

MEXICO CITY 2021
GLOBAL SOCIAL
ECONOMY FORUM

GSEF2021 Mexico City Declaration October 8, 2021

GSEF has played a key role in mobilizing Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) actors and organizations internationally since its creation in Seoul in 2013. GSEF2021 now gathers in Mexico City after travelling to Montreal in 2016 and Bilbao in 2018. It has become a voice for SSE globally, calling upon local, regional and national governments to recognize the vital role played by SSE in meeting socioeconomic and environmental challenges common to countries throughout the world.

The unexpected COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 made it impossible to convene GSEF2020 in Mexico City. However, a highly successful GSEF Global Virtual Forum was held with 8,500 participants from 19 to 23 October 2020.

Today on the last day of the 5th edition, organized in a hybrid format due to the ongoing crisis, we issue this declaration to express the shared commitment of all participants from across the planet, with significant contributions from Mexico and the Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) region.

Thousands took part in this Forum in the midst of a humanitarian crisis as the world continues to suffer the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our lives. Its consequences for public health, the economy and society continue to unfold, while governments around the world struggle to provide both quick responses and long-term strategic plans. Massive job losses in many parts of the world, especially – but not only – in the informal economy, severe labor shortages in healthcare and services, unmet basic needs including food and housing, and deepening inequalities within and between countries, including access to vaccines and medical care, are tragically accumulating across the planet. The world needs to embrace radical alternatives to the business-as-usual approach adopted after the 2008-2009 financial crisis. This is no longer an option. SSE must be considered as a viable, people-centered, democratic and sustainable post-COVID-19 development model to build back better.

SSE is currently playing a critical role in addressing and mitigating the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 and may thus significantly contribute to a paradigm change. Not only has SSE shown its extraordinary resilience as existing collective enterprises and organizations ramp up their activities, but

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these experiences are also inspiring and spawning new initiatives in all sectors, notably in vital proximity health and social services including daycare, homecare for the elderly, and collective health care provision, in many parts of the world, strengthening public services and complementing government action.

The need for a paradigm shift prioritizing people and the planet is no longer in question. The climate emergency calls for strengthening alternative food systems with an emphasis on local food production, consumption and distribution, stepping up waste reduction, recycling and reuse, amongst many other actions to mitigate the climate crisis. Moreover, many existing community-based initiatives throughout the world have long been dedicated to the stewardship of land and nature through sustainable collective ownership based on trust and human relationships.

The inherent commitment of SSE to the well-being of all people must transcend all aspects of life.

CALL FOR ACTION

GSEF2021 has provided a space for knowledge exchange and synergies amongst SSE actors, who reaffirm their commitment to the following:

We call on **all governments** and **international and regional organizations** to:

- Respect the basic right of equal access to quality social services, especially health Services, and ensure the right to a dignified life for all;
- Foster the fundamental values of humanity and social inclusion in all aspects of life, including gender equity, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and dignity;
- Increase the participation of young people in positioning SSE as a means to face the current health, socioeconomic and environmental crisis;
- Promote the development and adoption of co-constructed regulatory and legislative frameworks, and enable public policies at the local level in favor of SSE to strengthen its ecosystems;
- Collaborate and coordinate with national, regional and local governments. All stakeholders – citizens, SSE networks and organizations – must participate in this process;

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- Support decentralized cooperation in order to enhance the local anchoring of SSE.

We specifically call on **local governments** to:

- Adopt a local development approach embracing the principles and values of SSE;
- Strengthen the development of local and regional ecosystems by promoting innovative partnerships between actors of the traditional and/or informal economy, SSE actors and local governments;
- Implement policies promoting the local emergence of socially innovative solutions and support their capacity to grow.

We call on **SSE actors** to:

- Strengthen North-South, South-South and multi-actor collaboration and exchanges to further promote SSE and social innovation;
- Promote new and lasting alliances between SSE enterprises in order to develop socially innovative projects, rooted in local communities;
- Reinforce political advocacy for the adoption of policies and legal frameworks conducive to the development of SSE in partnership with governments, especially local governments;
- Develop research on and expertise in SSE;
- Adopt a long-term approach to the promotion of SSE aligned with the UN SDGs;
- Prioritize gender, race and intersectional perspectives;
- Engage actively in the co-design of tools to measure and evaluate the impact of SSE initiatives.