

High-level event in parallel with the United Nations General Assembly
Hosted by François Hollande, President of the French Republic

"Social and Solidarity Economy: Key sector for a Sustainable Urban Development"

Tuesday September 20, 2016, United Nations Headquarters, New York

RIPESS speech by Yvon Poirier – Vice Coordinator

RIPESS is the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy. We insist on the word *solidarity*. We have members in over 60 countries, organised in continental networks. We also have in our membership international organisations such as URGENCI, the Global network of Community Supported Agriculture and the Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) in Seoul. Our members are grassroots based.

Our movement was initiated with a first meeting held in Lima in 1997. Since then, the SSE movement has grown in all parts of the world. More recently, since RIO+20, we have been actively engaged in promoting SSE as an alternative paradigm for development grounded in a human rights based approach. We were active in all the SDG process. For example, we presented our recommendations to the Open Work Group final event in July 2014, here at the UN. They were endorsed by 500 organisations from 67 countries.

We are active observer members of the UN Interagency taskforce on SSE since its creation in September 2013.

On September 9th, a Declaration was approved at the 2016 Global Social Economy Forum in Montreal. We want to point out a paragraph in particular:

*We, the 1500 people from 330 cities in 62 countries.....strongly reaffirm that more intelligent, equitable and sustainable cities are possible and that an economic development model that places people at the center of economic, social and political activity exists. We call this the **social and solidarity economy (SSE)**.*

At the opening Plenary, 40 mayors from all over the world, including some from the global South explained the importance of SSE for their cities.

Public policies for SSE

In the last 20-30 years, SSE has grown (even if not always called SSE), in all parts of the world. Most of SSE activities are directly linked to concerns of local authorities such as housing, social care or job creation. Citizens also organise in SSE to built alternatives to our carbon based economy such as urban agriculture and renewable energies. There are many fields of activities, such as the Angus Development Society we just heard about, to name them all. All this contributes to a sustainable local development. It therefore became natural for local

governments to partner with SSE organisations to design and adopt public policies and programs for SSE.

Besides **Seoul** and **Montreal** already mentioned, here are few examples:

In Mali, the RENAPESS, the National network for the promotion of SSE has partnered with the government for the adoption of a National Policy for the promotion of SSE in 2014. They are now working with mayors, including the **Bamako** mayor who was in Montreal, for the creation of a network of local authorities and SSE.

In the last couple of years **New York City** has committed not only to support the development of cooperatives in the city through additional financing and training tools, but has also begun tracking the collaborations that already exist between the city and these structures (starting with procurement) in order to eventually enhance these actions.

In 1991, the city of **Toronto** set the Toronto Food Policy Council. This initiative is key to the growth of a healthy food system.

Thiès (a municipality near Dakar) is collaborating with a housing cooperative project (already partly built) in order to improve access to affordable housing. Women are in the leadership of this cooperative.

REVES, the European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy, has members in 19 countries. The criteria for membership is a partnership between a local authority and a local SSE organisation or network. Networks also exist at a national level such as RTES (Réseau des Territoires de l'économie solidaire) in France.

The C.I.T.I.E.S initiative announced at GSEF2016 will add to the visibility of SSE alongside other knowledge exchange and mapping activities we are already involved in. Since our members are active in hundreds of cities in the different continents, we therefore welcome this announcement.

Last June, the UN Taskforce published a paper that identifies the potential of SSE in 66 of the 169 targets of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). We must now work to explain and demonstrate with specific examples and policies this potential, and measure the impact of SSE within the implementation of the SDG's.

Members of our network, from the local to the global level, are engaged in activities directly linked to most of the Sustainable Development Goals, including goal 11 - *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. We commit to working with all levels of government, in a partnership mode, to tackle the challenges facing communities all over the world, including the challenge of saving our planetary ecosystem from further degradation.

Inequality and exclusion are the fuel for fundamentalisms of all types. Together, we must build inclusive societies and a sustainable livelihood for all. We are firmly engaged in this direction.