just want to redistribute, but to have a better distribution system. A critical nexus for this is at the state; without an enabling state, many advances in transforming the economy decline; states should be pushed to use every tool available to support economic transformation; important to see where this has worked and how it can be scaled up.

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2 | THEMATIC CONSULTATION ON TRANSFORMING THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Feedback we heard on opportunities and challenges:

Focus more on dynamics between the Global North and the Global South:

- It's important to look at the current economic system in the context of historical junctures (such as the abolishment of slavery and decolonization) where racial and economic inequities were not remedied. This has led to toxic debt, which in turn has led to risk premiums being applied to countries (e.g. through the bias of credit rating agencies) that, in reality, are providing the world's resources.
- The popularity of supposed 'win-win' solutions for climate financing (which in reality means increasing financialization and more debt) ignores this history and the accountability for it that rich countries must provide for the Global South. Proposals for reforms such as the World Bank Evolution Roadmap and Bridgetown are not really addressing accountability for colonial structural legacies, for example.
- This geopolitical context has also shaped the human rights agenda and how it relates to the right to development. Examples shared include:
 - Countries like the US, who promote human rights, have a long history of blocking economic deals that would advance rights in Global South countries.
 - The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has declined in prominence, while the Human Rights Council has increased.

Be aware of traps while pursuing opportunities in the multilateral agenda:

- There will always be spaces we can use for advocacy. But not all are equal; not everything is worth investing in. This can create confusion about where to focus energy. There's lots of "running after the flag" and figuring out where to "hitch your wagon". It's a struggle to be attentive to multiple things moving at the same time, but to engage with a systemic vision to avoid becoming siloed. This makes it important to know what spaces are useful, for what, at different times and to recognise that some processes are both opportunities and challenges at the same time. They may open up new avenues for change but not necessarily the kinds of changes that civil society has been demanding.
- Non-traditional spaces where decisions are being made are getting traction from world leaders. But they're often opaque and lack democratic processes (e.g. they exclude civil society, provide little information). They open a crack, because suggesting change; but not the kind of change we've been demanding. There are also new political configurations which can be helpful for civil society at different times (e.g. Pacific countries' advocacy on debt and climate) but it is difficult for NGOs to know who and where to tap and when.
- To get us to where we need to get, we need to transform the institutions that have become gatekeepers in the global economy. Otherwise, we're just scratching the surface and not dealing with the bigger picture. Trying to get IFIs to recognize their human rights responsibilities is a challenge. Also need to look at the WTO and how trade has been organized to stop global south countries always ending up at the losing end.
- Civil society efforts are focused on making the UN the decision-making space for economic governance. Seen some success, e.g. the UNTC and a fourth FfD conference in 2025 (which has a progressive history that can be built upon). But the former is currently falling short in convening an equitable space for discussion and decision-making.
- Progress through the UN is also not without challenges. What the UN has said on debt hasn't really evolved over the years, for example. What would change that? How likely are we to get concessions from Global North countries in spaces that they don't dominate?

Think about the different dimensions of corporate capture, including how it is fueling financialization:

- It's increasingly the UN cozying up to the private sector, rather than the other way around. More staff across agencies seem to have corporate backgrounds; this is solidifying the "corporate engagement" strategy and the use of development finance to privatize public services.
- Lots of development and climate finance debates are about "squeezing juice out of existing lemons", which means no new money from rich countries on the table and a push towards private finance with lots of carrots and very few sticks.
- Is a narrative that "business is just business". Business is political. But, that narrative has ever really been effectively challenged. So we're missing opportunities to challenge things on a political basis.
- Banking solutions to debt have been mainstreamed since COVID-19 and countries have high exposure to private debt. Right now private lenders refuse to participate in debt relief negotiations, for example, and there's no mandate to make them. Initiatives such as legislation in New York to hold private lenders accountable for participating in debt relief initiatives need to be replicated.

National politics are also important to think about:

- The rise of right-wing populism puts a break on global solidarity. What's the human rights-based angle to deal with this? For example, what's the human rights-based message to win over people who support those right-wing governments?
- In the Global South, rising authoritarianism, militarization, and closing civic space means that an injection of cash from the Global North is not necessarily a win if it exacerbates power imbalance between people and their (sometimes militarized) governments. If you look at Africa pre- and post-COVID, you can see the break of the social contract, leading to loss of trust in institutions.

Recognize the challenges within civil society:

- Biggest challenge is erosion of global solidarity. Climate change is so obviously a global challenge, but there's not a cent, compared to the need. Successful examples of global solidarity shared included: the anticolonial and anti-apartheid struggles; mobilization around the Seattle WTO conference; the jubilee movement and Make Poverty History campaign.
- Today there is a lot of fragmentation (which philanthropy is contributing to) and we imitate the same structures that we seek to dismantle, becoming disconnected to the grassroots. This is a moral and ethical challenge, not just a technical one.
- Connected to building solidarity is building coalitions on abstract issues that seem disconnected from local problems. There are efforts to localize conversations around tax inequities and connect the different constituencies who don't have political power on their own, but are contributing to the economy (e.g. informal workers, migrants).
- There is an opportunity to identify growing inequalities within Global North countries—and the role of the private sector in this—as a commonality that binds us together. The majority in the Global North have also been negatively impacted by oppressive systems.

Feedback we heard on how to respond:

Concretizing human rights would add value:

- Need to be more explicit about how realizing human rights demands the shifting power between countries. Global solidarity and international cooperation are human rights obligations. In seeking to right historical wrongs – in line with these obligations – there is a need for calls for reparations for debt and restitution for damage done by global North countries in the global South.
- Tracking UN debates on finance shows how easily language is co-opted and hollowed out (including feminist, decolonial, intersectional). Important to really unpack and spell out what we want to see.
- The upcoming process to review the debt sustainability assessment framework for low and middle income countries (which may seem technical but is at the heart of big money). Lots of debt justice organizations have a talking point that the framework should be human rights-based. But there's no clarity on what that would look like. CESR could play a valuable role in defining this.

- Make the case for different methods of raising resources for development and climate action which don't rely on debt such as progressive taxation.

There is demand for support in navigating global advocacy spaces, including:

- Understanding how regions and subregions are coming together to formulate power in a different way on different issues.
- Having a sustained presence in New York that can be a "go to" organization for anything UN.
- UN Tax Convention resolution is an opportunity but needs to be transformed to a more equitable convening space.
- Connecting the human rights community to financing debates (e.g. in gearing up for a possible 4th Ffd conference, reforms to WTO rules).

Translating across audiences and convening across geographies are key parts of movement-bridging:

- There's an increasing gap between NGOs and social movements because a lot of things get lost in translation. Human rights arguments need to be more concrete, accessible, and grounded in reality.
- Humanizing policies is also key. We're not just talking about tax, debt, trade, etc. We're talking about lives at stake. This brings out the moral and ethical dimensions of these issues and how the dominant economic system is antithetical to these dimensions.
- Start the analysis from people and then work outwards to see how different aspects of the broader economic justice movement can ultimately support those people.
- Connecting different sectors and issues to show their interconnectedness and identify common interests.
- How can we communicate issues in a simple manner so different consistencies can use these arguments, from the media to movements? Every human rights issue is a tax issue, but articulating this can be a struggle. For example, it's hard to find a place for tax issues in union platforms, even though it has a huge impact on workers. Focusing on the redistribution of revenue is abstract; need to make the link to spending. There's great value-add in providing this technical translation.
- National-level advocacy and campaigning is important; cannot absolve governments and this needs to happen at the national level through campaigns (e.g. through citizen debt audits) that bring together different actors and build energy from the grassroots.
- Being able to communicate with partners and connect groups to exchange learnings about what is working in different parts of the world is important, but very hard to organize. In many cases, national and regional actors have no idea what is happening outside of their bubble. It is important to also link to unions and civil society in the Global North.

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3 | THEMATIC CONSULTATION ON CHALLENGING THE FINANCIALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE ACTION, AND THE PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY

Feedback we heard on opportunities and challenges:

It's important to clarify what we mean by the term financialization and the scope of associated issues we're focusing on:

- In the economic literature, financialization is a theorization of the type of economic system we've entered over the past 30–40 years, which has been promoted in different ways since the 1980s.
- The issues mapped out in the note are a particular sub-sector of trends linked to the Financing for Development discourse, the Wall Street Consensus concept, etc.
- At the same time, the breadth of these issues is huge; different types of financialization might need a different approach. It's useful to be cross-cutting—as our understanding of the full picture is generally limited—but which pieces are we talking about and how they intersect would be useful to unpack.
- We also need more clarity on what needs to change. What's required is to get people working on financialization in different sectors to speak in a more harmonized way about the “upstream drivers” and to align around a common agenda for better regulating the financial sector to serve the public interest.

There are sector-specific trends to be aware of:

- The commodification of nature has been gaining pace for a number of decades, but it's really stepping up right now:
 - New financialization schemes being presented as nature-based climate solutions are leading to (sometimes militarized) land grabs in the Global South, primarily Africa.
 - The Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework opens the door wide for market-based financialization. This is a new challenge for civil society that works within that space. But the framework does include safeguards and recognizes indigenous peoples' rights. Civil society is starting to look at this, and unpack what it means, which is an opportunity.
- Financialization isn't just something to look at in the context of *addressing* climate change; it's also a *cause of* climate change (e.g., in driving unnecessary construction around the world).
- In discussions about how we prepare for the next pandemic, there are lots of conversations going on about how public finance can be leveraged to bring in greater amounts of private finance; we're seeing growing private investment in health systems in Africa and Asia, with very little analysis of its impact. The legacies of historical power relations and how they relate to the marketization of health are also relevant (which the WHO Economic Council report looks at).
- Post 2008, we've seen the creation of farmland funds, with almost all of the money coming from institutional investors—a large majority of which are pension funds. Still an ongoing issue. Involvement of development banks in the agriculture sector is another challenge; they're funding large agricultural companies, as they are the most profitable.

- In the water and sanitation sector, the conversation has become a bit schizophrenic. There's a lot of talk about increasing the availability of finance to help reach the SDGs and about how to raise extra finance to strengthen systems. Many of these conversations are taking place in multi-stakeholder partnerships with competing interests.

The complexity of private sector power should be emphasized:

- Market actors are heavily influencing development policy; governments are supportive because it gives them a 'get out of jail free card' for failing to deliver on their financing commitments.
- Privately financed projects are often developed outside national policy frameworks; they're add-on plans and remain off budget. This skews priorities; crowds out public investment; and leads to greater debt.
- Financial actors are also playing a kind of 'behind the scene' role, influencing the behavior of multinational corporations (e.g., in driving unhealthy consumption of various commodities).
- Financialization anonymizes who is behind the scenes (e.g., we don't know where the money for green funds is originating from) and practices shift rapidly to get around regulation; this makes it less accountable to the people.
- The imperialist drive behind financialization makes it opaque; it's difficult to see where the pushes and pulls come from; there's a lot more to be done to inform and education people about the power of financial actors; some specific actors mentioned included:
 - The Gates Foundation: which plays a really critical role in promoting the narrative around financialization being a positive thing and works very closely with the IFC
 - The World Economic Forum: which is a big actor in pushing this agenda, beyond the development banks.
 - Pension funds: building alliances with workers by showing where their retirement money is going has ended up being more difficult than anticipated, given the vagueness around who is managing pension funds, the structure of retirement schemes, the amount of money that exists, etc.

There are challenges to cross-sector collaboration among civil society:

- Increasingly more and more groups are starting to see the importance of working on the issue from a cross-sector perspective. But most are underfunded and overstretched and don't have the capacity to coordinate. There's a lack of understanding of what's out there.
- Better connection with social movements is also important. E.g., tenants' groups have had enormous successes pushing back against financialization, particularly in places like Germany, but also increasingly in Canada and Mexico.
- At the same time, the effects of the polycrisis are really weighing on people in social movements. Coupled with the issue of shrinking of civic space, this inhibits coordination and collaboration. Something to think about is how to help overcome the inertia of national and local movements being pushed down.

- Allies beyond civil society are also critical. How to reach them is an important question. For example, the sanitation sector is mostly engineers; they need realistic advice on how to strengthen services without privatization which leads to debt.

Feedback we heard on how we should respond:

Leveraging human rights, but not in a technocratic way:

- There is value in articulating how financialization is impacting people's rights. Even if their engagement with international law is very loose, structuring arguments around it has supported communities to build real power.
- It's important to utilize all the tools we have; the human rights-based approach is one. In the biodiversity space, it has had enormous traction, because of the special rights given to indigenous people.
- That said, we should nuance where we do need to be explicit on rights framing and where we can be more implicit; talking about whether or not a particular financialization strategy does or doesn't breach international human rights law can get us bogged down.
- How human rights obligations relate to the commons could be interesting to explore; the concept is gaining increasing momentum; it argues certain issues should be taken out of market dynamics all together.
- Working across constituencies will also help enormously; CESR is well positioned to help actors beyond the human rights community understand the relationship between human rights and financialization.

Strengthening narratives that counter the promotion of financialization:

- The kind of framing that may help identify synergies is to talk about the way that financialization is leading to exploitation and to the extraction of resources, wealth and value (e.g., out of healthcare systems into shareholders and tax havens). It's almost a form of neocolonialism. Spotlighting where money is flowing is also important.
- Narratives of scarcity and market efficiency are strong. But NGOs have been nervous to contest them without case studies to give concrete examples.
- Counter-narrative promoting the value of public finance is also important, e.g., showing how private investment extracts value and public investment creates value, how resources can be raised and why it's beneficial over private finance.

Developing case studies, including:

- Examples showing different types of investments, including alternatives to financialization, such as the implications of private vs public finance.
- Evidence about what goes into de-risking; how it plays out in different sectors; where it sits in longer trend of defunding the public in favor of the private; and what implications that has for people's rights (e.g., how the financialization of the energy transition will impact people's access to services like electricity).
- Making difficult concepts accessible through storytelling.

Facilitating cross-sector collaboration:

- Sharing information and convening conversations to learn how other sectors are combatting financialization.

Building awareness about alternatives:

- Looking at effective alternatives to financialization (e.g., Shift Directives) and what processes would be needed to implement them is also important, given how entrenched the model is.
- We should focus on working collectively to implement existing models, rather than trying to constantly create new ones. It would be helpful to do a sort of 'literature review' of models for change on financialization (e.g., water re-municipalization) and how they could work and what could be followed across sectors.

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4 | THEMATIC CONSULTATION ON RESOURCING CLIMATE JUSTICE

Feedback we heard on opportunities and challenges:

Climate justice issues are being discussed in an increasing number of forums, meaning CESR must be strategic about the spaces we choose to engage:

- While it is perhaps the best known climate advocacy space, engagement with the UNFCCC may not be the most strategic. The space is overly crowded and the forum often will not engage with progressive proposals, such as reparations.
- The trend of weakened multilateralism has been playing out in global climate spaces. This has led to an increase of new spaces for climate discussions that are often less democratic and effective, and exclude civil society, such as the Paris Summit for a New Global Financing Pact.
- A key way to advocate for climate justice is by taking these messages to new forums, particularly those around economic governance.

There is a need for stronger links between the climate justice and economic justice movements:

- A greater exchange of knowledge between climate justice and economic justice actors would further the goals of both movements by promoting the alignment of economic structures, such as trade agreements, with ecological structures.
- Combatting corporate capture of climate policies and advocacy spaces is a key challenge for climate justice actors. Strategies used by economic justice actors, particularly in development spaces, are a useful tool in challenging this.
- Opportunities exist to build out the economic components of climate agreements and use them to advocate for a just transition, such as Article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement, which focuses on financial flows.

- Very few organizations are focusing on taxes and climate finance and ensuring that proposals for taxes are consistent with the approaches developed by the tax justice movement over many years (not regressive etc.).

There is room to strengthen how human rights engage in climate justice:

- More unpacking needs to be done on how human rights can be used as a tool for climate justice actors. This includes clearly articulating how norms, such as international cooperation and assistance, can be applied in a climate context and used to hold states accountable for regressive policies.
- A key way to insert rights into climate debates is by engaging with climate actors who are participating in those debates, rather than human rights actors engaging in the debates themselves. Since these spaces are often crowded, it is better to build the capacity of longstanding actors in these forums, rather than inserting new actors.
- The climate justice movement would benefit from an expansion of the interpretation of collective rights in the climate context. One way to do this is by supporting and uplifting the messages of the indigenous rights movement, who often have a strong and radical interpretation of collective rights, and have been at the forefront of the climate justice movement.

Approaches to climate justice must be feminist and decolonial, challenging Global North/Global South power dynamics:

- Climate mitigation policies promoted by the Global North, such as renewable energies, often lead to harmful impacts caused by extractive practices in the Global South. These policies tend to disproportionately impact women and other already marginalized communities. It is important to critique these policies from a Global South perspective and to bring these voices into decision making spaces in the Global North.
- Many organizations in the Global North agree that climate justice must be decolonial but fail to carry this out in practice. It is necessary for Global North organizations to take radical stances on climate justice, uplifting positions promoted by those in the Global South.
- In addition to uplifting the voices of indigenous and other marginalized communities in the Global South, perspectives from marginalized communities disproportionately facing the impacts of climate change in the Global North must also be centered in calls for climate justice, as they are often overlooked.

Feedback we heard on how CESR can respond:

Thought leadership and bringing together economic and climate justice:

- CESR's thought leadership can help bring together different critical issues such as collective rights, move beyond a narrow framing of climate finance to look at how to really resource climate justice (especially through increased public finance), and develop a reparations framework which also addresses institutional transformations.
- CESR can use our experience engaging in development finance debates and apply it to those around climate finance, in order to counter corporate capture in these spaces. By sharing our experience countering narratives around private and blended financing, we can help build the

capacity of climate groups engaging in these discussions and let them know what red flags to look out for.

- Our ongoing engagement in certain development finance spaces, such as the Financing for Development Forum, provides the opportunity to amplify climate justice actors' messages and participation in these spaces, allowing them to reach new audiences.
- CESR can play a role in helping national climate justice actors navigate global advocacy spaces, whether it's the human rights or economic justice spaces we are active in or by applying knowledge from how these spaces work to climate advocacy spaces.

Creating channels for knowledge and skill sharing between movements:

- CESR can bridge silos by producing tools and analysis for linking different movements, identifying synergies, and helping challenge narratives around the need for market-based approaches.
- Creating resources that help demystify human rights concepts and economic governance practices, including around the global financial architecture, for those in the climate justice movement who would benefit from these tools.
- Using CESR's positionality to increase mutual learning and strategizing among those in the climate justice, economic justice and human rights movement.

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5 | ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONSULTATION

Feedback we heard about opportunities and challenges:

There are contradictions between the positions governments are taking on the ground and in global level discussions:

- There's a lot of opportunity to push for an alternative agenda, working tactically and strategically with governments, who might have their own agendas. But, the political context is not as promising as in Latin America, in this regard.
- Governments are not representing people's demands; their positions mostly reflect corporate interests. For example:
 - South Asia also has a lot of influential tax havens; as a result, a lot of advocacy work around tax justice gets undercut.
 - Both Sri Lanka and India have very progressive positions on tax internationally (though a lot of it is symbolic) but when it comes to domestic agendas, national groups have concerns.
 - The policies governments are pushing for are not always necessarily in the spirit of solidarity or cooperation; if they were, we would have a regional tax body in Asia.
- Global South governments such as India are interested in financing mechanisms such as carbon markets (India happens to be the largest supplier of carbon credits and largest supplier

of offset projects in the world) and there is very little critique of blended finance, financialization and de-risking.

- UNFCCC SB 58 is another example where positions taken by governments contradict policy positions at national level.
- We need stronger Global South-led critiques of many of these ongoing issues.
- The G20 is seen as a space to demand greater participation of civil society.

The Global South and Global North are on different pages when it comes to climate financing:

- At the Paris Summit, the Global South and the Global North were speaking two different languages. Global South governments had very clear demands (debt cancellations, more grant based funding, concessional money), whereas the EU and USA were talking about global carbon pricing, which is bizarre given the urgency of large scale funding.
- Those of us in the Global South have to be very careful and prepared not let the Global North run away with their agenda.
- Civil society was late to talk about climate finance and really needs to move the climate justice movement forward on this issue.

There is momentum growing on key policy issues, but silos across movements are fragmenting demands:

- Priority issues in the region include:
 - Agriculture, trade liberalization, working with the farmers movement on climate change, food sovereignty, etc.
 - Challenging false solutions, carbon trading projects (e.g. in countries like Indonesia, Thailand, India).
 - Wealth taxes, which left movements, teacher groups, and academics are demanding governments look further into, in the context of debt crises.
- The economic justice and climate justice movement are not speaking to each other as much as they should be; they are talking about climate finance and other similar stuff, but not necessarily *with* each other; the economic justice movement is not engaging with the UNFCCC COP, for example, which is a problem.
- It is important to focus on the links between debt and tax. But what gets missed is the bigger question of 'who is this financing *for* at the end of the day?'. We're not talking enough about the communities; that continues to be the real issue. We must work towards bringing solutions on the table where the community (e.g. migrant workers or refugees) is able to talk about public financing, public work programs, social protection, or even human rights in general.
- A lot of policy proposals focus on debt-for-climate swaps, social protection issues, etc. But they remain very surface level and only touch certain kinds of infrastructure programs, not necessarily community programs.
- Tax is also a complicated issue. Many groups think it is important to look at domestic tax issues, rather than looking at international tax movements.

While what happens nationally has impacts on internationally and vice versa, a lot of groups working at the national level are caught up with immediate crises:

- People across the region are dealing with high inflation, rising living costs, changing weather patterns; marginalized groups are most affected; it's clear a lot of migrant workers are moving because of climate induced changes in Pakistan, for example.
- The IMF and World Bank are pushing austerity policies in countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan and there are a lot of issues with the way social protection is seen in debt restructuring processes. For example:
 - A pension reform program in Sri Lanka is likely to cost pensioners 30% of their income over the next decade or so.
 - The Sri Lankan government launched a new social protection scheme at the beginning of July, which has been criticized wildly by many groups, including the Feminist Collective Justice, for its failure to take account of gendered experiences of poverty.
- A lot of groups are dealing with issues like restrictions on free speech, attacks on activists, lawsuits.

We need to interrogate the role of private creditors in the solutions being imposed to debt crises in the region:

- Private creditors are heavily influencing the debt "solutions" that are impacting people's rights; this isn't being sufficiently discussed and dealt with in the international arena.
- Several private creditors have filed claims in the US and in Canada against the Sri Lankan government.
- The Asian Development, World Bank, and Paris Club are very closely linked, despite the rhetoric about their separate agendas.

Feedback we heard on how we might respond:

Strengthening the links between the international, regional, and national levels by making global policy spaces more accessible:

- Many organizations working at the national level do not have the time or capacity to keep track of debates at the global level. CESR can play a role in sharing information from the international level to the national level, in order to help strengthen partners' work at the national level.
- Along with sharing information, CESR has a role to play in creating space for national organizations in international spaces. By bringing national partners and their grassroots allies into international forums, such as the UN or IMF, we can both amplify the voices of our partners, and provide much needed evidence rooted in national experiences to more theoretical debates happening at the international level.
- It is often the case that national organizations are working in depth on issues, such as economic crises, but are unable to navigate the policy spaces where these issues are being discussed, such as the IMF. CESR can provide training and other resources based on our experiences in these spaces to build the capacity of national organizations to carry out more targeted advocacy in these spaces.

Bridging silos across movements and regions:

- Throughout the Asia Pacific, there are strong regional movements around issues such as debt and climate. Given CESR's work on the nexus of these issues, we are positioned to help bring these movements together to build synergies and solidarity, including at the national and international levels.
- Creating channels to exchange knowledge and strategies across regions would be very beneficial to national organizations, especially those dealing with IMF loan policies. Using our role as an INGO working on these issues in various regions, CESR can help connect organizations throughout the Asia Pacific to partners in other regions of the world who have experience working on these issues, in order to share insights on advocacy strategies with the Fund, as well as ways to work with local partners trying to navigate these policies.
- Building these new partnerships across regions and movements can also help partners' messages reach new audiences and be applied to new contexts.
- CESR also has a role to play in connecting NGOs in the Global North and Global South, challenging historical dynamics when doing so. This includes ensuring that when Global North organizations hold information due to access to decision making spaces in the North, they are sharing this information with Global South allies in a timely manner, and being held accountable when they are not. It is also important to pressure Global North organizations to have their agendas led by those in the Global South, including when deciding which institutions should be influenced and which should be disrupted.

Making technical concepts and policies accessible to different actors:

- Breaking down the implications of different policy agreements, such as IMF loans or climate policies or tax agreements, in an accessible manner would be useful in helping organizations working on these policies assess their real world implications and how they can engage with them. For example, exposing the social impacts of climate financing agreements can help clarify how different social and climate justice actors can advocate for more equitable policies.
- Critiquing the promotion of financialization, demystifying its implications and exposing the politics that underlines it to support other organizations develop their own positions on the issue.
- Continuing to create brief and clear resources on how human rights concepts relate to, and enhance arguments for, economic and climate justice would be useful in partners' research and advocacy.

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6 | LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION

Feedback we heard on opportunities and challenges:

Human rights need to be made more accessible to those working on economic policy and justice:

- There is value in human rights norms and standards but more work needs to be done to show the value-add of rights to those working on economic justice. Currently, rights remain a niche topic discussed in certain circles. If we want to expand their use, more work needs to be done to articulate how they relate to various socioeconomic struggles.
- The human rights movement has struggled to create a narrative that counters the dominant right-wing narrative around economic conservatism. More needs to be done to build this rights-based counter narrative in order to get uptake by those fighting for progressive economic policies.

There is an opportunity to build alignment between the human rights, climate justice, and debt justice agendas:

- There have been a number of successes in the region in advancing rights-based fiscal policy in recent years. The next step in this work should be expanding it to include the debt and climate justice movements. The Caribbean in particular is a region where there is an opportunity to align debt and climate justice with human rights. Many countries in the region are facing a debt crisis, while also being some of the countries most disproportionately impacted by climate change. Human rights can play a role in linking these struggles.
- Those working on rights-based fiscal policy in the region should increase collaboration with climate justice actors to ensure that all fiscal policy proposals are structured in a way that incorporates climate adaptation. This needs to be done in different ways depending on the specific country's context.

In general, the political context throughout Latin America makes it an ideal region to promote a rights-based economy:

- While each country needs to be looked out individually, many nations across America have constitutions that are favorable to the conditions that underlie a rights-based economy. This provides legal avenues to seek accountability for rights-violating fiscal policies.
- There are strong grassroots movements throughout Latin America, who are key stakeholders and allies in this work. It is important to form alliances based on these movements' agendas and to tailor our tools and messages in ways that are accessible and practical to these actors.
- Recent policy shifts in the region, such as a shift towards green industrial policy, offers opportunities to influence reformulations of national policy landscapes, as they open questions on the role of domestic resource mobilization and the public sector.

Feedback we heard on how we might respond:

Create tools and resources that make technical concepts accessible:

- CESR is valued for our knowledge production. Continuing to create resources that explain in a digestible manner the links between fiscal, climate, and social issues in the region—so that activists can incorporate these different lenses into their work—would be a useful way to build on this.
- Engage with grassroots movements and create tools and resources that allow them to holistically incorporate human rights into their work.

Continue to build on our foundational work on fiscal policy, particularly tax, in the region:

- While there is an appetite for CESR to engage in new issues, such as debt and climate, it is important that we do not abandon our longstanding work on tax in the region. There has been a lot of uptake of this work by national organizations who would benefit from CESR's continued involvement.
- CESR should expand the network of organizations that it works with in the region, in order to build others' knowledge on issues of fiscal policy and human rights. It would be useful to work with both large organizations, such as Amnesty, as well as grassroots movements in this regard. This can help make the issue more mainstream and impactful.
- Along with expanding our network, CESR should consider expanding our tactics to promote messages on rights-based fiscal policy. This could include undertaking small campaigns with partners in the region.

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7 | SOUTH WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA REGIONAL CONSULTATION

Feedback we heard on opportunities and challenges:

Challenges our partners and allies are facing in the region:

- On the policy level, one of our allies highlighted the “inclusivity gap” as a challenge; in other words, there is a discrepancy between the rhetoric of inclusivity and policymaking in practice.
- Many allies expressed that while there is consensus around problems—many of which are common across regions—there is not as much work being done on articulating specific solutions for SWANA.
- A lot of the alternatives put forward for reforming the global economic system are very technical (e.g., the green transition), which makes it difficult for NGOs and social movements to engage with them.
- For example, the work on tax in the region has a lot of potential for growth, but there is limited capacity to popularize key moments (such as the OECD tax deal) among civil society and in public debates.
- Existing strategies such as campaigns, workshops, and demonstrations, while essential, have not made significant impacts in changing entrenched policies; there is a strong appetite to think collectively about new ways of working in the region.

- Another concern was the need for tools and mechanisms to safeguard individuals who face growing threats due to their advocacy roles, as civic space continues to shrink in the region.

Opportunities to harness:

- Adapting to geopolitical changes in Palestine and beyond: Recognizing and capitalizing on shifting geopolitical dynamics that are pushing economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political closer. Specifically today's multipolar landscape presents a strategic opportunity for expansive, visionary thinking beyond mere pragmatism.
- A strong sentiment resonating among allies is the need for a shift from mere reforms to holistic system change.
- Unifying local and global approaches: allies engaged in women's rights advocacy underscored the importance of connecting local challenges to their global drivers, while also ensuring solutions have local relevance.
- Climate issues, specifically loss and damage, are significant in the region and the region needs to be better represented in global climate dialogues like COP28.
- It's important to integrate gender perspectives, especially in climate discussions, and ensure women's participation and representation in global events.
- Historical insights can inform contemporary strategies, particularly from a decolonial perspective.

Feedback we heard on how we might respond:

- There's a clear call for stronger cross-regional and global networks to share knowledge, strategies, tactics, and resources—particularly on:
 - understanding and articulating the connections between various socioeconomic issues;
 - breaking down barriers between "expert" and "layman" in economic discussions, making these topics more relatable;
 - aligning with social movements, such as unions, to enhance advocacy efforts; and
 - strategies to sustain advocacy in environments where civic space is shrinking.
- Partners emphasized the potential of CESR in linking various organizations to tackle these issues, both within and across regions.
- It was also suggested CESR consider diversifying our advocacy tools, to be more comprehensive encompassing both global and local perspectives.
- Other suggestions included:
 - Enable analysis of alternatives in a way that is accessible, relatable, and engages with movements, national and local organizations.
 - Ensure, when working in partnerships, that policy alternatives are concrete to regional and national contexts and are well attuned to the lived realities and needs of local communities.
 - Advocacy should move towards pushing for significant systemic shifts, tackling the root causes of socioeconomic and climate crises.

8 | SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA REGIONAL CONSULTATION

Feedback we heard on opportunities and challenges:

Emphasize the issue of accountability, especially corporate accountability:

- The private sector should be held accountable for its role in worsening the debt crisis, as well as the various ways in which resource extraction has led to socioeconomic and climate injustices.
- Other actors, such as bilateral donors and creditors should be held accountable for the ways in which the unilateral decision making practices underpinning their lending ends up reinforcing social and economic inequalities by not directing funds where they are most needed. Even when these actors acknowledge wrongdoing, they reject calls for reparations.

Bring a nuanced, multidimensional, and intersectional lens to the issue climate justice:

- There is a need for feminist approaches and stronger feminist narratives around the issue of climate justice.
- Look at the intersections of debt and climate and who holds power here, whether it be global north states or corporations.
- Need to look at who controls natural resources. Even if the extractive industry is paying taxes to the countries they are operating in, those countries still don't have control over their own resources which could be more valuable.
- Energy transition policies promoted by global north states often lead to inequalities in the global south, due to mineral extraction practices that impact surrounding communities, with women being disproportionately affected.

Civil society, social movements, and others fighting for socioeconomic justice need a shared analysis of the problem and to be propositional with solutions:

- Currently, most civil society organizations and social movements have analyses focused on a specific issue or problem. Having a shared analysis, among groups pushing for accountability is necessary to achieve this goal.
- Since there are many proposals for economic alternatives out there, we need to tease out the common principles among these visions in order to build shared analyses and unified messaging.
- It's important to have a unified voice among civil society in order to amplify messages, but civil society should also work with governments in the global south to also promote this common messaging.
- Building strong and inclusive narratives is a key way to push for change by providing a unified message, grounded in evidence and lived realities.

Feedback we heard on how we might respond:

CESR has a lot of experience in collective skill building that can be used to support movements and front-line defenders build evidence and boost advocacy:

- As an international organization working with national level partners, CESR has the ability to bring these partners into new advocacy spaces, particularly those around global economic governance.
- We are also well suited to make the link between research on issues at the national level with trends at the global level.
- Many grassroots actors in the region would benefit from training on global financial architecture and how they can engage with it. In order to build mobilizations around this issue, people need to first learn what it is.
- CESR should continue to develop resources that others can draw on to enhance their research and advocacy practices, including methodological resources, as well as those that demystify and make technical concepts more accessible. There is also a demand for case studies showing good practices can be useful in articulating policy demands and showing how they play out in real life. These are particularly impactful when they use a storytelling approach that can help contribute to building new narratives.

Using CESR's positionality to open doors and connect actors across regions and movements:

- CESR can use its presence in different national contexts to connect actors working on common issues across regions and movements in order to build collective counter-power.
- Beyond connecting actors, CESR can also play a role in bringing those working on issues at the national level into new advocacy spaces at the global level.

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