Agenda for a joint SIIS-FDL workshop

Sustainable Development Finance in a Fragmented World: Challenges and the Way Forward

4th Floor, Magnolia Banquet Hall A / 4 楼白玉兰厅A
Jin Jiang Tower Shanghai / 上海新锦江大酒店
Address: No. 161 Changle Road, Huangpu District, Shanghai / 上海市黄浦区长乐路 161 号
December 4-5, 2025

Background and Objective

The "Sevilla Commitment" adopted at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) in July 2025 acknowledges that the annual financing gap for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries has risen to approximately USD 4 trillion, which is over 50% higher than the pre-pandemic estimates. This reflects the daunting challenges of global development in a more divided world. How to make the global financial system work for sustainable development is a very urgent task ahead.

In this context, the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS) and the Finance for Development Lab (FDL) decide to convene this workshop, discussing the challenges and the way forward for global sustainable development finance governance. Building on the first edition held in November 2024, the 2025 workshop will delve deeper into the dynamics of international development finance and debt sustainability, bridging past insights with emerging global challenges. This year’s edition emphasizes the growing complexity of the global financial landscape, highlighting the interplay between debt management, innovative financing solutions, and global finance governance in a fragmented world. The workshop seeks to foster dialogue that not only analyzes current trends but also proposes actionable strategies to advance sustainable development finance.

This two-day, closed-door workshop will convene 35–40 high-level experts and practitioners from China, OECD countries, the Global South, and international financial institutions. The program will combine academic research sessions and policy panels, informed by selected call-for-papers contributions. Discussions will be held under the Chatham House Rule and will aim to generate concrete policy options to support growth, improve debt sustainability, and strengthen liquidity in developing countries.

Simultaneous interpretation between Chinese and English will be provided.

Day 1: December 4, 2025

8:30-9:00 Reception (Light breakfast available)

9:00-9:10 Opening Remarks

• CHEN Dongxiao, President, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS) (video)

• Martin KESSLER, CEO, Finance for Development Lab (FDL)

Moderator: Ye Yu, Deputy Director, Institute for World Economy Studies, SIIS

9:10-10:10 Keynote Speeches

• Vera SONGWE, Chair and Founder, Liquidity and Sustainability Facility (LSF); Former Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

• Erik BERGLOF, Chief Economist, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Moderator: Martin KESSLER, CEO, Finance for Development Lab (FDL)

10：10-10：30 Group Photo + Tea/Coffee

10:30-12:00 Session 1: Sustainable Development Finance: Adapting to the New Reality

What are the key challenges and opportunities for financing sustainable development in the Global South? Which approach is more effective in promoting economic growth in developing countries; market-oriented institutions aid or industrialization-oriented productivity-enhancing aid, and how does effectiveness vary across different development stages? How does South-South Coopration (SSC) influence the coordination and effectiveness of development finance, particularly in climate-related investments, compared to traditional donors?How can Chinese state-backed lending and co-financing mechanisms be leveraged to support green investments and energy transition in the Global South? How does China's risk appetite in lending compare to other global lenders, and how does it vary across different Chinese institutions?

Paper presentations: (12 minutes each)

•Teal EMERY, Founder & Lead Researcher, Teal Insights, ***"Greener on the Other Side? Mapping China's Overseas Co-financing and Financial Innovation",*** with Yunnan CHEN

• LIU Shuang, South-South Finance Director, World Resources Institute, ***"Rethinking Development Finance through South-south Cooperation and Climate Action"***, with Liuhuan ZHOU, Yan WANG, Chris ZOU, Yedan LI and Ziyi MA

• Roman NOVOZHILOV, Head of ESG, New Development Bank, ***" The Evolution of Sustainable Finance by Multilateral Development Banks and the Growth of the Global South"***

• WANG Qizhi, Associate Professor, Central University of Finance and Economics, ***"Structural Change Like China: The Interaction Between Development Stages and Aid Effectiveness",*** with XIONG Wanting and CHEN Sijin

Discussants:
•ZHANG Chun, Professor of Center for African Studies, Yunan University

•Dan PETERS, Senior Advisor, Development Policy and Finance, Gates Foundation

Moderator: QIAO Yide, Vice Chairman & Secretary General, Shanghai Development Research Foundation (SDRF)

12:00-14:00 Lunch （4th Floor, Magnolia Banquet Hall B / 4 楼白玉兰厅B）

14:00-15:30 Session 2: Improving Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA): Technical and Political Economy Perspectives

How can borrowing countries in the Global South strengthen their own debt sustainability analysis (DSAs) to complement the IMF's assessments? How can the New African Debt Database improve debt sustainability analysis and support governance? How do a major power influence debt sustainability assessment and create geopolitical differences across institutions? In what ways does creditor composition affect default risk and access to finance? How does China's rise as a major creditor shape the existing debt restructuring regime?

Paper presentations: (12 minutes each)
• B. Peter ROSENDORFF, Professor of Politics at New York University, ***"The Geopolitics of Debt Sustainability Analyses"***

• Rick ROWDEN, Senior International Policy Advisor, Policy and Research Institute at Bread for the World, ***"Improving Debt Sustainability Analyses (DSA): How can Progress be Achieved?"***

• Ka Lok WONG, Economist, United Nations Economic Commission for

Africa (UNECA), ***"Supply Side Determinants in Emerging Market Sovereign Debt Auctions",*** *with Mark MANGER and Ugo PANIZZA*

Discussants:
•WANG Wen, Professor of University of International Business and Economic(UIBE); Former Chief Economist, Sinosure

•Théo MARET, Investment Analyst, Mesarete Capital

•Bruno CABRILLAC, Former Deputy Director General of Economics and International Relations, Banque de France (FERDI) (virtual)

Moderator: HUANG Meibo, Director & Professor, International Development Cooperation

Academy, Shanghai University of International Business & Economics (SUIBE)

15:30-15:50 Coffee/Tea

15:50-17:30 Session 3: Sovereign Debt Risk Management: Debt Composition, Currency Denomination and Others

How can Emerging Market and Development Economies (EMDEs) optimize the issuance of foreign-currency securities to balance sovereign debt sustainability with economic resilience in volatile financial environment? What role can multilateral development banks play in this process? What experiences can China share with other developing countries in dealing with its local government debt?

Paper presentations: (12 minutes each)
• David VAVRA, MOG Research, ***"Hedging Public Sector's FCY Debt Exposure–A Countercyclical Shock Dampening Mechanism?"***

• XU Jiajun, Tenured Associate Professor and Principal Investigator Public Development Finance Research Program, Peking University *"**Local Currency Lending by Multilateral Development Banks**", with Alfredo SCHCLAREK*

• Niccolo RESCIA, Global Sovereign Advisory, ***"New African Debt Databases",*** *with Christoph TREBESCH, David MIHALYI, Ugo PANIZZA, Mark MENGER, Ka Lok WONG, and Thomas BELAICH*

• Layna MOSLEY, Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University, ***"Creditor Composition, Default Risk and Access to Finance",*** *with LIU Qi*

• MA Hongfan, Director and Professor, Center for Financial Studies, Chinese Academy of Fiscal Sciences, ***Chinese Experiences in Dealing with its Local Government Debt***

Lead Discussants:
•TANG Xiaoyang, Chair and Professor, Department of International Relations, Tsinghua University

Moderator: WANG Yuzhu, Senior Fellow, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS)

18:30-20:00 Dinner (Orchid Room, 4th Floor / 4 楼兰花厅)
• CHEN Dongxiao, President, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS)
• Martin KESSLER, CEO, Finance for Development Lab (FDL)

Day 2: Dec 5, 2025

8:30-9:00 Reception (Light breakfast available)

9:00-9:30 Introductory Remarks
• Ishac DIWAN, Research Director of the Finance for Development Lab (FDL)

• Martin KESSLER, CEO, Finance for Development Lab (FDL)

9:30-10:45 Session 4: Creditors' Coordination in Sovereign Debt Restructuring: Role of G20, Paris Club and new London Club

What progresses have been made in the G20 Common Framework (CF) and non-CF cases? What are the major mechanisms and obstacles? How is the newly launched London Coalition on Sustainable Sovereign Debt (SDSB) working?

Paper presentations: (12 minutes each)
• HUANG Yufan, Pre-doctoral Fellow, China-Africa Research Initiative, Johns Hopkins University SAIS, "***China and the Common Framework",*** *with Deborah BRAUTIGAM*

•Fernando MORRA, Associate, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), ***"Let it Grow-Designing a Debt Relief Initiative in a Fragmented Creditor Universe",*** *with Anahi WIEDENBRUG, and Yanne HORAS*

•SUN Tianshu, PhD Candidate, School of Public Policy& Management, Tsinghua University, ***"All Quiet on the Debt-for-Development Front: A Microscope into China's Debt Relief Innovation"***

Discussant:
• Sonja GIBBS, Managing Director and Head of Sustainable Finance, Institute of International Finance (IIF) (virtual)

• Benjamin DARTEVELLE, Secretary General of the Paris Club (virtual)

Moderator: Adil ABABOU, Senior Program Officer, Development Policy & Finance, Gates Foundation

10:45-11:00 Coffee/Tea

11.00 – 12.30 Session 5: Innovative Sovereign Financing and Debt Restructuring Practices: Lessons from Sri Lanka and Kenya

Innovative approaches to sovereign debt coordination are increasingly visible in recent country cases. Sri Lanka, through its multilateral debt restructuring in 2024, introduced new instruments while negotiating with a diverse creditor base. By extending maturities and lowering interest rates, it created fiscal space and met IMF sustainability criteria, though significant challenges remain in structural reforms and long-term recovery. Kenya, by contrast, has taken the lead in exploring the conversion of part of its dollar-denominated external debt into renminbi, aiming to reduce exchange rate risks, optimize debt service costs, and diversify its financing instruments—an initiative that underscores greater African agency in engaging with China's capital markets. As debt pressures persist, such innovations point to a gradual shift toward new coordinated financing mechanisms, including debt-for-development swaps, currency diversification, and market-driven instruments. These practices highlight emerging pathways for enhancing fiscal resilience while supporting broader green and sustainable development objectives.

Speakers:

•K M Mahinda SIRIWARDANA, Alternate Executive Director for the Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Taipei,China, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

•Thilina PANDUWAWALA, Senior Consultant, Committee on Public Finance, Parliament of Sri Lanka, ***"Why is Budgetary Financing Complementary to Project Finance? – Evidence from Sri Lanka***", with Umesh MORAMUDALI

•Kanyi LUI, Partner and Head of China, Pinsent Masons

•ZHU Zhiming, Deputy General Manager and Chief Consulting Expert, China International Economic Consultants Co., Ltd. (CIEC)

•Hannah RYDER, Founder & CEO, Development Reimagined

•Syed Javed HASSAN, Senior Visiting Fellow, Pakistan Study Centre, Fudan University

Moderator: KUANG Weilin, Former Chinese Ambassador to Sierra Leone and the African Union

12:30-14:00 Lunch（4th Floor, Magnolia Banquet Hall B / 4 楼白玉兰厅B）

14:00-16:00 Session 6: Broader Global Financial Governance for Sustainable Development

Broader financial governance is essential to ensure that global frameworks effectively support sustainable development. China just launched the Global Governance Initiative (GGI), providing an important entry point for such discussions on international finance and development cooperation, Key issues include reforms in financial regulatory rules, multilateral institutions, debt architecture, and innovative financing instruments. Emphasis is placed on achieving a balance between global rules and national development priorities to build a more inclusive and resilient international financial system.

Speakers:

•Trevor MANUEL, Chairman, Old Mutual Limited; Chair of the G20 Africa expert panel; Former Finance Minister of South Africa (virtual)

•W. Gyude MOORE, Distinguished Fellow, Energy for Growth Hub; Former Minister of Public Works of Liberia

•Randall HENNING, Professor of International Economic Relations, School of International Service, American University

•ZHUANG Juzhong, Adjunct Professor, Fanhai International School of Finance, Fudan University; Former Deputy Chief Economist of Asian Development Bank (ADB)

•LI Xiaowei, Deputy Director General, Strategy and Planning, Export-Import Bank of China

•QIAN Jing, Assistant Professor of Political Science, New York University, Shanghai

•ZHANG Youyi, Deputy Director, Center for International Knowledge Development, Development Research Center of the State Council (CIKD)

Moderator: ZHU Jiejin, Professor at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs and Deputy Director of the Centre for UN and International Organizations Studies, Fudan University

16:00-16:20 Closing remarks:

- Ishac DIWAN, Research Director of the Finance for Development Lab (FDL)
- YE Yu, Deputy Director, Institute for World Economy Studies, SIIS