

Declaration of Cartagena de Indias

Final declaration of the tenth Mont-Blanc Meetings

The social and solidarity economy, local to international solutions in a changing world

We, leaders, entrepreneurs, and actors of the social and solidarity economy (SSE), met in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, **on October 18 and 19, 2022** with representatives of institutions and governments from different continents to take part in the **tenth edition of the Mont-Blanc Meetings** in order to examine together the urgent and major social, environmental and societal challenges facing populations in our changing world, and to develop together roadmaps to intensify the contribution that the SSE can make to their resolution.

We are faced today with a historical paradox. For the first time, humanity has the wealth, knowledge, technologies and institutions to eradicate hunger and poverty and to ensure that every human being, everywhere, lives a dignified and healthy life. Yet never in history has a generation been so endangered as the two billion young people under the age of 14, for and with whom we must foster a better future. Their future is endangered by the violence of the economic and financial rules, the growing climatic upheavals due to human activity, soil depletion, air and ocean pollution, as well as by the increase in inequalities which have reached an unprecedented level in the last 100 years. It is not normal that in the 21st century 2.2 billion people are unable to wash their hands, a billion do not have access to electricity, 800 million have neither a toilet nor a source of drinking water, and that in 2022 hunger and poverty kill more people than wars and pandemics and that even in the richest countries there is still strong social distress.

Based on this assessment,

- **We are determined to take a new step** to increase economic, social and environmental practices that put people and nature above the monopolization of resources and the endless pursuit of profits ; in order to increase those practices which take root in the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic and participatory governance, autonomy and independence ; in order to increase those practices and principles working with the initiated collective movement concerning the global drive for a change in scale of the social and solidarity economy, i.e. cooperatives, associations, mutual benefit societies, foundations, social enterprises, self-help groups and other entities operating according to its values and principles;
- **We are well aware that our ambitions** require, in order to reach this scaling up, that SSE is not reduced to certain functions or certain sectors, and to give ourselves the means, including financial ones : specific frameworks and measures being necessary but not enough, we are entitled to mobilize the common law frameworks or change them.
- **We endorse the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda (SDGs)** adopted by all governments in September 2015 and call on the citizens and political leaders of all countries to make them an absolute priority, to accelerate to deepen their implementation. States must mobilize to obtain an international convention guaranteeing them the capacity to legislate and regulate according to their agri-food autonomy and security; We promote our values such as solidarity, democracy and limited profitability as key values to achieve a fairer, more sustainable and inclusive future.

- **We promote our values** of solidarity, democracy, collective ownership and limited profitability as key values for a more just, sustainable and inclusive future.
- **We invite public national and local authorities** to consider SSE actors as partners that can resolve, in a shared responsibility, the societal challenges that territories and nations are faced with, and to implement, through a strong cooperation, the legislative and financial frameworks and policies capable of supporting these dynamics in the service of society, thereby contributing to the strengthening of public goods and the commons.
- **We support the efforts** of the UN Interagency Task Force on the Social Solidarity Economy (UNTF SSE) and all initiatives that will lead to the resolution in favour of the SSE at the United Nations General Assembly.
- We invite SSE actors and networks throughout the world to mobilize their members so that their national governments support and adopt this UN Resolution so that we benefit from a common action and acknowledgment framework.
- **We strongly welcome:**
 - the adoption by the International Labor Conference of the ILO of a resolution on the contribution of the SSE to the promotion of decent work; the OECD recommendation on the social and solidarity economy and social innovation adopted in June 2022;
 - the publication in December 2021 by the European Commission of a European action plan for the social economy,
 - the adoption of legislations by a growing number of States^[1]

Through the **International Coalition of the SSE** recently led by ESS FI, the mobilization of networks, organizations and enterprises of the SSE, we accompany the reflections aimed at implementing and concretizing these international commitments.

We emphasize the **need to involve the people and organizations in the field**, at all levels of governance, in order to take full account of the needs and assets of each community, to respect identities, to take into account the plurality of scales of SSE, to create positive synergies and also to take into account the technological and social aspects called for by the challenges of our time.

Referring to the sustainable development objectives (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, but also convinced that **the emergence of the social and solidarity economy can only be achieved with a change of political, economic, cultural and educational paradigm**, we have structured our reflections around 10 themes for which actions can be implemented in order to assert the place of the SSE in essential areas for tomorrow's society:

- Education and lifelong learning,
- The integration of the gender perspective,
- Improving methods of sustainable production, distribution and consumption of foodstuffs
- The protection of public and common goods
- The use of digital tools, in a human, sustainable and ethical shape
- Production and consumption practices contributing to the fight of climate change
- A more stable, resilient and democratic financial system
- Improving the quality and quantity of jobs
- Access to decent housing
- Access to quality health care
- The adoption of more effective public policies, whether at local, national, regional or international level.

We are aware that these areas cover only part of a vast undertaking.

More than a billion people currently benefit from services provided by entities that are part of the SSE circles. We are ready to increase the number and quality of the services that the SSE provides them with, as well as the number of beneficiaries. It's about both expanding social justice and getting back on the path to environmental sustainability. Growing the SSE means helping to guarantee a future for the 3.2 billion young people under 24!

Everyone has a role to play, ESS Forum International, organizer of these Meetings, is determined beside leaders, entrepreneurs and actors of the social and solidarity economy (SSE), public authorities at national, regional, local levels, and international institutions and also beside women and men, to do its part in the efforts to be undertaken, will adjust its own practices. We are determined to strengthen our capacity for influence in order to facilitate the birth of new unifying projects and contribute to the advent of modes of production, exchange, and consideration of needs leading to a better life without leaving anyone behind.

We open a new chapter of our Meetings in Cartagena de Indias, we know that you are by our side, and we invite you to join our network, SSE International Forum, thus the International Coalition, to give breath to our collective ambitions on all continents!

Cartagena de Indias, October 19, 2022

[1] Since the 2000s, there have been 23 adoptions of SSE laws. Regarding the type of legislation, most of the legal texts are laws while two are decrees (Belgium and Honduras). Regarding the level of legislation, the vast majority (17 out of 23) are laws of national application, while the remaining six are sub-national laws (Italy, Belgium, Canada, Brazil and Argentina).