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GSEF Global Virtual Forum Great Challenges, Greater Solidarity Power of Community and SSE as a Path for Transformation

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Plenary Session 4
New Solidarity for an Ecological Transition

Moderator Patsian: Low, Chief of Staff, AVPN

Speakers

- Ester Vidal, Director of Social Economy Division, Barcelona City
- Ranjinandai Bariam, Member of the interim council of the Asia Indigenous Youth Platform, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)
- René Audet, Professor at the Department of Strategy and Social & Environmental Responsibility, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)
- Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Africa
- Sébastien Proust, National Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Summary

Since the 70's, the need for a planetary social change was foreseen in the face of the obvious global environmental crisis, which places us in risky conditions but, at the same time, expands the opportunities for a transformation, based on the recognition that the future is susceptible to be redesigned and built if the economy and society are reoriented, in order to generate ways of knowing and doing that have an impact on the enhancement of our relationship with nature.

This demand an economy that has as a principle the preservation of nature; an economy that contributes to generate values like solidarity and cooperation in the creation of a more equitable and fair society, sustained in an ecological, social and economically viable

management. The ecological transformation suggests several paths that converge in many aspects with the values and principles of the SSE, which is why it is considered valuable to know and explore them.

Through a variety of experiences and initiatives in different contexts and locations, in this plenary we will be able to deepen the reflections based on the real challenges and examine the viable and future-oriented solutions that are sustainable and better for everyone.

Concept Note

In the face of a planet with limited resources, alarming figures of extreme poverty and a vast number of people around the world who do not have decent living conditions, various options for solutions have been proposed. One of them is the ecological (and social) transformation as a benchmark process to identify the required and possible transitions towards more adequate balances between society and ecosystems.

It is time to put people first in the reproduction and preservation of life, rather than capital-centered economic activities.

An ecological transformation that combines both social and environmental justice requires at least four major types of conditions: a change in expectations and mentality, participatory planning at both the sectoral and government levels, public policies that specifically address climate change, and a redistribution of wealth and work.

It is necessary to prioritize activities with social and ecological utility, for example, those of proximity circuits that generate wealth at the local level with a low ecological footprint, with high capacity of resilience and with the involvement of local actors of the community. This is the case of consumption groups. Created in Japan in the 1960s, this system brings together people who practice organic farming and the consumers who use it. It arrived in Spain in the late 1980s and early 1990s and, with a new wave since the beginning of 2000, is today a



reality in constant and rapid evolution, mixing self-managed groups with legally structured cooperatives.

The Social and Solidarity Economy promotes local development from the perspective of the ecological sustainability of the economic process. The SSE acknowledges the intimate connection between the environment and people. The SSE has valuable lessons on how, in a context of climate change, the economy does not confront the environment, but can live together in harmony.

In that sense and now more than ever, human solidarity is one of the principles that should rule our personal, local, national and international relations, in order to be able to achieve many of the changes and adaptations that the current world situation requires of us, including the realization of concrete actions focused on preserving the environment, such as those needed to achieve an ecological transformation.

Objectives:

- To learn about the approaches to ecological transformation and their interfaces with the SSE.
- To collectively propose, from the perspective of the SSE, a different way for a real ecological transformation.

Questions that will be addressed during the session

Round 1

- What lessons does the SSE bring to sustainability in a context of climate change?



- What does the SSE propose differently for the ecological transformation?

Round 2

- What would be a strategic vision of local economic and social development that would enable ecological transition/transformation?
- In order to achieve the ecological transition/transformation, who are the actors that need to get involved and assume commitments for a better planet?