



# carme *ngo*

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"In our time, we continue to see too many divisions, too many wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, fear of difference, and an economic model that exploits the Earth's resources and marginalizes the poorest."

—Pope Leo XIV  
Homily at the Inaugural Mass  
May 18, 2025

The mission of the Carmelite NGO is to actively participate in creating a more peaceful, just and loving world by advocating and caring for the spiritual and material needs of the human family and the environment. The NGO provides the Carmelite perspective on issues before the United Nations and focuses specifically on freedom of belief, human trafficking, education, and sustainability.



*The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, Spain*

## A Renewed Commitment to Financing Sustainable Development

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**B**etween June 30 and July 3, 2025, Seville, Spain, became the epicenter of the global debate on how to finance a more just and sustainable future. Over 10,000 people, including 50 heads of state, government, finance and foreign ministers, representatives of international organizations, academics, activists, and private sector leaders gathered at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) with a common goal: to transform the current international financial system so that it is capable of responding in a concrete manner to the enormous social, economic, and environmental challenges facing the world.

This conference was not just another event on the international calendar. It came at a time marked by growing economic instability, worsening climate conditions, and significant fatigue in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations and international community in 2015. As the 2030 deadline approaches, the commitments made at that time seem increasingly distant, and the urgency to redefine the rules of the game is more evident than ever.

One of the main outcomes of this meeting was the adoption of the so-called Seville Commitment, a document that clearly sets out the willingness of member states to resume the commitments made a decade ago in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and to go even further. The text of the Seville Commitment is not lim-

ited to formal reaffirmations: it includes a roadmap with concrete objectives and specific implementation mechanisms. The stated ambition is to close the financing gap that is preventing progress towards sustainable development, especially in the most vulnerable countries, in an international context marked by over-indebtedness, rising inequality, and the climate emergency.

Far from being an empty declaration of principles, the Seville Commitment proposes a change of approach: moving from diagnosis to action, from debate to implementation. To this end, it emphasizes improving the transparency of financial flows, strengthening accountability mechanisms, and mobilizing both public and private resources toward activities that have a real impact on people's lives.

Among the most discussed topics in Seville, the mobilization of resources took center stage. Many participants agreed that the current level of financing available is far below what is needed to meet the SDGs. The urgent need for global financial incentive reform was highlighted in order to increase public and private investment in sustainable development. Concrete measures

***“Seville was both a wake-up call and an opportunity for hope”***

were also discussed: expanding progressive taxation, reducing tax evasion, and ensuring that climate finance is sufficient and predictable, especially for countries that have contributed least to climate change but suffer most from it.

Another priority highlighted at the conference was the need to find sustainable solutions to the growing debt burden faced by many countries, particularly in the Global South. In recent years, several states have seen their external debt become unmanageable, conditioning their national budgets and severely limiting their capacity to invest in health, education, infrastructure, or energy transition. During the FfD4, innovative formulas were proposed, such as the inclusion of debt suspension clauses in the event of natural disasters or economic crises, as well as the creation of a “debtors’ club” that, for the first time, would bring together developing countries so that they can collectively negotiate better conditions and make their voices heard by public and private creditors.

Beyond financial issues, FfD4 also represented a shift in the way the relationship between the global North and South is conceived, breaking with the traditional donor-recipient dichotomy. Seville was a platform for listening to proposals from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and for recognizing the role of developing countries as key actors in building global solutions. The ideas that emerged from these contexts, combining social innovation, circular economies, traditional knowledge, and community responses, were valued not as “alternatives” but as fundamental contributions to the redesign of a more just system.

If anything characterized the conference, it was its pragmatic and results-oriented approach. At a time when many international summits are limited to generic speeches or minimal consensus, Seville stood out for its ability to advance tangible agreements and concrete actions. One of the clearest examples of this spirit was the creation of the Seville Platform for Action

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## Related Websites:

**4th Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)**  
[financing.desa.un.org/ffd4](http://financing.desa.un.org/ffd4)

### Seville Commitment

[www.globalpolicy.org/en/publication/sevilla-commitment-what-comes-next](http://www.globalpolicy.org/en/publication/sevilla-commitment-what-comes-next)

### Addis Ababa Action Agenda

[www.un.org/esa/ffd/publications/aaaa-outcome.html](http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/publications/aaaa-outcome.html)

### Sustainable Development Goals

[sdgs.un.org/goals](http://sdgs.un.org/goals)

### Seville Platform for Action (SPA)

[inf.f.org/news/sevilla-platform-for-action-initiative-country-driven-approaches-to-financing-sustainable-development-and-climate-action](http://inf.f.org/news/sevilla-platform-for-action-initiative-country-driven-approaches-to-financing-sustainable-development-and-climate-action)

### Spes non confundit

[www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509\\_spes-non-confundit\\_bolla-giubileo2025.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html)

### Turn Debt into Hope

[turndebtintohope.caritas.org](http://turndebtintohope.caritas.org)

### Message of the 58th World Day of Peace (2025)

[www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/20241208-messaggio-58giornata-mondiale-pace2025.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/20241208-messaggio-58giornata-mondiale-pace2025.html)

### Jubilee Year Report

[ipdcolumbia.org/publication/jubilee-debt-development-blueprint/](http://ipdcolumbia.org/publication/jubilee-debt-development-blueprint/)

### NGO Entreculturas

<https://www.entreculturas.org/en/>

(SPA), a platform for effective action that brings together more than 100 initiatives, either underway or in the launch phase, promoted by governments, multilateral organizations, NGOs, and companies. The SPA was conceived as a space for multi-stakeholder cooperation, where financial innovation is linked to the implementation of real projects in education, health, social protection, finance, and climate resilience.

Among the SPA's primary initiatives are programs to facilitate access to green finance, tax reforms designed to increase domestic revenue in low-income countries, and public-private partnerships to improve essential public services. New socially focused investment funds were also announced, as well as strategies to channel citizens' savings into impact projects, especially in rural areas and marginalized communities.

Finally, the context in which this conference took place cannot be overlooked. International organizations are warning of a likely 17% drop in Official Development Assistance over the next year, a reduction that threatens to leave many countries without the resources to meet their basic needs, just when investment is most needed. At the same time, interest rates remain high, making borrowing even more expensive. This scenario limits the ability of many governments to invest in essential public policies and widens the gap between rich and poor countries.

In this sense, Seville was both a wake-up call and an opportunity for hope. While the challenges are enormous, the conference demonstrated that there is renewed political will and a shared understanding that there can be no sustainable development without a global financial system that works for all. Far from getting bogged down in technicalities or diplomatic wrangling, the FfD4 offered a shared vision of the change that is needed.

One of the most valuable, though less visible, outcomes of the FfD4 was its contribution to rebuilding trust in the multilateral system. In recent years, international cooperation has been called into question by rising nationalism, geopolitical competition, and institutional erosion. However, what happened in Seville shows that dialogue is still possible and that collaboration between countries, sectors, and regions is the only viable way to address common challenges.

In closing, it can be said that the FfD4 was a summit of transition. It marked a turning point in the approach to development financing, committing to concrete action rather than postponed promises. The ideas put forward and the agreements reached are not the end of the road, but the beginning of a new stage that will require constant commitment and active monitoring by citizens, social organizations, and governments themselves.

The true success of this conference will not be measured by the applause it received at its closing, but by its ability to transform its conclusions into real improvements for millions of people. Seville has laid the foundations. Now the most important part begins: ensuring that everything agreed upon is fulfilled.



#### **Reflection After FfD4**

### **Where is the Good News for the Poor?**

*María del Carmen Molina Cobos*

*Chair of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid*

Many developing countries face severe external debt crises, often incurred as a result of an international financial architecture that is now perceived as perverse, unfair, and obsolete. The responsibility is shared: debtor governments have incurred cyclical debts, while creditors, driven by ambition, have provided excessive financing. After the 2008 economic crisis, everyone understands how catastrophic is this financial logic.

The situation in Africa and other regions of the Global South is particularly unsustainable. Since 2013, public debt has grown faster than GDP, and 57% of the population lives in countries that allocate more resources to servicing external debt than to health or education. In addition, the effects of climate change are particularly devastating in island countries such as Haiti in the Caribbean and Tuvalu in the South Pacific. And it is not only climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, and pollution that are increasing

the environmental impact figures. This impact, caused by the richest countries, is devastating the poorest. As Pope Francis pointed out, there is a real ecological, historical, ongoing, and quantifiable debt that the



North must repay to the South.

From June 30 to July 3, Seville hosted the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4). I had the opportunity to be there, in such a pressing context in the face of the current global crisis that expectations were very high, and many of us looked to Seville with a mixture of anguish and hope. As the conference progressed, expectations faded. The Civil Society Forum made an effort to express its usual demands in a different way, but to no avail: they were not listened to; they had hardly any space in the important conversations, just a few minutes. Many of the members of non-governmental civil society organizations present had spent what little they had to get there. Carlos Lozano, representative of the Amazonian Center for Good Living in Peru, explained with dramatic clarity how indigenous peoples suffer environmental devastation, how their lives are negotiated because what



we consider “resources” are their basic means of survival: an armed robbery—never better described—that none of us would allow in our own homes. After receiving a standing ovation from the audience, Lozano, now in a t-shirt, stepped down from the podium and began selling handicrafts to pay for his trip. I had the opportunity to interview him as an international leader and to buy some earrings from him in a gesture of solidarity. That had a profound impact on me. The last speech at the Social Forum left the room breathless. Lidy Nacpil, from the Asian Peoples’ Movement on Debt and Development, declared: “The financial system is a legacy of colonial conquests and no longer serves its purpose. We want access to official spaces to change things in governments because the Seville Commitment is a disgrace. It is the worst statement that could have been made to civil society. António Guterres expressed the importance of civil society, but it is a contrast because we are not being considered at all.”

Among all the voices, one caught my attention in particular. Jesica García stood up on behalf of Hope. A representative of *Entreculturas*, a Catholic NGO within the Jesuit family, Garcia brought a smile to my face and made me breathe a sigh of relief as I recognized myself in that *promised land*. “It is not possible to transform anything,” she said, “if we do not truly believe that it is possible to transform it. Without hope, there is no action, because what there is is desolation.” Hope is undoubtedly a catalyst for change, but there can be no change without proposals and, above all, there can be no change without commitment, will, and political discipline, led by international governance. We were far from that at a meeting where China, Russia, and the US were not present, and where the final document, the Seville Commitment, did not mention the concept of “ecological debt” even once. However, none of that mattered; I left feeling hopeful.

The next morning, listening to the presidents and representatives of the states present, the glass seemed more than half full. Happy, I headed to the Catholic Church’s parallel event: “A Jubilee for the Common Good: Revisiting the Global Financial Architecture.” At this event, the secretary general of Caritas Internationalis asked, in my opinion, the million-dollar question: Where is the good news for the poor? I understood that he was referring to the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus makes his own the proclamation of the prophet Isaiah (Lk 4:18-19): “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

At that moment, I experienced a loss of joy and felt unable to respond. However, I remembered the words of my friend from *Entreculturas*, who proclaimed Hope in a room filled to capacity, and the answer came spontaneously from the reservoir of my faith, which someone must have given me in some distant catechism class: “The good news that Jesus announced to the poor is the coming of the Kingdom of God, which brings

with it liberation, healing, and justice.” This message of transformation is addressed to those who suffer, are marginalized, or live in poverty. It is a universal message (*tutti, tutti*), both for those who live without meaning or purpose in the north and for those who face misfortune in the south. Faced with this new and ancient “scandal of the cross,” I reflected on whether the good news might not lie precisely in those who, immersed in hedonism, continue to lament while dogs lick Lazarus’ wounds. I wondered if this crisis might not represent an opportunity for the north to obtain the jubilee of Hope, by taking responsibility for its eco-social sins and promoting distributive, restorative, and retributive justice. I considered whether this crisis might not be a unique opportunity for the north to save the south from its material deprivation and the south to save the north from its existential misery. This turned out to be a wonderful reason for hope for me. Something I now share.

“Either we unite or we sink, no one is saved alone,” said Pope Francis. I never fully understood the meaning of these words of the Holy Father. Now I do.



Representatives of the Carmelite NGO joining other participants in Seville's Plaza de la Encarnación. (Photo from Carmelite NGO)

## The “Seville Commitment” and the Call for Greater Moral Ambition and Solidarity

Eduardo Agosta Scarel, O. Carm. – Director of the Department of Integral Ecology, Spanish Episcopal Conference, Conferencia

The faith-based organizations present at the Fourth Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) in Seville, as well as the Holy See itself, recognize the progress achieved in the “Seville Commitment,” but consider it insufficient. We appreciate the dialogue, but insist on the need to reform international financial structures to prioritize human dignity and the common good.

It is a priority to achieve a financial architecture that serves people, not profit. The Holy See, in its previous statements and during the conference, through its Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, has insisted that the current international financial system often does not serve the common good, leaving the most vulnerable in a situation of greater precariousness. A system that prioritizes financial markets over the well-being of people is criticized, generating what Pope Francis has called an “economy that kills.” From this perspective, the “Seville Commitment,” while containing language on the need to reform the financial architecture, is seen as lacking the boldness to transform the existing power dynamics in international financial institutions.

Furthermore, debt relief and forgiveness for countries that will never be able to repay their debts is a moral imperative. A central point in our position as a Church is the issue of the external debt of developing countries. Described as a “burden that weighs down economic and social life,” the Church has advocated not only for relief, but in many cases for debt forgiveness. Debt repayment cannot come at the cost of “unbearable sacrifices” for populations who see their budgets for health, education, and social protection reduced. Catholic organizations such as CAFOD (the development agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales) have lamented that the “Seville Commitment” did not include more robust and fair mechanisms for debt restructuring, such as a UN-led debt convention.

Genuine solidarity and cooperation for development are essential. The Church reaffirms the moral obligation of the richest countries to contribute to the development of the poorest, not as an act of charity, but as an act of justice. The failure to fulfill the historic commitment to allocate 0.7% of Gross National Income to Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been criticized. The “Seville Commitment” appears weak in this regard, with language that lacks the urgency and ambition necessary to reverse the downward trend in development assistance by some rich nations, such as the United States.

In line with the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, our “Carmelite NGO”, together with numerous faith-based organizations and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (DSDIH), led by Pope Francis, introduced the concept of “ecological debt” into the debate. The DSDIH has emphasized that countries

that have benefited most from polluting industrial development have a greater responsibility for the climate crisis and therefore a greater debt to the poorest countries suffering its worst consequences. The Catholic perspective finds that the “Seville Commitment” does not go far enough in climate finance, especially with regard to loss and damage, and in ensuring that the ecological transition is fair and does not fall on the shoulders of the most disadvantaged.

In summary, as members of the Catholic Church, we value the “Seville Commitment” as a step toward maintaining multilateral dialogue, an achievement in itself in the current geopolitical context of growing mistrust. However, we can only consider it a minimal agreement, a “modest step forward” that does not rise to the urgency of the multiple crises facing humanity.

From the perspective of faith, we strongly call for going beyond timid commitments. We urge a true “integral ecological, socio-environmental conversion of the global economy, grounded in the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, and the universal destination of goods, respect for human dignity, and the pursuit of the common good.” As a Church, we see that the “Seville Commitment” is not a point of arrival, but a reminder of the enormous distance that still separates the international community from a truly just economic order at the service of the entire human family.



*by José Luis Gutiérrez  
Lay Carmelite  
Vice President of Caritas for Peace*

## **The Church, Present at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development**

The Financing for Development (FfD) Conferences are high-level UN meetings that focus on addressing the structural financial challenges necessary to achieve sustainable development. These conferences bring together governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, and the private sector to discuss and coordinate efforts on financial and systemic issues related to global economic governance.

The first of these conferences, the International Conference on Financing for Development, was held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, where the Monterrey Consensus was adopted. This landmark document outlined six areas of financing for development: domestic financial resources, foreign direct investment and other private flows, international trade, international financial cooperation, debt, and systemic issues such as global economic governance.

Subsequent conferences, such as those held in Doha (2008) and Addis Ababa (2015), have built on the Monterrey Consensus, addressing emerging challenges and reinforcing the global commitment to finance development in an effective and equitable manner. These conferences are crucial for setting international agendas and fostering cooperation to achieve the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The IV UN International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) is taking place in Seville from June 30 to July 3 and is a key event for mobilizing policies and resources for development, given that there are only five years left until 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are far from being achieved. World leaders and members of civil society have a unique opportunity to advocate for greater resource mobi-



lization and stronger partnerships to reform and address the financial challenges that are blocking progress towards sustainability. In this context, the urgency of FfD4 to deliver cooperative solutions is heightened by global challenges that have been exacerbated by growing political and social tensions: the crisis of multilateralism, rising inequalities, and public mistrust, among others, which threaten the success of international cooperation. Meanwhile, the global economic situation is also hampering progress: nations around the world are facing a period of slow growth, struggling with shrinking fiscal space and, in most cases, an unprepared workforce that has to contend with the rapid advance of new technological tools.

The process leading up to FfD4 has included months of negotiations and meetings in New York, where governments agreed on a Final Document called the “Seville Commitment” that will guide development financing priorities for the next decade. The document focuses on tax justice, domestic resource mobilization, debt sustainability, and global financial system reform. Although it is governments that formally negotiate the text, civil society, including NGOs, has helped shape the agenda through constant pressure. The Civil Society Forum (June 28-29) is a vital space where these movements and civil society at large align messages, coordinate advocacy, and make joint demands. During the main conference (June 30-July 3), you can participate through ministerial roundtables, interactive dialogues, and side events, either by attending in person or following online. These are key moments to raise demands, question leaders, and influence the political tone of the negotiations.

### **1. Spanish Catholic organizations call for “canceling the debts of countries that will never be able to pay them” on the occasion of the Fourth UN International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville**

Spanish Catholic organizations are united in calling for the need to "cancel the debts of countries that will never be able to pay them (...) If we truly want to prepare the way for peace in the world, let us strive to

**“3.3 billion of the 7.2 billion people living in this world are deprived of vital services, exacerbating poverty and inequality by spending. While 80% of new global debt in 2023 came from rich countries, developing nations face the highest costs, with interest rates up to 12 times higher.”**

*United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*

remedy the causes of injustice, cancel unjust and unpaid debts, and feed the hungry" as well as the "ecological debt," as called for in the Jubilee 2025 bull *Spes non confundit* and in the Message for the World Day of Peace 2025: “I invite the international community to take action to remit external debt, recognizing the existence of an ecological debt between the north and south of the world. It is a call for solidarity, but above all for justice.”

The Spanish Church has a calendar of special events at which the voice of these organizations is heard to highlight the need to work for justice and transformative financial reforms, in the hope of helping impoverished populations burdened by an unsustainable debt crisis.

As *Caritas Internationalis* points out in its special campaign *Turn Debt into Hope*, according to UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), 3.3 billion of the 7.2 billion people living in this world are deprived of vital services, exacerbating poverty and the inequality of quality of life. While 80% of new global debt in 2023 came from rich countries, developing nations face the highest costs, with interest rates up to 12 times higher. Rising inflation, unfair loans, and economic crises have left the poorest nations unable to invest in their people and their future.

On the occasion of this important international meeting, the main Church organizations in Spain have joined together to bring to this exceptional international enclave the special request of this Jubilee Year 2025 to cancel the external debt and the “ecological debt” of impoverished countries, as stated in his message for this year’s World Day of Peace, Pope Francis and in the Jubilee Bull of 2025, which Pope Leo XIV recently recalled:

There is another urgent invitation I wish to make in view of the Jubilee Year; It is addressed to the wealth-

est nations, that they may recognize the gravity of many decisions taken and determine to cancel the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them.” Francis continued: “This is not so much a question of magnanimity as of justice, aggravated today by a new form of iniquity of which we have become aware: ‘For there is a real ‘ecological debt,’ particularly between the North and the South, linked to trade imbalances that have consequences for the environment, as well as to the disproportionate use of natural resources historically carried out by some countries.’ (*Laudato si*, May 24, 2015, no. 51) As Sacred Scripture teaches, the earth belongs to God and we all live on it as “strangers and guests” (Lev 25:23). If we truly want to prepare the way for peace in the world, let us strive to remedy the causes of injustice, cancel unjust and unpaid debts, and feed the hungry. (*Spes non confundit*, May 9, 2024, no. 16)

The demands of the Church in Seville are:

- Cancellation or restructuring of debt to free the most vulnerable countries from over-indebtedness.
- Debt swaps for investments in health, education, food security, and the environment.
- Greater regulation and transparency in international debt, anticipating future debt crises, avoiding conditions that are detrimental to debtor countries and guaranteeing decent living conditions for their citizens.
- The creation and provision of fair climate finance systems that recognize the ecological debt of developed countries to the most vulnerable countries.
- An inclusive and equitable multilateral framework, where all parties involved in sovereign debt crises have a voice and representation.
- A human-centered economy, inspired by justice and solidarity, that recognizes the dignity of every human being and promotes economic models based on the common good, respect for nature, and global equity.

The Seville Declaration ends with an important reminder: “Peace cannot exist without social justice, and social justice requires a profound transformation of the economic structures that perpetuate poverty and inequality. May this Jubilee bring for all, especially for children and young people in the most impoverished countries, a true time of grace, justice, and hope.”

**“That, recognizing their ecological debt, the richest countries feel called to do everything possible to forgive the debts of those countries that are not in a position to repay what they owe. ☹☹**

*Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of Peace 2025*

## **2. The Jubilee Report: A roadmap to address the debt and development crises and lay the financial foundations for a sustainable and people-centered global economy.**

A few days before the start of FFD4, an innovative report prepared by leading global debt and development experts was published in the Vatican. It calls for urgent action and structural reforms to address the growing debt and development crises affecting billions of people around the world.

It was drafted by Pope Francis’ Jubilee Commission—a group of more than 30 leading international experts led by Nobel laureate and Columbia University professor Joseph Stiglitz and Martín Guzmán, former Minister of Economy of Argentina and professor at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs. The report builds on Pope Francis’ repeated calls for global debt relief—calls now being promoted by his successor, Pope Leo XIV—and combines for the first time a sound economic approach with the moral imperative to act.

The document makes a compelling case that the debt crisis affecting the global financial system is fueling a development crisis. Fifty-four developing countries already spend 10% or more of their tax revenues solely on interest payments. In these countries, the average interest burden has nearly doubled over the past decade. This diverts essential resources that should be spent on health care, education, infrastructure, or climate resilience, depriving millions of people of vital medical care, food, or jobs.

The report proposes a moral and practical vision: global finance must serve people and the planet—not



punish the poorest to protect profits. The report's recommendations include:

- **Improve debt restructuring:** Reform the policies of multilateral institutions and legislation in key jurisdictions (such as New York State and the United Kingdom) to incentivize creditors and debtor governments to reach more sustainable agreements with appropriate timeframes.
- **End private creditor bailouts:** Multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund should modify their policies and practices to favor sustainable recoveries, rather than providing de facto bailouts to private creditors or imposing suffocating austerity policies.
- **Strengthen domestic policies:** Developing countries should make more active use of capital controls to reduce destabilizing flows and create an environment conducive to long-term investment, in addition to investing in structural transformation.

- **Improve transparency:** Greater transparency in financial policies should be promoted, while ensuring broad social support.

- **Reimagine global finance:** A comprehensive transformation of international financing models is needed to promote sustainable development, including financing lines that promote long-term growth.

The right to development must be taken into account in issues related to the debt crisis in many poor countries. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. 450).

### 3. The Seville Commitment

The document “Seville Commitment,” resulting from the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development held in Seville, Spain, from June 30 to July 3, 2025, aims to renew the global financing framework for development. Building on previous agreements such as the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, and the 2008 Doha Declaration, it reaffirms the commitment to sustainable development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, emphasizing the eradication of poverty.

The key aspects and commitments outlined in the document are too general and non-binding, and include:

**Addressing the financing gap:** The document highlights a significant gap in financing for sustainable development, estimated at \$4 trillion per year in developing countries. It proposes reforms and actions to close this gap by improving fiscal space, addressing debt challenges, and mobilizing diverse sources of financing.

**Reforming the international financial architecture:** There is a commitment to reform the international financial architecture for greater resilience, coherence, and effectiveness, with the goal of more inclusive, representative, equitable, and effective global economic governance.

**Domestic public resources:** The document highlights the central role of public resources in sustainable development, advocating for stronger, more transparent, and accountable tax systems. This includes broadening tax bases, promoting progressive tax systems, combating illicit financial flows, and strengthening international tax cooperation.

**Business and private finance:** It recognizes the catalytic role of private investment in sustainable development and calls for policies to create an enabling environment for such investments, including the development of domestic financial sectors, the promotion of innovative financial instruments, and increased foreign direct investment.

**International development cooperation:** The document reaffirms the importance of Official Develop-



Archbishop Gabriel Caccia, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations during his intervention at the 2025 Financing for Development meeting in Seville, Spain. (Photo courtesy of the Carmelite NGO)



Side event at the Financing for Development Conference held in Seville in 2025, co-organized by the Carmelite NGO and other faith oriented NGOs. (Photo courtesy of the Carmelite NGO)

ment Assistance (ODA) and urges developed countries to fulfill their ODA commitments. It also discusses the role of multilateral development banks (MDBs) in providing financing and technical support.

**Debt sustainability:** It emphasizes the need for long-term debt sustainability for developing countries through coordinated policies, debt relief and restructuring, and sound debt management.

**Global economic governance and financial safety net:** The document seeks to strengthen global economic governance by improving the voice and representation of developing countries in international financial institutions. It also commits to strength-

ening the global financial safety net amid growing systemic risks.

**Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI):** The importance of STI in achieving the sustainable development goals is highlighted, with calls for greater investment and capacity building in developing countries to harness the full potential of technology, including digital connectivity and artificial intelligence.

**Trade:** The document aims to preserve and strengthen the multilateral trading system, boost the trading capacities of developing countries, and increase the local value added of minerals and critical commodities.

**Monitoring and follow-up:** It stresses the importance of strengthening monitoring and follow-up processes to ensure sustained progress in financing for development, including annual reporting and in-depth reviews.

The Civil Society Mechanism on Financing for Development (CS FFD Mechanism) is an open platform of civil society that includes several hundred organizations and networks from various regions and interest groups around the world. The core principle of the CS FFD Mechanism is to ensure that civil society can speak with one collective voice. Its response to the document is one of deep disappointment with the "Seville Commitment," considering it a "missed opportunity" that does not reflect the urgency of the current global crises and the fulfillment of the SDGs five years before their deadline. Furthermore, the Cs FFD has felt the exclusion of civil society from the negotiations and the continued closure of civic space. We are confident that the voice of the poor and the voice of the planet will find new ways to be heard in the world of multilateralism.

## TESTIMONY FROM THE COURTYARD OF A CARMELITE HOUSE TO THE UN CONFERENCE IN SEVILLE

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Not everyone knows, at least I didn't, that the Carmelite Order (both the friars, nuns, and Third Order of the Ancient Observance and the associated congregations, let's call them the Carmelite Family) founded the Carmelite NGO in 2001, known internationally as the "Carmelite NGO." The mission of this NGO is to actively participate in the creation of a more peaceful and just world, defending and caring for the spiritual and material needs of the human family and the environment. Its areas of action include caring for creation in the spirit of *Laudato Si'*, the fight against human trafficking, religious freedom, the education of children and young people, and the eradication of hunger and poverty in the world.



The courtyard in the Carmelite residence of Buen Suceso in Seville, Spain. The Carmelite have played a significant role in the religious life of the city since 1358. Many of the city's confraternities, famous for their processions during Holy Week, find some Carmelite influence in their being established. (Photo courtesy of the Carmelite NGO)

Less well known is that the Carmelite NGO has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is affiliated with other UN bodies, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). ECOSOC is one of the six main bodies of the UN. Its main function is to coordinate the economic and social work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Therefore, having special consultative status with ECOSOC, as is the case with the Carmelite NGO, means that the organization can participate in Council meetings, submit reports, and collaborate in the implementation of sustainable development policies and programs. The more I learn about my Church, the more it amazes me!

Thanks to the Carmelite NGO, I was able to participate in my dual capacity as a Catholic and a university researcher in the field of biodiversity and conservation, in the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) held in Seville from June 30 to July 3. To be honest, I did not participate much in this undertaking, but I learned a lot. The civil society's unheeded demands to the UN, the protest march through the streets of Seville, the speeches by world presidents and government representatives, the plenary conferences, the negotiating tables, the "side events," everything was new.

I was equally motivated and proud of the active participation of the Holy See through Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN. His energetic words calling for the cancellation of the external debt of

countries that will never be able to pay it and denouncing the failure of the global financial system, which deepens inequalities that the Church must denounce. The round tables and days of prayer organized by the Archbishopric of Seville, the proposals of the Church, the titanic efforts of Caritas Internationalis and so many faith-based organizations present there. So many that it would be tedious to name them all, but they are all sisters, they are one, confirmed, moreover, by the presence of representatives of the Spanish Episcopal Conference. At the same time that the Jubilee Report was published, a document was published by the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, in which the Church not only denounces, but also offers possible solutions, through 30 economists specializing in debt from the best universities and social research centers. This is a whole new world for me. My world is usually between the laboratory, the classroom, and the office, then home, and then my faith community. It has been quite an experience to get a glimpse, at least, of the important mission that the Holy See and each of the organizations and individuals, as representatives of the Catholic Church, have in this type of international event.

But like the people of Israel at the Passover Seder, I can continue to sing the *dayenu* in Hebrew. *Dayenu* means "this would have been enough." With my experience at FfD4, it would have been enough, but there was even more.

The Carmelites of the Buen Suceso convent welcomed me with evangelical love and I was able to participate in their community life, their prayer, their cuckoo clock, which I finally managed to photograph in full flight after many attempts, and above all—I am like that—their central courtyard, Andalusian, bright and cool. A courtyard that reminded me of my grandmother, summer afternoons, and the blue basin of fresh water with which, at around eight or nine in the evening, dressed in strict mourning and wearing her small checkered apron, she would cool down the house in the village in Córdoba. She would hold the basin at her slender waist and, with the grace of her Andalusian hands, she would take cool water from the basin and sprinkle it with energetic delicacy over the courtyard of the house. Each drop, as it touched the ground, seemed to whisper relief to the hot earth, creating an oasis of freshness that embraced every corner of the house. It was glorious! With her simple, loving gesture, she transformed the scorching heat into a gentle, refreshing breeze.

The courtyard reminded me of pajama naps, more necessary now than then, when, due to climate change, no one can stand in the streets of Seville. Someone turn off the heating out there, please! It's horrible! I was



moved as I breathed in again, as if I were right there, the scent of jasmine and orange blossom from my aunt's lemon tree. What a memory! It even turned out that, just as God works in mysterious ways, the Carmelite brothers often visit my village, Rute de Córdoba, for the novenas to the Virgin. Rute, so Carmelite, so devoted to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

My stay in Seville could not have been more intense, rewarding, evocative, and productive. I am taking away a lot of information to share with my students, my brothers and sisters in faith, and my family. I am taking with me the impulse of the Spirit to continue sowing the Kingdom of God on this earth, starting with my own home as soon as I arrive. I take with me the intense desire to continue working for the care of a creation that overflows with God's love wherever you look. I take with me my memories, more vivid than ever, the peace of community life, and a little piece of the courtyard. A cutting of *Begonia bowerae* (eyelash begonia) that I plan to care for as my own. I take with me the life of the monastery and I take with me the hope, a theological virtue, that flowed in abundance from all the faith organizations present at the FfD4. I take with me the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel that the friars gave me and the intention to begin the novena as soon as I get home. What more and what better could one take away from Seville?

Thanks to the Carmelite Order for taking care of the little things in their convents and dreaming big through the Carmelite NGO. Thanks to José Luis Gutiérrez and Esther Díaz, active members of the Third Carmelite Order, who explained these things about the NGO to me. My sincere thanks to the Prior Provincial David del Carpio and the Prior Chema and all the brothers, so diverse, so funny. Thanks to Father Eduardo Agosta for bringing me here. May God reward you! Of course, thanks to María and María Isabel, the hard-working women of the convent. That gazpacho, María, *was out of this world*.

Sometimes God surprises us with these unexpected gifts. That's how He is.



## Carmelite NGO Begins Work with New Leadership and New Projects

Since the appointment of new leadership for the Carmelite NGO in April of 2025, much energy and effort have gone into organizing the coming year's activities.

We welcome the continued participation of Sr. Jane Remson who founded the Carmelite NGO in 2000. Her leadership was invaluable in moving the NGO into the effective organization it has become. She will be continuing to be involved as coordinator of the NGO's Days of Prayer twice a year.

A number of meetings have been held with the NGOs Board of Directors as well as the Executive Committee to ensure the continued effectiveness of the NGO worldwide.

Leadership of the NGO is committed to the creation of a dynamic long range plan. The process began in mid July and will conclude in December 2025, involving a wide range of thoughtful leaders throughout the Carmelite Family and world.

In the meantime, the website ([carmelitengo.org](http://carmelitengo.org)) will be enhanced to better serve you and the NGO will continue its presence on X and soon on Bluesky. We invite you to visit us!

If you believe in the mission and world vision of the Carmelite NGO, please consider making a donation! Click [here](#) to be an agent of change in our world!

## Carmelite NGO Board of Directors

William J. Harry, O. Carm.  
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## Areas of Focus

Freedom of Belief  
Human Trafficking  
Sustainability  
Education

## Committees

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Long Range Planning Committee  
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