

EVENT REPORT



FORUS 2026 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

23 to 27 March, 2026

Siem Reap, Cambodia & Hybrid



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Introduction

We are pleased to share the event report of the Forus 2026 General Assembly, held in a hybrid format from 23 to 27 March in Siem Reap, Cambodia, and co-organised with the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC).

Bringing together 73 member organisations — representing 89% of the Forus network — this General Assembly marked an important moment for our global family to reconnect, exchange experiences, and collectively shape the way forward. In a particularly challenging global context for civil society, the gathering served as a valuable space to reflect, recharge, and build a shared strategic direction for the years ahead.

This report captures key discussions, reflections, and outcomes from the week, including:

- **Launching the 2026–2030 Forus Strategy:** Members collectively validated the new strategic direction for Forus, translating shared priorities and reflections into a concrete roadmap for the next five years.
- **Navigating a Changing Global Landscape:** Participants engaged in rich discussions on shrinking civic space, digital governance, and the evolving development finance landscape, exploring how civil society can continue to adapt and respond collectively.
- **Strengthening Network Health and Solidarity:** Sessions focused on practical approaches to strengthen connections across the network, foster trust and peer exchange, and reinforce the resilience of our global ecosystem.

- **Member Recommendations and Priorities:** The report also reflects the strategic recommendations, expectations, and aspirations shared by members to help ensure that Forus continues to remain relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the realities of its network.

The 2026 General Assembly was not only a moment of reflection, but also the beginning of a new chapter of collective action and collaboration.

We hope this report serves as a useful resource as we continue working together to turn our shared values into meaningful global impact.

Upwards and onwards!
The Forus Secretariat Team

**Of the Forus
network
attended**

89%

The 2026 General Assembly According to Forus Members

Inspiring
Connected

Enriching

Community

Strategic

Transformative

Fantastic

Wonderful

Empowering

Productive

Excellent

Solidarity

Successful

Generosity

Connectivity

Interaction

Values

Diversity

Global connection

Peer learning

Collective energy

Laughter & love

Rich in learning

Amazing experience

Action & unity

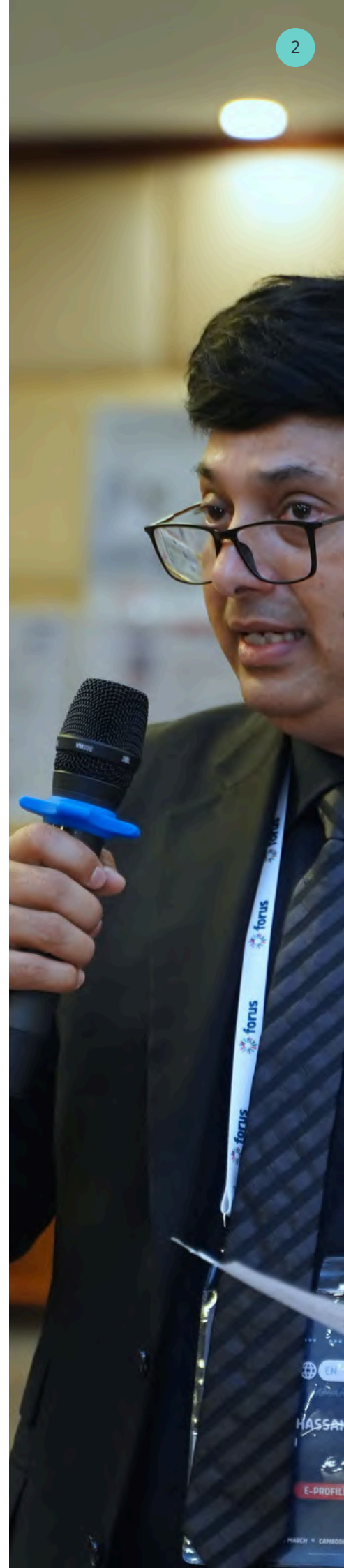
New experiences

Human richness

Great success

Very beneficial

International
solidarity



Engagement & Feedback Highlights

Following the momentum of our shared journey toward 2030, the Forus 2026 General Assembly served as a vital recharging station for our global network. Designed to be member-led and participatory from inception to execution, the GA's high levels of member engagement are the result of a deliberate and collaborative planning process.

1

A Participatory and Member-led Approach

The General Assembly's Programme was designed by Forus members, rooted in their priorities and expectations:

- A dedicated **Member Steering Committee** was responsible for crafting the programme, sessions, and activities, ensuring the week resonated with the network's collective needs.

Our host, the **Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)**, was an essential partner at every stage, providing strategic guidance and meticulously supporting onsite logistics and hospitality.

2

Member Engagement Highlights

Despite a complex global landscape characterised by geopolitical tensions and travel restrictions, the Forus family demonstrated remarkable resilience and commitment.

- The GA was adapted into a **hybrid format**, integrating onsite and online perspectives to ensure every voice was part of the strategic dialogue.
- A total of **73 member organisations** participated in the 2026 General Assembly, representing **89% of the Forus network**.
 - The Assembly brought together **95 delegates**, with 69 joining in person in Siem Reap and 26 participating remotely. We extend a special thanks to those digital participants who joined across challenging time zones to remain connected.
- The GA's success was rooted in member ownership, with **21 members** actively taking the lead as **speakers, co-facilitators, or session leads**.
- **89% of participants** felt they were active contributors to the discussions and activities throughout the week.



3

Member Feedback Highlights

With an overall satisfaction score of **8,7 out of 10**, participants reaffirmed that the General Assembly serves as a vital space for connection and learning.

- 97% of respondents agreed that the GA provided a platform for **meaningful collaboration**, offered valuable organisational **insights**, and provided ample **opportunities to interact** with Forus members and the Forus Secretariat.
- Likewise, the great majority of participants reported feeling **motivated to take a more active role in future Forus initiatives**
- **100% of participants** stated that the GA fostered a deep sense of **community and solidarity**, with every respondent expressing **eagerness to attend the next Assembly!**

We extend our sincere thanks to all participants who shared their reflections through the 2026 General Assembly Feedback Survey. Your insights are vital in helping Forus evolve and remain responsive to the needs of our global family.

[Watch the Video Recap of the Forus General Assembly 2026!](#)





DAY 1 – MONDAY 23 MARCH

OPENING SESSION: RECHARGING OUR COLLECTIVE ENERGY

The Opening Session of the 2026 Forus General Assembly officially launched a landmark week of resilience and renewal in Siem Reap, bringing the network together in a hybrid format that bridged continents and time zones. The session marked a powerful return to collective action, grounding global strategy in the diverse regional realities of our members and moving beyond traditional leadership models to embrace a shared vision for the future of our network.

The session was opened by **Justina Kaluinaite from VBP Platforma (Lithuania) and Forus Treasurer (25-26)**, who offered warm welcoming words to members participating both in person and virtually. She touched upon the significant logistical hurdles overcome to bring the network together and expressed deep gratitude for the unwavering commitment shown by the membership. This was followed by an inspiring message from **Christelle Kalhoulé (Forus Chair 21–26)**, who celebrated the transformative achievements of the past years while challenging the Assembly to "dream big" for the network's next chapter. **Sarah Strack, Forus Director**, extended a special welcome to **Philippe Walfard** from the **French Development Agency (AFD)** and **Pierric Reynaud** from the **French Embassy to Cambodia**. She expressed deep gratitude for their enduring partnership and their presence in Siem Reap during the first two days of the General Assembly, noting that their steady commitment and multi-year support remain a vital cornerstone of Forus' collective work. Sarah also emphasised that despite the immense pressures and negative political trends currently squeezing civic space, the General Assembly serves as a vital "recharging station"—an energising moment to build a meaningful strategic roadmap for the **Forus 2026–2030 Strategy**.



Representing our hosts, **Pheakdey Chan, Director of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)**, shared the deep excitement of CCC's team and local members to host the Forus family in Siem Reap. Highlighting the pivotal role of CSOs in Cambodia, he described the General Assembly as a dynamic arena for members to debate, reimagine, and build high-impact global collaborations that link local action to global challenges. He concluded by noting that the gathering itself stands as a testament to the enduring strength and necessity of civil society.

Adding to this vision, **Zia-ur-Rehman, Regional Coordinator of the Asia Development Alliance (ADA)**, addressed the shared challenges currently facing the sector across the globe. He positioned Forus as a vital cross-regional alliance that must now think "outside the box" to craft a strong new narrative for the network. Zia also urged members toward selective accountability mechanisms and a radical increase in network solidarity to ensure the network's future impact.

The session concluded with a palpable sense of shared purpose and renewed energy. By grounding global strategies in member-led regional experiences, the Opening Session successfully set the stage for a week of inclusive dialogue, ensuring every voice in the network is heard as we begin the journey toward 2030.



SESSION 2. GETTING TO KNOW WHO IS IN THE ROOM (AND ONLINE)

Facilitated by Zia-ur-Rehman from ADA (Asia), the session focused on breaking the ice and reducing anonymity within our diverse global group. It provided a vital space for participants to connect beyond formal names and institutional roles, establishing the trust necessary for a week of deep strategic collaboration.



Mapping our diversity and shared realities

Using a dynamic “human map” format, participants moved around the room—with online members engaging via digital tools—to physically visualise the network's composition. This exercise highlighted our geographic roots and the rich institutional memory of the network, bridging the gap between veteran attendees and members joining their very first General Assembly. The activity also made visible our shared global pressures, from civic space restrictions to funding uncertainty, reinforcing the reality that while our contexts differ, our challenges are often one and the same.

The session encouraged informal but profound exchanges as members shared their “dream civil society headline” for their respective regions, offering a glimpse into the positive transformations driving their daily work. Participants also identified specific thematic areas that they were most eager to explore during the Assembly.



Frustrations and Hope

The session concluded with a personal reflection where members shared one frustration they were currently carrying and one core motivation that keeps them going. This allowed participants to recognise that while local pressures are significant, there is a collective energy and shared purpose that sustains the Forus family.



SESSION 3. FORUS 2026-2030 STRATEGY - NAVIGATING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

This session marked a key moment for the General Assembly, transitioning from shared reflections into a concrete roadmap for the next five years. Sarah Strack, Forus Director, opened the discussion by framing the new strategy as the result of a long-term journey of collective thinking, reminding members that the document belongs to the entire network.



A Strategy Rooted in Global Participation

The Forus 2026-2030 Strategy was developed through a deeply participatory process, including a network-wide survey, focus group discussions, and regional consultations that captured the voices of nearly 90% of the membership. While built on a foundation of rigorous analysis—including PESTLE and SWOT assessments—its true strength lies in this member-driven approach. Sarah detailed the new Theory of Change using an evocative metaphor: a unified vision serving as our Guiding Star, the core strategic Pillars of Connect, Support, and Influence representing our Constellations, and Network Health acting as the Va'a (Canoe) navigating the journey together.



Member Pulse: Defining Our Strategic Priorities

The session also included an exchange where members discussed which strategic pillars were most vital to their daily work, highlighting several priorities for the network's future. **Julien Comlan Agbessi from REPAOC (West Africa)** stressed the need for regional coalitions to be better positioned to lead advocacy efforts across Africa, while **Jacques Ngarassal from CILONG (Chad)** and **Dominique Matondo from CCOD (Congo)** called for concrete protection mechanisms, emphasising the need for the network to hear those with no voice, especially activists facing imprisonment. **Miguel Santibáñez from ACCIÓN (Chile)** and **Harsh Jaitli from VANI (India)** reminded the room that the strategy must remain agile to anticipate rapid political shifts and election-related turbulence, a sentiment echoed by **Arjun Bhattarai from NFN (Nepal)**, who noted that digital challenges and youth inclusion must be woven into the network's institutional health.



A Horizontal Path Forward

In her wrap-up, Sarah noted that a core value of Forus is turning local strategy into global visibility, and that the network is committed to developing solidarity mechanisms together, whether through legal knowledge or communication support. The session closed with a clear sense of shared ownership: the strategy is now in the hands of the members, and the work done during the General Assembly will breathe life into its implementation through 2030.

SESSION 4. WEAVING THE NETWORK: WHO WE ARE AS MEMBERS

Facilitated by Kutlwano Pelontle from BOCONGO (Botswana), this session was designed as a vibrant, interactive forum to illuminate the evolving identity of the Forus network in 2026. It provided a dedicated space for members to visualise the immense diversity of the membership, explore the various ways platforms engage with one another, and celebrate the unique contributions each organisation brings to our collective mission.

The session underscored the rich diversity inherent in the Forus family, highlighting the vast differences in geography, organisational size, capacity, and thematic focus. utilising real-time tools like Mentimeter alongside comprehensive membership overviews, participants were able to construct a vivid and concrete picture of the network and the varied realities represented in Siem Reap.

Jennifer Franco (Forus) presented a detailed analysis of Forus Membership engagement, illustrating how the network's vitality is sustained through active involvement in thematic working groups, joint advocacy campaigns, bilateral exchanges, and peer-to-peer capacity strengthening initiatives. Participants noted with appreciation that engagement has seen a steady upward trajectory since the last General Assembly, reinforcing the network's resilience.



Welcoming New Perspectives

The session also provided a heartfelt moment to officially welcome several new members into the Forus room. **Linda Luts from AKÜ (Estonia)** shared their organisation's optimism and deep-rooted focus on youth perspectives, while **Sale Getahun from CCRDA (Ethiopia)** spoke about their journey through the FfD4 process and their success in developing income-generating initiatives despite resource constraints. **Gina Ekholt from ForUM (Norway)** also shared their motivations for joining, adding their unique national context to the global dialogue.



Visualising Our Shared Realities

The session included a participatory **Poster Activity**, where members mapped out their organisational profiles and arranged them by region around the room. This "gallery" of peers allowed for a sophisticated understanding of the specialised expertise found across the network, confirming that while Forus members operate in vastly different contexts, we remain profoundly connected by a unified commitment to strengthening civil society globally.



SESSION 5. GLOBAL CONTEXT AND EMERGING TRENDS

Led by Andrea Detjen from ANONG (Uruguay), this high-level panel grounded the General Assembly in the complex realities members navigate across every region. The session provided a vital shared reading of the global landscape, exploring the forces currently reshaping the sector, including shifting power dynamics, shrinking civic space, the evolution of development finance, and the dual pressures of digital surveillance and rising inequality.



A Shared Diagnosis: Navigating the "Perfect Storm"

The discussion highlighted a troubling trend where global shifts increasingly prioritise security, competition, and resource access over human dignity and sustainable development. Panelists pointed to a growing mismatch between global political attention and the urgent needs of local communities. Despite facing disinformation and reduced funding, the consensus remained clear: civil society is more essential than ever as the bridge between local realities and global decision-making.



Diverse Perspectives, One Compass

The panel featured a rich diversity of voices from across the network and beyond. **Christelle Kalhoule from SPONG (Burkina Faso), and Forus Chair 21-26**, called for civil society to "follow the money" and engage where real decisions are made, keeping the focus on people and planet, while **Carolina Cuesta (Youth Activist, Uruguay)** challenged the network to embrace intergenerationality, simplicity, and joy in its organising. **Tanya Cox from CONCORD (Europe)** urged a rethink of how to build public support within a changing European cooperation landscape, a sentiment echoed by **Gina Romero (UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association)**, who named the "perfect storm" facing global civic space while insisting on the necessity of care and collective protection. Further broadening the perspective, **Virak Ou from Future Forum (Cambodia)** invited participants to reckon with the shifting Asian landscape and the courage needed to chart different paths, as **Li Li (Associate Professor at the College of International Development and Global Agriculture at China Agricultural University)** widened the lens on emerging South-South cooperation models. Finally, **Sam Worthington (Forus fellow and former Director of Interaction, USA)** reminded the room that resistance, solidarity, and democratic mobilisation remain vibrant and alive.



Beyond "Business as Usual"

Members were clear that the current context demands more than "business as usual." The session concluded with a call to build new alliances, speak more clearly to the public, and stay rooted in community needs rather than institutional donor logic. Online participants reinforced this urgency, advocating for proactive strategies and stronger inter-regional solidarity.

Pathways for Continued Engagement with Forus



- **Join Working Groups:** Participate in shaping collective positions on digital governance, financing for development, and the Enabling Environment.
- **Share Realities:** Provide examples of how shifting geopolitics or funding changes affect your national context to inform collective, evidence-based advocacy.
- **Rethink Narratives:** Contribute examples of how your platform is strengthening public trust or building local legitimacy in difficult political climates.
- **Lead Intergenerationally:** Bring youth perspectives into Forus spaces by encouraging youth leadership in working groups and regional coalitions.
- **Flag Opportunities:** Identify where Forus solidarity and visibility can help amplify national or regional concerns in multilateral spaces.





“We must act strategically and together: focus on decisions that truly matter. Civil society must follow the money and engage all actors, not just politicians. Forus has an important role to play in connecting local voices to global decisions.” – Christelle Kalhoule, SPONG, Forus Chair





DAY 1: ONLINE RECAP & FEEDBACK SESSION

To close out the first day of the General Assembly, **Marianne Buenaventura Goldman and Bibbi Abruzzini** (Forus) facilitated **the first dedicated recap and feedback session for our online participants**. These sessions were designed to ensure that the perspectives and inputs of online participants were fully integrated into the General Assembly debates and outcomes.



Solidarity Across Borders

Reflecting on our connection as a global network, online members emphasised that collaboration is a practical lifeline that must transcend geographic limits.

- **Regional Interconnectedness:** Participants reminded the network that we are one body; a setback for civic space in Latin America vibrates across every other region. To turn solidarity into action, members suggested practical measures like supporting colleagues in exile, organising joint embassy visits, and utilising multilateral teams to keep our collective advocacy alive.
- **Navigating Survival and Restrictions:** For colleagues in conflict-affected regions, civil society is often operating in a state of survival. With travel bans and security concerns frequently blocking physical presence, digital tools and remote participation become vital for denouncing violations and coordinating advocacy from within restricted spaces.
- **Strengthening Collective Action:** Feedback highlighted the importance of developing faster, more proactive strategies. Members encouraged the network to move beyond reactive statements and make greater use of international mechanisms to strengthen and amplify advocacy efforts on the ground.



Reimagining the Sector: Roots and Youth

The dialogue shifted toward the "internal reconstruction" of the sector, moving away from institutional logic and back toward grassroots power.

- **From Consultation to Decision-Making:** There is a strong call to promote citizenship from the ground up. Participants noted that while communities are often "involved," they are rarely part of actual decision-making. To stay autonomous and self-sustainable, representative platforms must ensure local voices are in the driver's seat.
- **The Youth-Led Agenda:** This reconstruction isn't possible without young people. The digital cohort was clear: youth should not just be represented—they must be at the center of governance, helping to develop the "new agenda of the world" that our current context demands.
- **Collective Impact:** In a world trending toward individualism, civil society must prove that an isolationist approach doesn't deliver results for the majority. By remaining radically open to communities, we demonstrate the superior impact of collective action.



Strategic Resilience and Funding

Navigating the "perfect storm" of shrinking civic space and reduced funding was a key point of the online session:

- **Creative Resourcing:** While negotiating with traditional donors is harder than ever, members highlighted opportunities to engage national governments on domestic funding. Even in countries facing conflict, finding these strategic openings is essential for maintaining independence.
- **Independence as a Priority:** The consensus from the online group was that civil society must remain independent and autonomous, finding creative ways to resource our work without compromising our mission or community roots.





DAY 2 – TUESDAY 24 MARCH

LIGHTNING TALK BY PHILIPPE WALFARD (AFD) – PARTNERING FOR RESILIENCE

In a focused Lightning Talk, Philippe Walfard from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) reaffirmed the agency's strong, long-standing partnership with civil society—particularly through networks like Forus and Coordination Sud. Against a backdrop of shrinking resources and global political uncertainty, the session explored how institutional donors can better support the systems that allow civil society to thrive.



Strengthening the Ecosystem

Philippe Walfard underscored that for AFD, civil society is not just a set of implementers, but the heart of ensuring accountability, transparency, and trust in development cooperation. He emphasised that the agency's mandate focuses on the institutional strengthening of CSOs, moving away from top-down mandates toward supporting initiatives that originate directly from civil society—particularly those centered on human rights, health, and the public interest.



Strategic Collaboration and New Paths

The talk highlighted several key areas where the AFD-Forus partnership is breaking new ground:

- **Systematic Consultation:** A call to integrate CSOs more deeply into project design, including private sector initiatives, to ensure they remain grounded in local contexts.
- **Global Initiatives:** Strategic efforts are underway to integrate civil society into major global platforms, such as the Finance in Common initiative.

Defending International Solidarity: With the 2027 French elections on the horizon and increasing funding pressures, Walfard stressed that international solidarity must be more boldly communicated and defended in the public eye.

The session concluded with a clear message: in an era of political risk, the "business as usual" approach to funding is no longer enough.

Strengthening civil society systems is the most effective way to protect the long-term impact of international cooperation.



SESSION 6. PLENARY - NAVIGATING CHANGE IN A SHIFTING GLOBAL LANDSCAPE

This plenary marked a pivotal transition for the General Assembly: moving from an understanding of the global "perfect storm" to defining exactly what Forus wants to achieve in response. Led by Marie L'Hostis (Forus), the session moved beyond a simple diagnosis of world events, focusing instead on how the network can strategically drive the outcomes it wants to see.



Turning Evidence into Action

Through a series of member reflections, the session demonstrated how collective action is already transforming national realities into powerful global advocacy:

- **Grounding Advocacy in Data:** **Luisa Rodriguez Tariba from Sinergia (Venezuela)** and **Arjun Bhattarai from NFN (Nepal)** highlighted that grounded research and hard data are our best tools for defending the enabling environment and civic space.
- **Holding Power Accountable:** **Silla Ristimäki from Fingo (Finland)** shared how Forus helps members bring distinct civil society perspectives into international accountability processes and SDG follow-up.
- **A Rights-Based Future:** Looking toward the post-2030 horizon, **Miguel Santibáñez Ibarra from ACCIÓN (Chile)** warned against fragmentation, insisting that we must remain ambitious and rights-centered in our long-term strategy.
- **Influencing Development Finance:** **Oyebisi Oluseyi from NNGO (Nigeria)** and **Harsh Jaitli from VANI (India)** underscored the need to engage more seriously with Public Development Banks (PDBs) as increasingly influential spaces of power.
- **Communities as Decision-Makers:** Finally, **Moses Isooba from UNNGOF (Uganda)** and **Mette Müller from Globalt Fokus (Denmark)** challenged the network to imagine a future where communities are no longer "beneficiaries," but co-investors and lead decision-makers in their own development.

A strong message coming through was that Forus has a unique role to play in helping members connect evidence, advocacy, learning and solidarity across countries and regions. The discussion also made clear that civil society cannot remain only reactive. We need to be more strategic, more coordinated, and more intentional about the outcomes we want to drive together.

In the group discussions that followed, members converged around several key priorities for collective Forus advocacy in the coming years: enabling environment and civic space, financing and financial sustainability, Agenda 2030 and post-2030, stronger shared narratives on the value of civil society, digital and intergenerational dimensions of advocacy, and more meaningful collaboration across the network.

This session marked an important shift in the Assembly: **moving from exploring what is changing around us to starting to define what Forus can help us change together.**

Pathways for Continued Engagement with Forus



- **Join the Working Groups:** Help shape Forus' collective positions on the enabling environment, sustainable development, financing, digital governance, and the "Shift the Power" movement.
- **Feed National Evidence into Global Advocacy:** Share alerts and concrete data from your national context regarding civic space, SDG implementation, or funding challenges to strengthen our collective leverage.
- **Shape the Financing Agenda:** Contribute examples of how "investment compacts," debt pressures, or PDB projects are affecting your region. Your experiences directly inform our advocacy with the OECD-DAC and the PDB-CSO Coalition.
- **Connect VNR and HLPF Work:** If your country is undergoing a Voluntary National Review (VNR), coordinate with the network to link your national SDG accountability work to Forus' broader HLPF engagement.
- **Champion the Post-2030 Vision:** Join the launch of the **Forus Post-2030 Vision on 21 May**. Help us promote our "3D Framework"—what we **Defend** (rights and local leadership), what we **Demand** (real accountability and financing reform), and what we **Decline** (the weakening of climate or rights-based ambition).
- **Strengthen Digital Governance:** Engage with the digital rights track through CADE or the Digital Governance Working Group. Help us navigate issues like AI, surveillance, and digital equity by sharing national concerns or proposing new themes.
- **Build Stronger Shared Narratives:** Help us change the story of civil society. Contribute impact stories, media hooks, or translation support to communicate our role as credible constructors of solutions.
- **Lead in Key Advocacy Arenas:** Step forward to represent the network or co-convene spaces at the UN, with the OECD-DAC, or in regional forums. Forus is here to broker your participation and amplify your leadership where it matters most.
- **Foster Peer Solidarity:** Use Forus as a space for peer exchange and regional strategy. By sharing lessons and feedback, you help turn national knowledge into collective power.

SESSION 7. HOW DOES A SUCCESSFUL SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM LOOK IN FORUS?

Facilitated by Elisa Novoa (Forus), this session served as a pulse-check for the network, moving from individual self-reflection to a collective vision for the future. The session revealed an "unspoken alignment" among members: regardless of geography, culture, or size, national platforms and regional coalitions are facing similar internal hurdles and sharing the same aspirations for growth.



A Roadmap for Organisational Resilience

The discussions identified three core pillars that will now anchor the **Forus Capacity Strengthening Curriculum** for the 2026–2030 strategic period. These areas aren't just technical skills; they are the bedrock of our long-term survival and impact:

- **Strategic Advocacy:** Moving beyond reactive statements to proactive, evidence-based influence that changes policy and shifts power.
- **Resource Mobilisation:** Finding creative, sustainable ways to fund our missions in an increasingly restrictive and unpredictable financial landscape.
- **Risk Management:** Building the internal systems and cultures of care necessary to navigate political, digital, and legal threats safely.



Building a Culture of Learning

This session marked the beginning of a member-led approach to capacity building. Instead of top-down training, the next strategic period will focus on:

- **Co-Shaping Learning Spaces:** Interested national platforms and regional coalitions will take the lead in designing resources and approaches that reflect their specific realities.
- **Expanding Innovation:** By combining diverse expertise and partnering with specialised actors, Forus will foster a network-wide culture of learning that stays ahead of emerging trends.
- **Collective Resilience:** Using the curriculum not just for individual growth, but to strengthen the entire ecosystem, ensuring that every member has the tools to stay independent and effective.

This approach allows Forus to remain a space where members actively engage to build everyone's resilience and prepare for the future.

SESSION 8. LOCAL CSOS MEETING: ROOTS AND RESILIENCE IN SIEM REAP

Facilitated by Pheakdey Sorn, Director of CCC (Cambodia), this session brought the General Assembly's focus to the provincial level through the experience of the Non-Government Coordination Network of Siem Reap (NCN-SR). Presented by Mrs. Nhean Phoungmaly, Chairwoman of NCN-SR and Executive Director of Rachana Satrei, the session offered a powerful look at how local coordination sustains civil society in challenging contexts.



A Legacy of Local Coordination

NCN-SR is a network with deep roots, tracing its origins back to the post-election period of 1993. What began as a small coordination space has grown alongside Cambodia's NGO sector; by 2025, Siem Reap alone is home to over 300 organisations and associations, making provincial-level connections more vital than ever.

Today, NCN-SR brings together around 150 member organisations through a management committee and six thematic sub-networks, covering everything from education and health to rights, environment, and disability support.



Practical Support on the Frontlines

The session highlighted the network's role as an essential bridge between local actors and broader structures. In 2024 and 2025, NCN-SR has been incredibly active, focusing on:

- **Navigating the "Perfect Storm":** Helping members stay informed and compliant with complex requirements regarding registration, labor law, taxation, and social security.
- **Opening Doors to Dialogue:** Creating direct channels for members to engage with provincial authorities and national networks, ensuring local realities reach decision-makers.
- **Building Technical Capacity:** Leading consultations on child protection and women's rights, while facilitating training in digital security and community development.



Doing Much with Little

A recurring theme of the session was the sheer determination of the network. NCN-SR carries out this significant work with very limited resources, with its committee operating primarily on a voluntary basis.

As they look toward the future, the network's goals are clear: they are seeking more stable support—including a permanent secretariat—to strengthen their internal capacity and resource mobilisation. **Their story served as a vital reminder to the Forus network that the "bridge" between local reality and global advocacy is often built and maintained by the tireless, voluntary efforts of local leaders.**



DAY 2: ONLINE RECAP & FEEDBACK SESSION

To wrap up the second day, our **online participants** met to break down the day's discussions, integrating their perspectives directly into the General Assembly's debates, and asking that the realities of those facing political and financial pressures are central to Forus' next steps.



Key Insights: Driving a Proactive Agenda

Online participants highlighted that for the network to remain effective, civil society must shift from a reactive stance to a more intentional, "upstream" approach:

- **Strategic alliances with Public Development Banks (PDBs) are increasingly essential:** As cooperation models shift and traditional ODA declines, civil society must proactively engage PDBs at national, sub-national, regional, and international levels. Building coalitions with PDBs can expand funding access, strengthen influence over resource allocation, and create new opportunities for sustainable financing.
- **Advocacy must move upstream to shape funding and policy decisions:** Civil society should not only respond to funding mechanisms after they are designed but actively influence how priorities, allocations, and governance structures are established. Effective advocacy requires stronger coordination, regional cooperation, and clear strategies for engaging political and financial decision-makers. SDGs and Agenda 2030 are tools for advocacy, linking human rights with social priorities.
- **Data ownership, regional monitoring, and credible evidence are critical tools for influence:** Controlling data strengthens advocacy, protects civic memory, and enhances legitimacy. Initiatives like regional monitoring systems provide essential comparative analysis, support rapid responses, and inform both national and global advocacy strategies while fostering youth participation and long-term sustainability.

- **Civil society must diversify financial models and adapt to geopolitical change:** Shrinking civic space, unstable political environments, and changing financial flows require new sustainability strategies, including crowdfunding, social enterprise, PDB partnerships, and creative financing mechanisms. Multi-level approaches are necessary to remain resilient. Regional collaboration and alliances amplify influence and strengthen resilience.
- **Peace, rights, and civic space must remain central to civil society impact:** Civil society must position itself as a credible, solution-oriented actor advancing peace, dialogue, SDGs, and human rights. Defending both physical and virtual civic spaces is fundamental to maintaining advocacy, collaboration, and democratic participation.



Member Recommendations & Asks

Day 2 onsite and online reflections translated into a series of concrete member recommendations and asks to guide the network's collective efforts:

- **Strengthen and Expand CSO-PDB Coalitions:** Members are calling for structured engagement platforms with Public Development Banks. This includes mapping existing opportunities and barriers to financing and scaling up successful initiatives like coalition-building toolkits.
- **Invest in Shared Regional Data and Infrastructure:** There is a strong demand to strengthen regional observatories and monitoring platforms. By coordinating peer-learning networks and improving early-warning systems, the network can react faster to threats. A key priority is involving **youth in research** to ensure the next generation is part of this advocacy work.
- **Promote Diversified Funding Strategies:** Forus should support members in moving beyond traditional donor aid. This involves building capacity for financial resilience and increasing access to sub-national and regional public financing mechanisms.
- **Defend Civic and Digital Spaces:** We must reinforce protection mechanisms against restrictive laws. This includes expanding digital advocacy tools so participation can continue even under political or physical restrictions, while prioritising virtual security and communication infrastructure.
- **Reinforce Peace-Centered, Rights-Based Narratives:** The network needs to position civil society as a strategic policy actor, not just a beneficiary. By using the SDGs and Agenda 2030 as advocacy tools, we can strengthen our messaging around peace, justice, and social rights.



DAY 3 – WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH

A MORNING AT ANGKOR WAT

On Wednesday morning, the spirit of exchange and solidarity that defines Forus extended beyond the conference room to the historic temples of Angkor Wat. Participants in Siem Reap spent the morning discovering these iconic heritage sites together, creating space for informal conversations, shared moments, and a deeper connection with Cambodia's rich cultural heritage.

More than a cultural visit, the excursion offered an important moment to pause, reconnect, and recharge collectively amid an intense week of discussions. It created an opportunity for delegates to strengthen relationships beyond their institutional roles, helping nurture the trust, solidarity, and sense of community that continue to underpin collaboration across the Forus network.



SESSION 9. REGIONAL STRATEGY DISCUSSIONS

Led by Marie L'Hostis (Forus), this session launched an important member-led process to translate the Forus Strategy 2026–2030 into regional advocacy priorities, influence arenas, and practical next steps. The goal was not to finalise strategies during the General Assembly, but to begin a process genuinely shaped by members—grounded in the realities they face, the spaces where power is exercised in their regions, and the collective action that could make the greatest difference.



A Process Built by Members, for Members

A key message from the session was that these regional strategy processes are designed for members to engage in at every stage. This is not a closed or expert-only exercise. Instead, it creates multiple entry points for members to shape the direction and usefulness of the strategy in their region by:

- Sharing political analysis and identifying advocacy opportunities.
- Contributing examples from national contexts.
- Helping think through power mapping.
- Feeding into consultations and draft outputs.



The Roadmap for Regional Strategy

The process discussed includes a few clear steps to ensure the strategy remains rooted in local realities:

1. **Identify Priorities & Steering Committee:** Regions identify initial priorities and volunteer members for a light **Regional Steering Committee**.
2. **Define Terms:** The Steering Committee helps finalise short Terms of Reference and agrees on how support will be selected.
3. **Research & Draft:** Consultations and research are conducted to draft the strategy, power map, and action plan.
4. **Review & Validation:** Members review and validate the draft before it is finalised.

Note on Support: Budget support is available for **Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific** to accompany this work. This support is specifically for developing the strategy itself and is not for sub-granting.



Flexible and Focused

The discussions made it clear that regional strategies must not be "one-size-fits-all." They need to reflect different sub-regional realities and the actual spaces where decisions are made—whether in regional bodies, public development banks, national parliaments, or UN regional processes. The goal is to create a clear sense of shared direction while remaining flexible enough to reflect the diversity of the network.

Pathways for Continued Engagement with Forus



The overall goal is to make these regional strategies meaningful and practical. Broad engagement is essential to making them strong:

- **Connect with the Leads:** If you would like to engage in the regional advocacy strategy process — regularly or occasionally — contact **Jyotsna Mohan** at jyotsna@forus-international.org to be connected to the colleagues leading the process in your region.
- **Join the Regional Steering Committee:** You can help steer the project and share what kind of support, expertise, or consultation methods would be most useful for your region.
- **Provide Feedback and Analysis:** Even if you aren't on the Steering Committee, you can play an important role by feeding in examples and analysis. You can help identify top regional priorities, relevant power arenas, useful contacts, and opportunities for inter-regional collaboration.



SESSION 10. STATUTORY SESSION - GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

The Statutory Session provided a space for members to review the network's health, celebrate collective milestones, and formalise the governance structures that will carry Forus into the 2026–2030 strategic period. Led by Justina Kaluinaite from VBP Platforma (Lithuania) and Forus Treasurer (25–26), the session focused on two main goals: ensuring full transparency regarding the network's activities and finances, and renewing the leadership mandates required to move the network forward.



Celebrating Two Years of Impact (2024–2025)

Sarah Strack (Forus Director) presented a retrospective of the past two years, highlighting how the network's collective energy has translated into global influence.

- **Expanding Connectivity:** With over 100 events and impactful communication campaigns like #MarchWithUs and #LetsTalkDigital, the network has significantly increased its ability to tell the story of civil society impact.
- **Strengthening Support:** Targeted programs, such as the Leadership Development Programme for women and the Forus Journalism Fellowship, have directly bolstered the internal capacity of member platforms.
- **Deepening Influence:** Through the EU SEE consortium project and the creation of the PDBs-CSO Coalition, Forus has moved toward a more evidence-based and strategic form of advocacy, particularly in the areas of digital governance and development finance.



Financial Stability and Future Planning

The financial report confirmed that Forus is in a stable and healthy position, ending the current cycle with balanced accounts.

- **Resource Allocation:** Total expenses reached approximately €1.3 million, with a strong focus on the "Influence" pillar and direct support to members.
- **Diversification:** While current funding is secured through partners like the European Commission and AFD, Forus is focused on diversifying income streams to ensure long-term independence and resilience.





Decisions & Statutory Amendments

In a series of votes that included onsite and online participants in the session, the General Assembly approved several key amendments to the Forus Statutes. These decisions were grouped into three categories to ensure clarity and institutional alignment:

- **Editorial Adjustments:** Members voted unanimously to update and officially formalise the transition of the network's name from **IFP to Forus** across all legal documentation.
- **Operational Changes to the General Assembly:** Following up on discussions initiated at the 2024 GA in Botswana, members voted unanimously to adjust the frequency and format of our highest decision-making body: It was decided that an Ordinary General Assembly will take place **at least every two years** (moving from a three-year cycle).
- **Council Rotation and Representation:** A final group of amendments focused on the Council's structure and mandates:
 - **Mandate Limits:** It was confirmed that the Chair can serve a maximum of two mandates of two years each, while Council members are limited to three mandates of two years each.
 - **Rotation:** To ensure institutional memory while allowing for fresh perspectives, it was confirmed that at least one-third of the Council should be renewed every two years, while specifying the special case of regions with 1 member only or where members have given mandate to the Regional coalition for representation in the Council.



Renewal of the Forus Council

The session concluded with the formal renewal of the Council, with four new representatives elected by the membership to join the Council, each bringing specific expertise to guide the network's 2026–2030 strategy. The newly elected Council members are:

- **Harsh Jaitli (VANI, India)**
- **Rosaria Arbore (La Coordinadora ONGD, Spain)**
- **Ndey S. Bakurin (TANGO, The Gambia)**
- **Luisa Rodríguez Táriba (Sinergia, Venezuela)**

These representatives, alongside the sitting Forus Council members, are now entrusted with leading the network's collective advocacy and ensuring Forus remains a grounded, member-led global platform.





DAY 3: ONLINE RECAP & FEEDBACK SESSION

During the **Day 3 online recap and feedback session**, online participants discussed the major governance shifts and strategic launches that defined the day. The conversation focused on how the network can leverage its current stability to move from a reactive mode toward a more proactive, collective agency.

- **From Crisis-Reaction to Collective Agency:** Participants urged the network to move beyond simply reacting to global events. There was a strong call to invest in positive, forward-looking narratives for civil society, particularly as we work to shape the post-2030 agenda.
- **A Growing and Financially Stable Network:** The session highlighted a very active period for Forus, with over 110 events and approximately 3,800 participants, and stable resources leading to surpluses in 2024 and 2025. With six new members joining, the network now reaches 82 members. However, participants flagged a structural risk: membership fees represent only 1–2% of income, an issue that must be addressed to ensure long-term independence.
- **Statutory Amendments and Governance Updates:** Online members welcomed the formal adoption of several statutory changes. These include the official transition of the network's name to Forus, the adjustment of the General Assembly frequency to at least every two years, and the tightening of Council renewal rules and term limits. The session also celebrated the successful election of the new Forus Council.
- **Urgent Need for Funding Diversification:** There is strong interest among members in exploring social enterprise, crowdfunding, and mutualisation as concrete alternatives to donor dependency. Participants flagged upcoming sessions on these topics as high-priority areas for the remainder of the Assembly.

Member Recommendations & Asks

Building on the statutory updates and regional debates, onsite and online participants identified several critical priorities for the network to address over the coming strategic period. These recommendations focus on moving beyond internal management toward high-impact, proactive advocacy and financial sustainability.



Shift from Crisis-Reaction to Collective Agency

The network must move beyond a reactive mode and invest in positive, forward-looking narratives for civil society.

- **Post-2030 Leadership:** Focus on building common positions and narratives that shape the post-2030 agenda rather than just responding to it.
- **Civil Society as Solution-Builders:** Develop messaging that positions the network as a proactive, strategic policy actor and a constructor of peace and justice.

Strengthen Regional Advocacy Infrastructure

Building on the newly launched regional processes, members highlighted the need for grounded, coordinated action.

- **Operationalising the Africa Strategy:** Move forward for a bottom-up continental strategy. This must address specific regional pressures, including the debt crisis and shrinking civic space, through a unified voice in global governance.
- **Bottom-Up Power Mapping:** Ensure regional strategies flow from national contexts to sub-regional and continental levels, ensuring they are practical and rooted in members' local realities.





Tackle Structural Financial Risks

While the network is currently stable, members called for an urgent focus on long-term financial independence.

- **Diversify Income Streams:** Address the structural risk of membership fees representing only 1–2% of income.
- **Explore Innovative Models:** Invest in capacity building for alternative financing, such as social enterprise, crowdfunding, and the mutualisation of resources, to reduce dependency on traditional donors.

Optimise Governance & Participation

The success of the new strategy requires high engagement across all levels of the network.

- **Leverage New Governance Structures:** Use the more frequent two-year GA cycle to remain agile and keep members closely connected to the decision-making process.
- **Inclusive Engagement:** Create multiple entry points for participation in regional steering committees and thematic groups, ensuring that platforms with limited resources can still provide analysis, political data, and feedback.



DAY 4 – THURSDAY 26 MARCH

SESSION 11. BOOK TALK BY SAM WORTHINGTON – PRISONERS OF HOPE

Day 4 of the General Assembly opened with an inspiring and deeply personal book talk by Sam Worthington (Forus Fellow and former CEO of Interaction USA), discussing his work *Prisoners of Hope*. Moving away from the technical jargon that often dominates development circles, the session was a call to return to the core values of civil society: human dignity, compassion, and the intentionality of hope.



Beyond the Jargon: Reconnecting with the Human Story

Sam shared that the challenge in writing the book was to avoid "NGO-speak" and instead focus on the basic ideas of human development. He emphasised that while the sector often gets lost in policy language, our real work is about ensuring people have a say in their own future.

- **Stories of Resilience:** Sam shared a moving account from Africa during the pandemic. In a community where 40% of adults had passed away, hope was found in the way children were organised and cared for by grandparents—fueled not by formal funding, but by pure compassion and shared memory.
- **The Intentionality of Hope:** Hope is not a passive feeling; it is a strategic choice. Sam urged leaders to create "space for conversation" outside of day-to-day business to recover their long-term aspirations and reclaim their activism.



Reclaiming Localisation: Agency over Tokenism

The discussion took a hard look at how "localisation" is currently framed. Participants argued that modern institutionalism and the "RFP (Request for Proposals) culture" have often killed the original spirit of community activism.

- **Shifting Power, Not Just Funds:** Localisation must be about local agency, not just a shift in percentage of ODA or donor funding. Sam noted that while resources are necessary, we must bridge the gap between local realities and global systems without being tokenistic.
- **The Risk of Innovation:** True innovation involves failure and experimentation. However, Sam cautioned that we cannot innovate "on the backs of people who have already lost everything." We must push donors to carry the risk rather than imposing it on the most vulnerable.
- **The Threat of Co-option:** A warning was issued that "localisation" is increasingly being co-opted by nationalist or populist movements. To counter this, civil society must remain rooted in universal values and cross-border solidarity.



Member Perspectives: Survival vs. Activism

The session opened a vulnerable dialogue among members about the current state of the sector and the obstacles to genuine change. **Rita Leote from PPONG (Portugal)** reflected that many organisations are currently trapped in a "trauma mode" and survival mindset that prevents them from being truly strategic. She emphasised the need for self-reflection to recover the activism that has been lost in the struggle to simply stay afloat. **Zia-ur-Rehman from ADA (Asia)** noted that the transition into modern, institutionalised civil society was effectively the first attack on localisation; by moving away from sitting directly with communities in favor of bureaucratic "RFP culture," the core activism of the sector has been eroded. Adding to this, **Harsh Jaitli from VANI (India)** pointed out the complexities of the modern "donor industry," where private philanthropy and CSR often prioritise their own corporate interests or internal organisations over the national platforms that actually voice the concerns of the people.



Reclaiming Our Purpose: Key Takeaways

The session concluded with a powerful call to action, urging members to move beyond the technicalities of service delivery and reclaim their roles as political and social actors. Sam reminded the network that real impact comes from investing in social change rather than just spending budgets on implementing programs. He emphasised that the sector must enable the capacity of people to engage in a way that isn't tokenistic, looking for those already solving problems and joining them in collective action. Ultimately, the discussion served as a reminder that civil society did not always exist in its current professionalised form; it began as a movement of people. By shifting from jargon to the language of human dignity and intentional hope, the network can reclaim its activism. Small changes remain possible through human experience and organising collective thought, ensuring that our legacy is one of protecting values and creating solutions for the generations to come.



The session concluded with a powerful reminder: ***"Our children and grandchildren will not ask us about our budgets, but about how we protected human values and created solutions in the face of crisis."*** – Sam Worthington



Get Your Copy of Prisoners of Hope

Following his book talk, many of you asked how to find **Sam Worthington's** latest work, ***Prisoners of Hope: Global Action and the Evolving Roles of U.S. NGOs***. The book offers practical solutions for NGOs to stay relevant in today's shifting landscape. To facilitate reflection within your own networks, one chapter of Prisoners of Hope is available here, and has been translated into French and Spanish by Forus.

The book is available at the following links: Global: [Amazon](#), Official Publisher: [Archway Publishing](#), UK: [World of Books](#), Netherlands: [Bruna](#), Germany: [KulturKaufhaus](#), Australia: [Booktopia](#). You can also search for "Worthington Prisoners of Hope" in your local search engine to find additional independent booksellers in your country.

SESSION 12. WORLD CAFÉ 1 - ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The World Café Lab was a high-energy, participatory session designed to turn the "lived advocacy experiences" of members into a collective strategic map. Participants rotated through four specialised stations, each focusing on a different dimension of the enabling environment. The goal was to identify the actors, actions, and innovative practices that allow civil society to move from a state of survival to one of strategic influence.



Station A: Advocating for Fundamental Freedoms & Legal Frameworks

Facilitated by **Lena Muhs** and **Elisa López (Forus)**, this station integrated actor mapping with strategic analysis to identify the "gatekeepers" of civic space. Participants didn't just list actors; they analysed the specific actions required to turn them into allies.

- **The National Technocracy:** A major takeaway was the need to look beyond elected officials. Members identified civil servants within ministries (Economy, Revenue, Local Government) as critical targets, as they manage the implementation of NGO laws and registration processes.
- **Legislative Champions:** Strategic efforts should focus on identifying MPs by personal interest to sponsor enabling legislation, such as access-to-information bills or cybersecurity safeguards, while securing formal commitments from Political Parties during electoral cycles.
- **Knowledge & Legal Actors:** The map included "non-geographical" actors like Universities and Think Tanks, which provide the legal analysis and simplified research necessary to debunk restrictive laws. Lawyers and the legal community were identified as essential for providing protective counsel and organisational development.

Synergies: Members noted the power of Unions to co-advocate on legislation that protects the freedom of assembly for both workers and civic activists.



Station B: Advocating for a Secure Digital Environment

Facilitated by **Ángela Alarcón (Forus)**, this station used a hypothetical case of a fast-tracked "Cybersecurity Law" used to silence dissent to develop a high-readiness playbook.

- **The Dual Approach:** Members focused on preventive measures—building structural readiness before a crisis occurs. This includes creating common reference frameworks on freedom of expression and establishing "early warning systems" to track restrictive digital governance trends.
- **Reactive Resilience:** In the face of immediate threats, participants suggested translating complex technical debates into accessible language for the public and mobilising "rapid-response" coalitions that include media experts and technical partners to challenge "fake news" imprisonment clauses.
- **The Forus Network Value:** Members looked to the network to facilitate transnational solidarity, connecting national actors with international rights-based legal alternatives and technical fact-checking observatories.



Station C: Advocating for Accessible & Sustainable Resources

This session, facilitated by **Paul-Gilbert Colletaz (Forus)**, focused on the political economy of funding, emphasising that **access to resources is a direct result of political influence**.

- **Mapping the Gatekeepers:** Participants mapped targets ranging from Public Development Banks (PDBs) to the OECD DAC and private philanthropy.
- **Narrative Power:** Using the media to shape a public narrative that recognises civil society as a necessary partner for development makes it politically easier to secure funding.
- An innovative recommendation was the **mutualisation of resources** — sharing platforms, insurance, or administrative tools within the network to reduce individual costs and donor dependency.
- **Evidence-Based Asks:** Working with think tanks to analyse sector trends allows CSOs to approach donors with proactive, data-driven proposals rather than reacting to donor-imposed priorities.



Station D: Advocating for Positive Narratives on Civil Society

This station, facilitated by **Clarisse Sih (Forus)**, explored how to reclaim the "civil society story" in an era of mis- and disinformation.

- **Tested Peer Tools:** Members shared successful models, such as **La Coordinadora's** (Spain) election monitoring tool, **Global Focus'** (Denmark) "4 myths about development aid" campaign, and **ForUM's** (Norway) constructive journalism training.
- **Self-Documentation: VANI** (India) emphasised training members to self-document their impact to build public trust *before* anti-CSO narratives take hold.
- **Direct Support:** The session revealed a wealth of "member-to-member" support opportunities, with **KCOG** (South Korea) offering data collection training and **Espace Associatif** (Morocco) suggesting working groups for navigating high-stakes multistakeholder meetings.



The Unified World Café Roadmap

The session concluded with four overarching recommendations to the network:

1. **Peer-to-Peer "Skills Repertoire":** Create a direct directory allowing members to contact each other for specific expertise (e.g., fact-checking or legal analysis) without Secretariat mediation.
2. **Global "Power Map":** Aggregate individual member maps into a single, collective "Forus Power Map" to visualise where the network holds influence and where strategic gaps exist.
3. **Proactive Toolkits:** Develop "ready-to-use" resources for negotiating with governments, myth-busting on TikTok, and results-based storytelling.
4. **The Evidence Bank:** Build a shared database to track and showcase the collective impact of the network's work, proving the legitimacy of the sector to skeptical governments and donors.

SESSION 13. WORLD CAFÉ 2 - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & FINANCING

The second World Café session shifted the focus toward the future of global cooperation, exploring how the network can navigate the evolving landscape of development finance, the transition beyond the 2030 Agenda, and the inclusion of diverse, intergenerational voices.



Station A: Financing for Sustainable Development (FfSD)

This station, facilitated by **Marianne Buenaventura Goldman and Elisa Lopez (Forus)**, focused on operationalising the Forus Financing for Sustainable Development (FfSD) Working Group Strategy. The discussion made it clear that while the Secretariat provides coordination, the strategy's success depends on the leadership and self-organisation of the members.

- **Priority #1: Public Development Banks (PDBs) & FiCS:** Engagement with PDBs remains the top priority. A mapping exercise revealed that 23 members are already active in this space: 7 at the national level, 12 at the regional level (engaging banks like the AfDB and ADB), and 5 at the international level (World Bank, New Development Bank). Nine members are specifically active in the Finance in Common (FiCS) initiative.
- **Priority #2: ODA & Development Cooperation:** With 29 members active in ODA—11 of whom are linked to the *Aid Watch* report—this was confirmed as the second thematic priority. However, members emphasised that this pillar requires strong, member-led initiatives to remain sustainable.
- **Emerging Interests:** The mapping also identified significant interest in Tax Justice (16 members), Climate Finance (12 members), and Debt (11 members), providing a baseline for future peer-to-peer connections and specialised partnerships.



Station B: Agenda 2030 & The Post-2030 Vision

As we approach the final five-year stretch of the SDGs, this station, facilitated by **Jyotsna Mohan Singh (Forus)**, addressed the urgent need to bridge the gap between current reporting and the future architecture of global development.

- **Strengthening Accountability:** Participants stressed that **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)** must be strengthened as tools for genuine accountability. There was a call to validate SDG data publicly and ensure that national and regional reports highlight replicable best practices rather than just statistics.
- **A "Leverage, Not Depart" Approach:** For the post-2030 framework, the consensus was to build upon the existing SDGs rather than "recreating the wheel." A new Theory of Change must be developed, centered on **bottom-up grassroots initiatives** and local government engagement to correct the top-down nature of current processes.
- **Intersectoral Collaboration:** Members recommended breaking down silos between sectors—establishing multi-stakeholder task forces within Forus to coordinate advocacy across government, academia, and the private sector.



Station C: Global Cooperation 2.0 - Power Shifts & New Allies

Facilitated by Marie L'Hostis (Forus), this session tackled the "changing of the guard" in development cooperation, identifying the actors who are increasingly shaping the rules outside of traditional UN spaces.

- **Following the Money:** Civil society must proactively follow the financial flows moving through bilateral deals, BRICS-related spaces, and the private sector. The takeaway was clear: **don't abandon traditional institutions (like the UN), but engage them alongside new power-holders.**
- **Strategic Positioning:** Rather than being reactive, members emphasised that civil society must advance its own agenda of rights and accountability within these new spaces.
- **Intelligence Sharing:** Members were encouraged to share "intelligence from the field" regarding new bilateral partnerships or emerging cooperation dynamics in their regions to inform a future-facing Forus strategy.



Station D: Inclusive Engagement & Intergenerational Communities

The final station, facilitated by **Elisa Novoa (Forus)**, explored how to bring the most impacted communities into the heart of national platform work, moving beyond "the usual suspects."

- **Prioritising New Alliances:** The group mapped critical actors for collaboration, including **youth collectives, indigenous organisations, LGBTQI+ activists, and social movements.**
- **Barriers to Inclusion:** A key challenge identified was the "risk of association"—where platforms fear that the confrontational tone of some grassroots movements might jeopardise their own collaborative relationships with governments.
- **Proven Practices:** Several "best practice" models within the network were highlighted to bridge this gap:
 - **Emerging Leaders Programs:** (e.g., Cooperation Canada) to build long-term capacity.
 - **Youth Fellowships:** (e.g., INFID, Indonesia) to integrate students into policy work.
 - **Thematic Assemblies:** (e.g., Guatemala) specifically organised upon the request of indigenous groups to ensure their priorities lead the agenda.



Key Recommendations: A Strategic Outlook

The session concluded with a call for Forus to act as a bridge-builder:

- 
1. **Protect Civic Space:** Ensure that civil society has a genuine say in SDG implementation and the post-2030 architecture at both global and national levels.
 2. **Invest in Youth:** Integrate youth engagement strategies and SDGs into national education curricula to ensure long-term sustainability.
 3. **Modernise Advocacy:** Develop media and public communication campaigns (the "Comms River") to build public awareness and support for SDG progress.
 4. **Hold the Private Sector Accountable:** Strengthen accountability mechanisms through ESG frameworks and responsible business conduct standards.

SESSION 14. FUNDRAISING FOR THE FUTURE - STRATEGY, CAPACITY & FUNDING APPROACHES

The final session of Day 4 addressed one of the most critical challenges for the network's long-term viability: the shift from donor dependency toward financial resilience. Led by Paul-Gilbert Colletaz (Forus), the session explored how civil society can navigate a changing financial landscape by adopting entrepreneurial mindsets and collective resource models.



Diversifying the Funding Mix

The discussion highlighted that financial sustainability is no longer about finding a single "perfect" donor, but about building a robust portfolio of diverse income streams.

Participants explored four key pillars for the future:

- **Social Enterprise & Income Generation:** Members shared practical pathways to financial autonomy through mission-aligned business models. Examples include tree-planting programs in the Philippines that generate jobs for indigenous communities and platforms that leverage their assets by renting office space or offering specialised consultancy services.
- **Evolving Corporate Partnerships:** The conversation shifted from traditional CSR toward long-term, multi-actor collaborations with tangible community impact. A notable example was the use of social trust funds in Mexico, where businesses contribute to stable, community-managed funds.
- **Mutualisation (Shared Resources):** This approach focuses on strengthening efficiency and solidarity by sharing skills, services, and resources across the network. By "mutualising" costs, platforms can reduce overhead and redirect more resources toward their core advocacy missions.
- **Crowdfunding & Community Engagement:** Participants discussed the power of local resource mobilisation, noting that crowdfunding succeeds when it is rooted in deep community trust and a sense of shared ownership.



Strategic Takeaways: Autonomy + Advocacy

The session emphasised that while financial innovation is essential, it must serve the mission, not distract from it.

- **Autonomy as a Strategic Choice:** Social enterprise and private partnerships offer a pathway to autonomy, but they should complement—not replace—continued advocacy for public and international funding.
- **Trust as a Prerequisite:** Innovation in funding requires a "high-trust" environment. Whether engaging a local community or a corporate partner, the legitimacy of the civil society platform remains its most valuable asset.
- **Managing Structural Risk:** Participants acknowledged that with membership fees currently representing a very small percentage of the network's income, diversification is a critical tool for mitigating the risks of shifting donor priorities.

Member Recommendations to the network



To support members in this transition, several priority actions were identified by participants:

1. **Capacity Building:** Strengthen the ability of national platforms to manage diversified funding strategies, particularly around social enterprise and inclusive business models.
2. **Creation of a Dedicated Innovation Space:** Members recommended that Forus establish a specific thematic space to share practical tools and success stories related to non-traditional funding.
3. **Internal Collaboration:** Boost resource-sharing across the 82 member networks to foster a culture of mutualisation and collective efficiency.
4. **Resilience Toolkit:** Support the upcoming rollout of the Forus Resilience and Support Toolkit, designed to provide members with actionable guidance on strengthening their financial foundations.

A Future of Independence: The session closed with a clear message: by combining innovative funding models with our core advocacy, the Forus network can secure the independent resources needed to drive long-term social change.



COUNCIL MEETING

At the end of the day, the **Forus Council** held a two-hour hybrid meeting to officially begin its new mandate. The session brought together onsite and online Council members—including those newly elected during this General Assembly.

The primary focus of the meeting was to introduce the diverse national platforms now represented on the Council and to elect the new Executive Committee.

The meeting opened with Council representatives sharing the backgrounds of their organisations, highlighting the diverse contexts within the network, ranging from long-standing platforms to those working in challenging political environments.

Following these presentations, the Council held elections for the **Executive Committee**, **appointing** the following members to lead the committee:

- **Chairperson:** Justina Kaluinaite (VBP Platforma, Lithuania)
- **Treasurer:** Shannon Kindornay (Cooperation Canada)
- **Vice Chairs:** Moses Isooba (UNNGOF, Uganda), Rolando Kandel (Red Encuentro, Argentina), and Luisa Rodríguez (Sinergia, Venezuela).





DAY 4: ONLINE RECAP & FEEDBACK SESSION

During the **Day 4 online recap and feedback session**, members discussed the key governance outcomes and strategic breakthroughs of the day. Online participants focused on how the network's new leadership can steer Forus through a period of escalating digital threats and a tightening global funding landscape.



Key Insights: Governance and Crisis Response

The discussion underscored both a moment of renewal for the network and an assessment of the external environment:

- Participants expressed their support for the **new Executive Committee**, elected by the Council to lead the network through its next strategic phase. Members also offered warm recognition and gratitude to the outgoing leadership for their dedicated service and contributions to the network.
- **Enabling Environment Under Threat:** The session confirmed that the shrinking of civic space remains the most pressing challenge across the network. Participants emphasised the need to move from alarm to action by leveraging practical tools like legal mapping, parliamentary alliances, and partnerships with **UN Special Rapporteurs** and diplomatic embassies.
- **Escalating Digital Repression:** A significant portion of the feedback focused on the "weaponization" of new cyber laws used for surveillance against activists. Members flagged a dangerous dual threat: the rise of national security legislation designed to stifle dissent, alongside coordinated misinformation campaigns specifically targeting the reputation of CSOs.



Strategic Shifts: Moving Beyond "Business as Usual"

The recap session made it clear that traditional methods of operation are no longer sufficient to meet current global challenges:

- **The Funding Crisis:** Participants noted with concern that cuts in USAID funding have not been compensated by the EU or other major donors. While Forus is tracking these shifts through the OECD-DAC and the [EU SEE consortium project](#), members called for a more aggressive move toward joint consortium funding and domestic resource mobilisation.
- **Strategic & Inclusive Advocacy:** There was a strong call to pivot toward research-based advocacy and a more proactive communications strategy to counter anti-CSO narratives. Inclusion must go deeper, moving beyond "the usual suspects" to genuinely integrate youth, women, the diaspora, and religious organisations into the heart of the network's work.
- **The Post-2030 Uncertainty:** The SDG post-2030 agenda was identified as a critical crossroads. Online participants urged the network to treat this not just as a policy deadline, but as a defining moment to reshape the sector's role in global governance.

The session concluded with a sense of urgency. Members emphasised that for the new Executive Committee to succeed, the network must remain agile, coordinated in its donor responses, and unapologetic in reclaiming the narrative of civil society as a vital pillar of democracy.



Day 4: Member Recommendations & Asks



Day 4 onsite and online reflections translated into a series of concrete member recommendations and asks to guide the network's collective efforts:

Strengthening Network Engagement

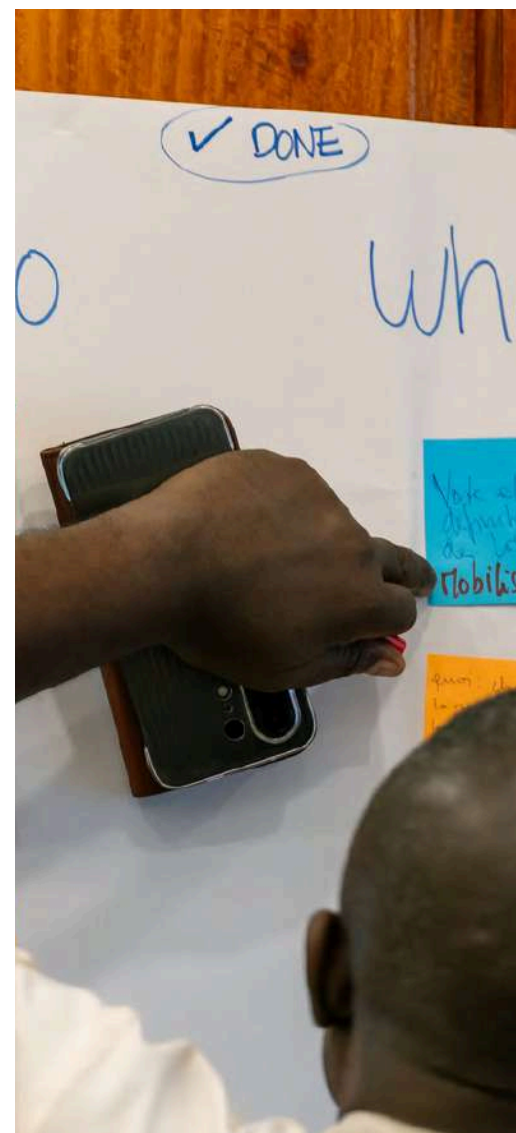
To ensure the 2026–2030 strategy is effectively localised, members requested greater transparency and structural clarity regarding how to participate in the network's governance.

- **Operational Mapping:** Members recommended a comprehensive mapping of engagement within the network—specifically identifying who sits on the Council, which Working Groups (WGs) members co-chair or participate in, and how members can better engage in Forus projects at the national level.
- **Onboarding and Clarity:** There is a continued need to simplify the "entry points" for members to contribute their expertise and leadership within the network's specialised structures.

Proactive Advocacy & Civic Space

Participants emphasised that in a world of shrinking civic space, the network must move from a defensive posture to one of "collective agency."

- **Demonstrating Alternatives:** Members issued a strong call for proactive advocacy. Beyond denouncing rights violations, Forus should lead by demonstrating positive alternatives and documenting "good practices" that prove civil society's value.
- **Consortium Leadership:** There is a clear ask for Forus to lead joint consortium work and funding strategies to navigate the current geopolitical shifts.
- **Digital Coordination:** Forus digital platforms were affirmed as critical tools for denouncing violations and coordinating rapid advocacy responses across borders.



Day 4: Member Recommendations & Asks



Funding & Financial Sustainability

Members called for a dual-track approach to the funding crisis: holding traditional donors accountable while building new, autonomous models.

- **Strategic Pressure:** Forus and Concord Europe are asked to continue pressing the **EU and OECD-DAC** for better emergency funding mechanisms that reflect the realities of CSOs under pressure.
- **Co-responsibility Models:** There is significant interest in exploring "win-win" partnerships with the private sector (CSR) and engaging citizens, local leaders, and national governments as diverse funding sources.
- **Domestic Resource mobilisation:** Members recommended moving toward models that share social responsibility across a broader base of local actors.

Inclusion & Grassroots Representation

To ensure the network remains representative and resilient, members urged a shift in how "inclusion" is practiced.

- **Intergenerational & Diverse Voices:** Recommendations were made to significantly strengthen the inclusion of youth, women, the diaspora, and religious organisations in Forus processes.
- **Bottom-Up Entry Points:** Where national civic spaces are closed or restricted, members suggested focusing on sub-national and community-level engagement as a strategic entry point, ensuring the network's work is rooted in grassroots realities rather than top-down mandates.

"Resignation is not an option." Participants' recommendations reflect a network that is ready to innovate and reclaim its political space through solidarity and proactive leadership.





DAY 5 – FRIDAY 27 MARCH

SESSION 15. WEAVING NETWORKS: CULTIVATING NETWORK HEALTH AND STAYING CONNECTED!

Led by Jean-Marc Boivin from Coordination SUD (France), Arturo Cortés Barbabosa (Forus), and Jennifer Franco (Forus), this session was dedicated to Network Health and Network Weaving—the vital internal systems and intentional practices that hold the Forus family together and strengthen our collective impact. The session moved from a reflection on the "health" of the network, which serves as the foundation of Forus' collective power, to practical "weaving" practices and tools designed to identify links, facilitate exchanges, and foster impactful relationships and collaborations within the network.



Network Health: The Foundation of Collective Power

Jean-Marc Boivin from Coordination SUD (France) opened the session by introducing Network Health as a **core priority within the 2026–2030 Strategy**. It describes how the network functions internally: how people relate, collaborate, communicate, build trust, and share resources. He explained this concept through the metaphor of simple medical care: network health is observed in practice when a member feels safe to ask for help, a connection is made by another, and resources are shared—essentially, the network working as a responsive system. This demonstrates that trust, communication, and responsiveness are not just values but active behaviors.



Strengthening Impact with Data: Healthy Inside, Powerful Outside

Taking the floor to explain the operational side of these dynamics, **Arturo Cortés Barbabosa (Forus)** emphasised that rather than being an abstract idea, **network health** acts as the vessel that holds our three strategic pillars—Connect, Support, and Influence—allowing them to move together toward our common goals.

To move network health into a manageable priority, Arturo detailed how Forus utilises **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)** systems and processes to drive data-driven operations and decision-making. This framework ensures the network remains dynamic and member-led by analysing five key areas:

- **Network Initiatives & Outputs:** Tracking projects (such as EU FFPA, AFD, and EU SEE), connection spaces like Working Groups, and joint publications or campaigns...
- **Member Engagement:** Monitoring participation across all network activities and representation in external fora.
- **Member Support:** Evaluating the impact of national projects, leadership development (LDP), organisational self-assessments, and other capacity-strengthening initiatives...
- **Collective Influence:** Measuring impact in multilateral processes such as the UN HLPF, PDBs, EU, EUDs...
- **Member Feedback & Key Data:** Systematically analysing impact, membership and satisfaction surveys and feedback to remain responsive to member needs.

Arturo concluded that Forus MEAL framework ensures accountability to members and donors while allowing the network to learn, adapt, and remain proactive. By analysing impact trends network-wide, by member and regions, Forus can better understand the quality of member relationships and specific priorities to keep the network healthy and dynamic. Ultimately, the guiding logic is **"Healthy Inside, Powerful Outside"**; by reinforcing solidarity and internal relationships, the network increases its collective resilience and amplifies its global influence.



From Data to Action: Weaving the Network

Building on the structural framework, **Jennifer Franco (Forus)** transitioned the session into the active practice of **Network Weaving**. She explained that weaving is simply the intentional work of connecting people and facilitating exchanges to help relationships and trust grow over time. It is about making the links within the network visible and useful so that members can collaborate more easily.

To turn this practice into action, Jennifer presented several practical tools currently being developed to respond to consistent member requests for better visibility and direct exchange:

- **Multilingual Communication System:** Jennifer detailed a new multilingual channel (listserv) where member-to-member messages will be automatically translated and redistributed, making coordination across language barriers simpler and more accessible. This system will be officially launched by Forus in the following months.
- **Network Mapping:** Inspired by the Dochas (Ireland) network map model, Jennifer introduced a mapping tool to allow members to visualise the network membership based on thematic focus, advocacy priorities, and member-to-member connections, helping everyone identify "who is doing what" at a glance.

To ensure these tools are shaped by the members themselves, the session transitioned into a series of dynamic discussions focused on refining these future Forus systems.

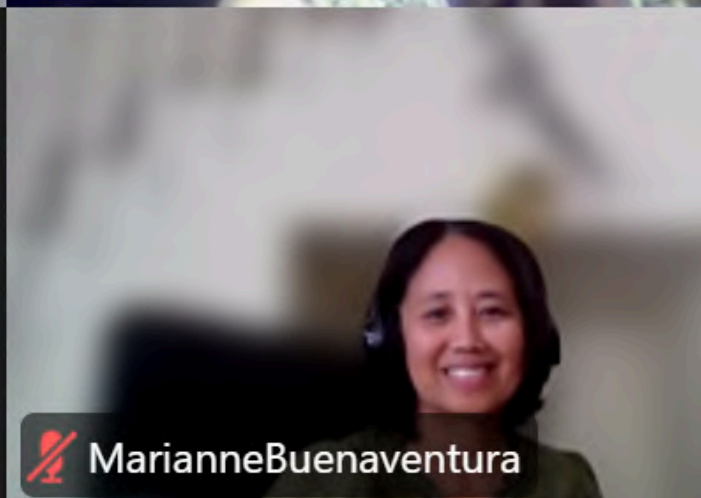
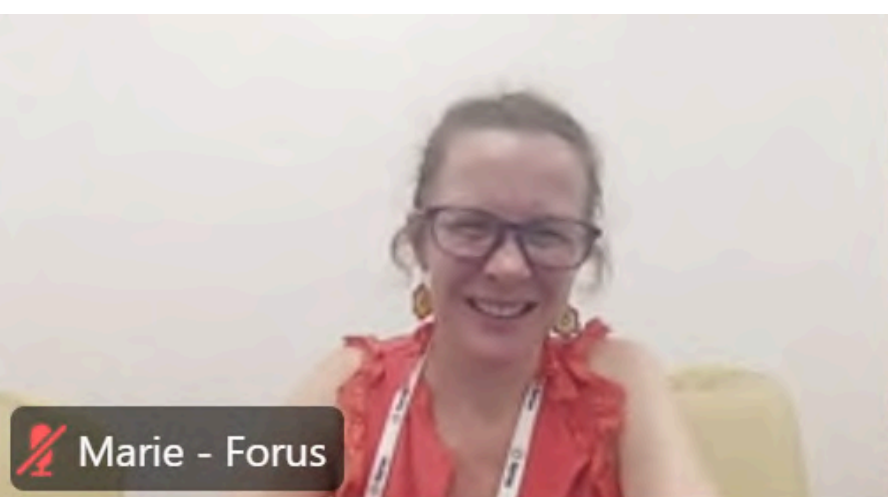
Participants gathered in table discussions to identify concrete, operational improvements:

- **Working groups** were recognised as essential spaces for peer exchange, collective learning, and joint initiatives. To improve these spaces, participants suggested that they should be more clearly aligned with member priorities and more inclusive of different capacities, languages, and regional realities. Other recommendations included rotating meeting time zones and creating shared resource spaces—such as dedicated drives—to make meeting outcomes and materials easily accessible to all.
- **Refining Communication Rules:** Members established "healthy use" rules for the multilingual email groups—such as using clear subject lines and avoiding "one-word" replies—to ensure the space remains a professional asset. Participants emphasised that the value of the space would depend not only on the translation system itself, but also on shared discipline around what should and should not be sent.
- **Optimising Data for Connection:** The discussions around member mapping highlighted a strong collective desire for practical tools that make the network easier to navigate. Participants emphasised that an effective mapping system should serve as a strategic resource—enabling members to quickly identify "who does what," pinpoint opportunities for collaboration, and connect with the right contact people across the globe. Participants also identified factual data fields for the upcoming Forus' mapping tool, such as active projects and specific collaboration needs, ensuring the platform serves as a practical bridge for direct partnership.



Moving Forward: The Weaving Roadmap

The inputs from this session provide a clear mandate for the coming years. The Secretariat will prioritise the optimisation of the mapping tool by focusing on the most relevant, member-vetted data points, ensuring it remains a functional asset for the network. Simultaneously, the member-to-member communication channel will be launched with clear rules to enable meaningful exchanges. Finally, Forus will continue to integrate its MEAL-driven framework to monitor network health, ensuring that member feedback remains the primary compass for a proactive and member-led 2026–2030 strategy.



SESSION 16. CLOSING ADVOCACY SESSION: DRIVING THE FORUS 2026-2030 STRATEGY

To wrap up a week of intense collaboration and visionary thinking, the Advocacy Closing Session, facilitated by Marie L'Hostis (Forus), brought together the main advocacy priorities that surfaced throughout the General Assembly. This session helped clarify how these priorities connect to ongoing and upcoming Forus work for the implementation of the new Forus 2026-30 Strategy.



Sharpening the Collective Advocacy Agenda

Marie L'Hostis (Forus) kicked off the session with a focus on the main advocacy priorities that surfaced throughout the General Assembly, clarifying how they connect to ongoing and upcoming work for the implementation of the new Forus 2026-30 Strategy. The session began from a simple point: the General Assembly had not produced a completely new agenda, but had helped sharpen and connect priorities that members had been raising throughout our strategy review process and across the GA week. Forus will work on:

- **Protecting and expanding the enabling environment for civil society**, with a focus on solidarity and protection when civic space closes or members face pressure.
- **Co-creating a civil society agenda for future development cooperation and financing** that is grounded in community realities.
- **Strengthening CSO participation and influence** in multilateral, regional, and emerging arenas to boost the implementation of sustainable development agendas.
- **Advocating for a shift in power in global cooperation.**
- **Co-designing new narratives, alliances, and public trust** to ensure civil society is heard as a constructor of solutions.
- **Advocating for digital resilience, youth, and inclusion** so the next phase of work is more secure, open, and representative.





Connecting Priorities to Action

A key message throughout the session was that follow-up is strongest when members can clearly see how their priorities travel into existing spaces and processes. For example, advocacy for a supportive ecosystem for an enabling environment has grown stronger thanks to the data, alerts, and faster responses collected by members, especially through **EU SEE** and related advocacy.

This momentum is sustained through active participation in working groups and peer exchanges, resource mobilisation through joint learning on resilience, and a stronger civil society voice in decision-making spaces such as **HLPF, VNR, OECD-DAC, and FiCS**.

Additionally, digital rights work continues through initiatives like **CADE** and the “**Let’s Talk Digital**” campaign. Forus’s advocacy is not about trying to do everything everywhere; it is about being intentional about where the network can open space, broker participation, and amplify member leadership.



What happens next? Pathways for Continued Engagement with Forus



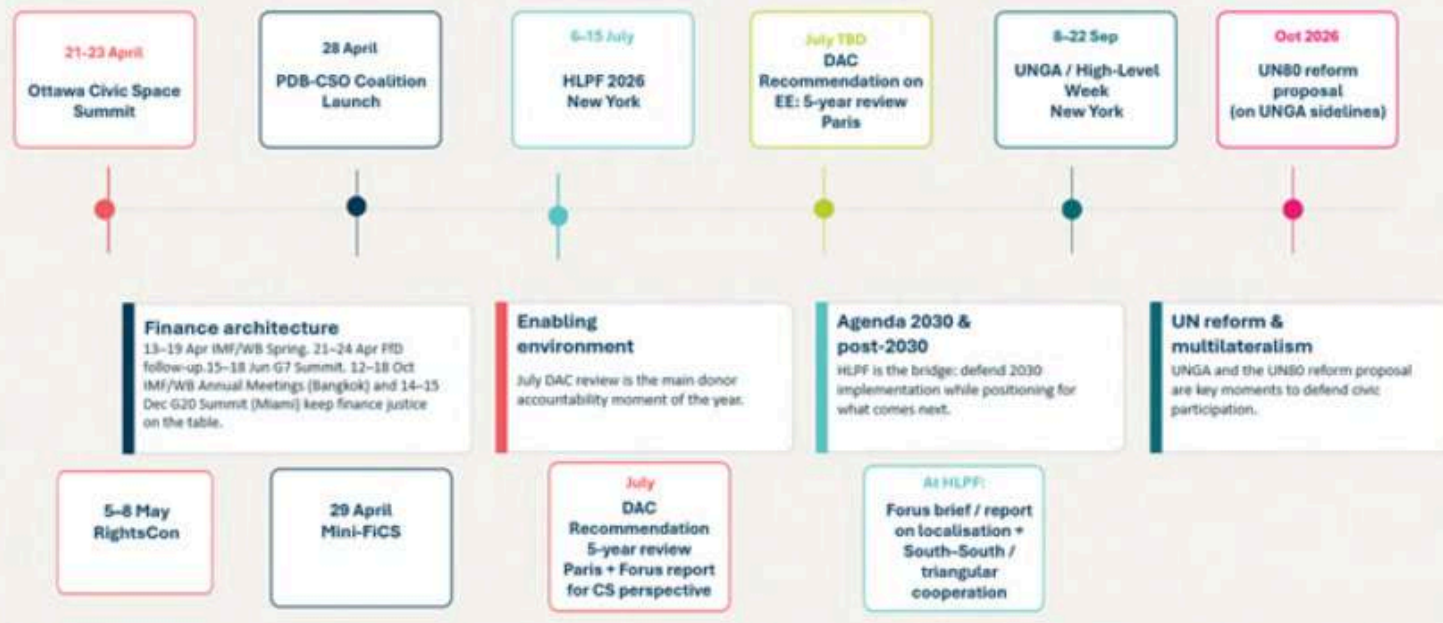
The General Assembly was not an endpoint, but a starting point for the next phase of collective work. In the coming months, members will engage through regional advocacy strategy processes, working groups, and evidence-sharing. There are several upcoming advocacy moments linked to the enabling environment, HLPF, post-2030, financing for sustainable development, and digital governance. The session provided a concrete framework for how members can continue to engage and drive this work forward:

- **Share evidence:** Provide alerts, case studies, national data, policy shifts, and community realities to strengthen collective advocacy.
- **Join the spaces:** Engage in working groups, regional strategy processes, consultations, multilingual peer exchanges, and thematic advocacy tracks.
- **Shape the asks:** Contribute to policy drafts, shared messages, briefings, and power-mapping discussions.
- **Lead together:** Speak at events, represent the network, co-convene discussions, and help open doors in key arenas.
- **Participate in communications:** Share stories, social content, media hooks, and narrative examples.
- **Connect and share:** Use feedback loops, solidarity actions, and network weaving spaces to keep the network alive between meetings.



2026 advocacy timeline | July-December

This is where the different strands of work begin to converge more sharply; enabling environment accountability, HLPF and post-2030 positioning, UN reform, and finance architecture debates.



2027 openings we should already be preparing for

1 Jan 2027	New UN Secretary-General takes office	A new SG will help shape the political opening and tone for post-2030 debates.
2027	ADB hosts the Finance in Common Summit in Asia	An important opening for deeper work on public development banks and the PDB-CSO coalition.
Sep 2027	SDG Summit	Expected launch point for the official post-2030 negotiation process.
2027-2030	Post-2030 negotiations	The long runway where we will be advocating for an inclusive process, stronger accountability, and financing justice at the core.

SESSION 17. CLOSING SESSION

To officially close the General Assembly, **Sarah Strack (Director, Forus)** opened the final session by expressing her deep appreciation for everyone who made the GA possible, despite the geopolitical context and travel constraints. Sarah highlighted the vital contributions of both online and onsite participants, the Forus governance and Secretariat, the technical staff, and the interpreters. A special note of gratitude was given to the **Cooperation Committee of Cambodia (CCC)**, the member organisation that hosted the GA in Siem Reap with exceptional hospitality and partnership. Sarah emphasised that the week successfully fostered the "spirit of sharing" that defines Forus, noting that the conversations started during the GA need to be developed further, as the true value of the network lies in these evolving peer exchanges and the collective strength found in our diversity.

Pheakdey Chan, (Executive Director, CCC, Cambodia) also took the floor to share a warm farewell on behalf of the hosts. He invited everyone to take the energy and the spirit of Cambodia home with them, urging participants not to let the new contacts and friendships fade. For Pheakdey, the success of the GA will be seen in how everyone stays connected and keeps this momentum going long after leaving the room.

During this closing session, several members took the floor to share their personal testimonies and reflect on the impact of the General Assembly:

Doris Ramirez from CODE-NGO (Philippines) shared how strengthening it was to be part of the GA. She expressed that the "Forus family" provided her with a renewed sense of confidence to lead her national platform, finding immense inspiration in both the formal and informal moments of the week.

Dominique Matondo from CCOD (Congo) spoke of a profound sense of peace and hope, remarking that "the world got together here" in an atmosphere of sincerity and freedom. He described the assembly members as pioneers of a new world, noting that the week provided a rare space to share struggles and solutions in a truly inclusive way.

Jacques Ngarassal from CILONG (Chad) highlighted that despite geographical and language barriers, the network successfully grew closer. He emphasised that the week proved the network is at its best when members rise above their individual contexts to act as a unified collective.



Brenda Molinar Marquez from UnidOSC (Mexico) celebrated the success of the GA, admitting that while she initially felt anxious about language barriers, the support of kind, like-minded people made the experience incredible. She observed that members from completely different regions realised they share common problems and a shared commitment to respect and peace.

Tutaingara Katuke from CICSO (Cook Islands) thanked the teams and participants while making a strong case for physical gatherings. She reminded the assembly that while digital tools are often proposed for efficiency, this GA proved that "seeing each other is the most important part" for building deep trust.

The 2026 General Assembly concluded with a heartfelt reflection from **Justina Kaluinaite from VBP Platforma (Lithuania), the newly elected Chair of Forus**. Justina shared how incredible it was to see the week fly by with such a strong sense of momentum building within the network. Stepping into her new role, she expressed a deep sense of gratitude for the chance to help shape the network's future, reminding the assembly that while every country brings something unique to the table, our impact is *"way more if we are connected."*





DAY 5: ONLINE RECAP & FEEDBACK SESSION

While the physical gathering in Cambodia drew to a close, online participants met to share their final reflections on the **Forus 2026-30 Strategy** and the network's future. The feedback focused on five priority areas:



Strengthening member-to-member communication is essential

There is strong support for a dedicated Member-to-Member platform to facilitate direct exchanges, collaboration, and solidarity across the network, particularly in crisis contexts.



Internal identity and cohesion need reinforcement

While governance structures are functioning well, members highlighted the need to strengthen shared identity, mutualisation, co-responsibility, leadership, and internal engagement across the network.



Working groups and co-leadership should be enhanced

There is a clear call to reinforce working groups by promoting co-leadership, including greater involvement of members in thematic areas.



Clear structure and content governance are key for the platform

The effectiveness of the Member-to-Member communication system will depend on clear rules and guidelines, relevant content, and regular updates to support advocacy, information-sharing, and project development.



Fundraising and sustainability must be prioritised

Members stressed the need to explore diversified fundraising strategies and identified interest in creating a dedicated working group on fundraising led by members.

Day 5: Member Recommendations & Asks

Finally, members outlined several concrete recommendations and asks to ensure the Forus 2026-30 Strategy is translated into effective, everyday action. These priorities focus on building a more connected, member-led, and transparent network:

- **Implement a member-to-member communication platform:** This should include clear guidelines, moderation, and a defined scope of content to ensure it remains a useful space for the network.
 - **Map and mobilise member expertise:** Develop a system to identify thematic leads and share professional expertise (e.g., sharing CVs) to better support collaboration and peer learning.
 - **Strengthen working groups:** Reinforce existing groups and explore the creation of a new, member-led fundraising working group.
 - **Streamline information sharing:** Use the new platform to share project proposals, advocacy updates, and timely information that is directly relevant to members' work.
 - **Reinforce multi-level collaboration:** Improve the connection between national, regional, and global levels to ensure complementarity and a stronger collective impact.
- Prioritise accountability:** Ensure the timely sharing of GA reports and key documents to support transparency and collective learning across the network.



THANK YOU

We extend our deepest gratitude to all Forus members, both onsite and online participants, for your vibrant engagement throughout the Forus 2026 General Assembly. Despite travel disruptions and global challenges, your commitment to collective solidarity remained steadfast, ensuring that every day was enriched by diverse perspectives from across the globe.

Special thanks go to the members of the **GA Member Steering Committee** who shaped the agenda and discussions, ensuring a truly member-led and strategic programme.

We also thank very much the **Forus Council and the Executive Committee** for their strategic guidance and for working so closely with the Secretariat. Your leadership provided the necessary framing to launch the 2026-2030 Forus Strategy and ensured the GA remained focused on our shared long-term vision.

A huge thank you to the **Forus Secretariat** for their coordination and practical organisation of the sessions, programme, communications, and logistics. Special thanks to the **GA Organising Team, led by Arturo Cortés Barbabosa, Jennifer Franco, and Isabella Camargo**, whose planning and resilience in navigating last-minute obstacles were vital in making this hybrid GA a reality.

Our heartfelt thanks also go to the **Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)**, our national member platform, for co-hosting this event. We are especially grateful to the CCC Team for their amazing partnership, hospitality and for helping us feel at home in Siem Reap: **Pheakdey Chan, Saorn Ou, Putheary Sin, Sreyleak Phorn, Bunthoeun Chan, Vibol Chea, Seng Pheng, and Sothea Un**. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the Non-Government Coordination Network of Siem Reap (NCN-SR) and Mrs. Nhean Phoungmaly for joining us to share the frontline experiences and realities of local CSO coordination in Cambodia.

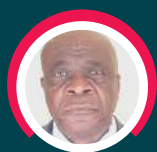
Our gratitude also goes to the **external partners and speakers** who engaged in our discussions and panels, helping us navigate the complex global landscape.

Meaningful connections across our multilingual network would not be possible without interpreters. We thank the **FirstClass Agency** in Cambodia and our onsite interpreters for facilitating real-time dialogue in Siem Reap. We also extend a big thank you to **members of the Forus Pool of Interpreters**, whose reactivity and solidarity in accepting last-minute requests were vital for the success of our daily recap and feedback sessions, bridging the gap for GA remote participants: Álvaro Martínez, Ana Karen Audiffred, Carolina Valezzi, Daniella Sanchez, David Helguera, Elizabeth Baca, Gabriela Cleefi, Guillermo Casillas, Patricia Lorentz, Roberto Sánchez, Ruth Polo, Sebastián Wasserzug, and Wendy Dubreuil.

Finally, we thank the **Angkor Paradise Hotel in Siem Reap** and its Team for their exceptional service. We appreciate the dedication of the technical and conferencing teams who ensured our hybrid sessions ran smoothly and made every onsite participant feel welcome.



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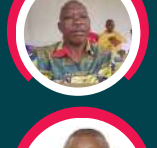
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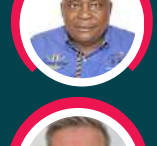
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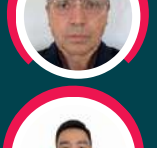
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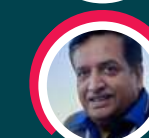
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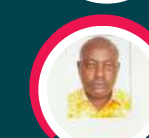
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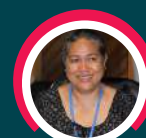
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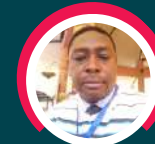


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FORUS SECRETARIAT



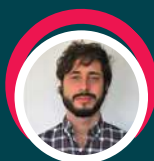
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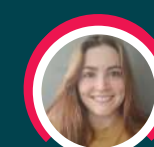
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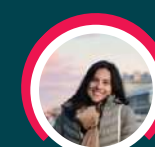
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