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## World leaders rebuke “narrow unilateralism” and call for nations to urgently join forces to combat inequality

[40 former Heads of State and Government](#) are calling for “a new economic coalition of the willing” to urgently tackle inequality and “remake our world in response” to “era-defining disruption”. In a joint letter released ahead of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, they call for a restoration of development aid, comprehensive debt relief, international tax cooperation, and ambitious reform of the world’s “outdated” economic model.

The leaders include former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of Norway Jens Stoltenberg, former President of Costa Rica Carlos Alfaro, former President of Senegal Abdoulaye Wade, former President of Guinea-Bissau Carlos Gomes Vieira, former Prime Minister of Finland Sanna Marin, former President of Portugal Aníbal Cavaco Silva, former President of Timor-Leste Xanana Gusmão, and current President of Timor-Leste Taur Matan Ruak.

Rebuking the choice of “narrow unilateralism” and calling for a more inclusive sense of a rules-based order is violently d

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organized by Club de Madrid, the world's largest forum of democratic former Presidents and Prime Ministers, they warn the world is facing a “crisis in multilateral cooperation” that is compounding poverty, inequality, and environmental breakdown at a time when “trillionaires could emerge this decade, while near half of humanity lives in poverty”.

However, “a powerful shift is possible”, leaders say. “Trillions of dollars exist for financing development – but too much public money is captured by private power.” They call for “inequality-busting financing”, including effective tax cooperation on high-net-worth-individuals and on the profits of multinationals wherever they operate, alongside “coordinated Jubilee debt relief” and financial architecture reform to prevent the recurrence of unsustainable debts.

“Today’s economic system, shaped in 1944 in Bretton Woods by wealthy nations at a time when colonialism still defined much of the world, is outdated,” leaders say. Arguing that “global entities are not sacrosanct”, they urge the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to promote sustainable development “rather than prescribing shackling austerity that undermines it”. They call on governments to pursue new trade cooperation which raise labor and environmental standards and reforms intellectual property rules to prevent a repeat of the deadly vaccine inequity of COVID-19.

**José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain 2004-2011:** “To govern is to choose—and today’s leaders face a clear choice. Either we are overwhelmed by crisis, or we rise to meet the challenge of soaring inequality. There is no escaping the fact that this means confronting the rise of this inequality which undermines societies, whole regions of the world, and democracy itself. This week in Seville, we are seeing nations come together to pursue global solidarity, rather than aggressive unilateralism. But good intentions aren’t enough. What’s needed now is action— and a real commitment to building an economy that delivers for working people wherever they may live.”

The leaders highlight the Financing for Development Conference and the upcoming G20 in South Africa and COP30 in Brazil as critical opportunities to embed this new agenda. “Working together is not only a moral imperative—it is a shared interest for what is now a more multipolar world,” the leaders write. “You v  
country.”

**Aminata Touré, Prime Minister of Senega**  
having to pay for crises they did not cause  
serve the interests of humanity are broken  
demanding alternatives – from tax efforts  
governments need to band together to co

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The letter was organized by Club de Madrid, with support from Oxfam International and the People’s Medicines Alliance.

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