

GSEF2018 - BILBAO DECLARATION

03 Oct. 2018 - Bilbao, Spain

We, the 1700 individuals from 84 countries, participants of the 2018 Global Social Economy Forum - GSEF2018 in Bilbao - strongly affirm that economic development serving both people and planet, leaving no one behind, is rooted in principles of democracy, social justice, solidarity, diversity and peace.

Current context

The magnitude and speed at which today's challenges are developing is unprecedented. Disruptive technologies and artificial intelligence, climate change, globalization, migration and demographic changes are shaping a new reality in which our current development paradigm struggles to adapt. A rapidly transforming labour market with increasingly atypical and precarious forms of employment calls for new strategies to address the future of work. Policy innovation to overcome the challenges faced by our cities and communities to ensure decent work, social protection, prosperity for all, can only be achieved with greater participation of all stakeholders. The co-construction of public policies is embedded in the social economy today.

Despite the diversity of terms, the Social Economy (SE) and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) share the same values of the primacy of people over capital, democratic governance and commitment to an ecological and just transition. Recent trends in many countries and regions demonstrate that youth are increasingly drawn to these values and principles and wish to work collectively to achieve them in all sectors.

We acknowledge the importance of localizing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the successful implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The contribution of the SE and SSE to build a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient society is increasingly recognized by UN agencies, governments and civil society as fundamental to achieve these goals. Great efforts in this regard are being made by the many actors and networks here today. The World Forum of Local Economic Development and the Localizing SDGs online resource are examples of this effort to facilitate and map the localization efforts globally.

Commitment to the Social Economy and the Social and Solidarity Economy

Many national, local and regional governments have adopted framework legislation and public policies that promote SE and SSE enterprises and organizations to provide effective and innovative solutions to meet local needs in all the economic sectors. They have also supported participatory budgeting, local currencies and solidarity finance mechanisms, and have dedicated public procurement with specific clauses. These measures, laws and policies are not only enabling the scaling and sharing of local practices across territories, but are also catalysts for systemic change at the macro level in which the SE and SSE are contributing to the democratic and inclusive transformation of our societies.

Values and competitiveness for an inclusive and sustainable local development

SE and SSE enterprises and organizations are viable, efficient, and generate social value and economic returns. Their competitiveness lies in the social impact generated by their activity, with economic returns reinvested into the community or the organization itself, enabling their ongoing capacity to accomplish their mission.

Locally situated, they must be mindful of the environmental impact of their activities and adjust accordingly. SE and SSE enterprises promote and create decent work embedded in values of social justice and respect labour rights. Sovereignty and transparency are more present in their supply chains, delivering goods and services based on the needs of the community they serve. Democratic governance and management practices are at the core of their *raison d'être*.

These values and principles underlie the commitment to the active inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, the elderly and persons with disability, and are the foundations of a peaceful, and resilient society rooted in solidarity and trust.

Resolutions

Based on the Montreal Declaration of 2016, we, the representatives of SE and SSE organisations, local and regional governments, networks and other partners, further commit to:

- Continue the co-construction and co-development of public policies and affirm the central role that each of us plays in overcoming the main challenges faced by our cities and communities;
- Prioritize and pursue our efforts to support and finance processes and fora that gather and coordinate input from civil society;
- Recognize and support research that identifies the needs and expertise of SE and SSE entities and measures their impact, in order to improve the knowledge of actors at all levels and support the dissemination of best practices;
- Advocate member states to call for a UN resolution on Social and Solidarity Economy;
- Further collaborate in the development of linkages between territories (both urban and rural) and work towards greater policy coherence at all levels of government (local, regional, national, international);
- Mobilize ethical, alternative and solidarity finance and local savings to support the further development SE and SSE.
- Improve environmental practices to become more transparent in production-consumption circuits in order to generate a necessary ecological and just transition.

We strive to achieve these resolutions by leveraging the roles, responsibilities and strengths of each of us (SE and SSE entities, government, universities, research institutes, UN and other international organizations), and by collaborating to assure an inclusive, just, resilient, and sustainable local development.