



MEXICO CITY 2021
GLOBAL SOCIAL
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Great Challenges, Greater Solidarity

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Plenary 4 Session report

Session title:	New Solidarity for an Ecological Transition
Session type:	Plenary
Date:	October 22 nd 2020
Time:	8:30 a.m.
Language(s):	Spanish - English - French
Participants (number of people connected)	383 (Zoom, 9:41 hrs)

Name of the moderator:

Patsian Low, Chief of Staff, AVPN, Singapore

Name of the panelists:

- 1. Ester Vidal**, Head of Cooperative, Social and Solidarity Economy Services, Barcelona City Council, Spain.
- 2. Rajiandai Bariam**, Member of the Interim Council of the Asian Indigenous Youth Platform at the Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), India.
- 3. René Audet**, Professor at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM), Canada.
- 4. Ana Karina Quintero**, Advisor of the German Society for International Cooperation GIZ, Colombia.
- 5. Rahmatouca Sow**, Policy and International Relations Adviser, UCLG, Africa.
- 6. Sébastien Proust**, National Coordinator, PPD, UNDP, Mexico.

Introduction: María de la Luz Hernández Trejo, Director General of Economic Development, Ministry of Economic Development, Mexico City.

Moderator: Patsian Low

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The graphic is a promotional poster for the GSEF 2021 Global Virtual Forum. At the top, it features logos for the Government of Mexico (Gobierno de México), Bienestar, INAES, and Gsef. The main title is 'GSEF Global Virtual Forum' with the subtitle 'Great Challenges, Greater Solidarity'. Below this, it states '90 countries, 35 sessions, three languages' and 'Be part of the most important Forum'. A large number '4' indicates the plenary session. The theme is 'New Solidarity for an Ecological Transition'. The poster lists six speakers with their names and affiliations: Sébastien Proust (UNDP), Ana Karina Quintero (GIZ), Ester Vidal Pujol - Xicoy (Experiencia Social and Solidarity Economy, Barcelona), René Audet (UQAM), Rajiandai Bariam (AJPP), and Rahmatouca Sow (UCLG Africa). A moderator, Patsian Low (AVPN), is also mentioned. The event is scheduled for October 22, 2020, at 08:30 Mexico City time. Registration information includes the website www.gsef2021.org and the hashtag #GSEF2021.

All parts of the social and economic environmental impact must be integrated into the ecological transition, including businesses, investors, governments, social entrepreneurs, and individuals.

It will not be an easy transition, success will depend on recognizing and leveraging the interconnections between gender, livelihood, social and economic factors, the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of these interconnections.

At the international level the SSE has taught us great lessons about how it can counteract negative effects and generate positive impacts.

Round 1

- What does the SSE propose differently for ecological transformation?
- What lessons does the SSE bring to sustainability in a context of climate change?

Round 2

- Which would be a strategic vision of the local economic and social development that would allow an ecological transformation?

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• Ester Vidal

1st Round

- In order to carry out the commitments contained in a climate change declaration, we must necessarily work on an urban change, based on influencing waste, energy, cultural and educational models. All this oriented to the common good and cooperating between different actors. These principles are shared by the SSE and their practices are based on them. The SSE builds a fabric that is aware of the limits of the planet and seeks collective solutions that respect the planet. We must build public policies that are committed to this sustainability.
- In early 2020, the government of the city of Barcelona promoted a declaration of climate change that includes the main challenges for the city and the actions to be taken to address them in conjunction with citizens and businesses.
- This declaration includes the work that must be done to change different models such as: urban; mobility and infrastructure; energy; economic, consumption and waste; food; and cultural and educational.
- All this work is carried out on the basis of the relationship with the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in order to resolve current and future needs and thus achieve the common good of the community, in cooperation with different actors and, above all, with respect for the environment.
- The policies that are being promoted in the area of SSE are part of the challenge of transforming the economic model in order to build a pluralistic economic model with the participation of public administrations and companies and organizations responsible for the environment.
- An example of the change in the mobility model is the collaboration for the promotion of a sustainable mobility app in Barcelona promoted and managed by 26 community entities.
- Likewise, in the area of energy change, we are collaborating, together with the SSE network, companies, organizations and communities, to promote projects to generate energy communities for self-production and self-consumption that move towards greater energy sovereignty.
- **The SSE can offer a climate-conscious business network because it has demonstrated that it can innovate or seek solutions to needs collectively that are much more compatible with life and the planet.**
- The SSE also offers an economic fabric committed to promoting sustainable production systems, through the creation of sustainable alternative products

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and services.

- It is necessary to work on the development of new promotion models together with economic and government actors, as well as to design governance models and public policies committed to sustainability.

2nd Round

- We must seek the protagonism of the community as the object and subject of government policies. Seek self-centered development based on satisfying local needs with local resources (less dependence from outside). The business community must be more aware of the ecological implications of its actions. If the SSE is not incorporated into everything, we will make little progress.

• The protagonism of the community in its different forms of organization, as object and subject of the public policies looking for new forms of governance, allows to work more from the local.

- Self-centered development should be sought by prioritizing the satisfaction of needs through local resources.
- Both communities and companies should converge in the development of the environment.
- Barcelona has proposed a strategy for the promotion of the SSE over 10 years and its role in the reactivation of an economy for life.
- Priorities must be established jointly; agreements must be reached and efforts must be joined.
- We work from a sectorial perspective from the SSE in aspects such as mobility, energy, attention and care of people, promoting cooperation.
- Some essential levers, such as conscious consumption, allow us to advance towards the transition.
- The challenge is to incorporate the SSE in the energy and ecological transition; in the digital economy, the feminist economy, among others.

• Rajiandai Bariam

1st Round

- Indigenous peoples are agents of change who can propose solutions to climate change. To ensure collective rights, we need to have solutions to climate change.
- Ensure the territorial rights of indigenous peoples as one of the ways to fight climate change. We need indigenous peoples to be able to prosper and this requires the political will of governments.**

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- Indigenous peoples actively participate as agents of change for the development and implementation of actions to mitigate climate change.
- These peoples are not victims of climate change thanks to the strength they have in managing natural resources that have been managed for many years.
- Indigenous peoples' territories and resources represent 80% of the planet's biodiversity and at least 20% of the world's tropical forest resources.
- Indigenous peoples have faced challenges and threats from different sectors such as the mining sector with its large extractive companies or from monoculture activities that are more interested in profitability and profit generation than in the sustainability of the territory and its biodiversity.
- To ensure collective rights over our resources and territories, it is necessary to have solutions to address climate change.
- In the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it is mentioned that ensuring the territorial rights of indigenous peoples is an efficient way to combat climate change, in addition to contributing to addressing various problems and finding solutions to the pandemic.
- Systems are needed so that indigenous peoples can prosper and maintain their social practices, and control of organizations should be avoided.
- Likewise, it is necessary that governments have the political will to make indigenous rights a priority in the ecological and climate actions to be implemented, and that there is always the participation of indigenous peoples in the generation of policies for ecological transformation.

2nd Round

- Indigenous communities live with very sustainable practices. However, these practices are considered outdated compared to what is proposed by systems that are considered more technological. But indigenous peoples are an example of how one can have respect for nature. We must promote their practices and learn from them. Respect their legal rights and let young people see the value of what they do.
- Indigenous communities live in areas with a large amount of forest resources and their socio-economic and cultural practices are sustainable with minimal negative effects.
- “Indigenous systems are considered outdated compared to technological initiatives, but in reality, they are good to nature, it is an environmentally benign system”.

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- Indigenous systems are a living example of how respect for local rights can lead to the empowerment of local indigenous communities. They must be supported to conserve their cultural and food practices, which are very connected and congruent with nature, which is not easy since there are corporate interests based on profit.
- They support a system that promotes diversity, which is so necessary to encourage the values and practices of indigenous peoples and to learn from these communities as well.
- These communities need to be empowered at different levels to have their legal rights respected.
- The government should promote awareness among young people of the value of their activities.
- The communities are self-sufficient and their socio-economic practices are sustainable.
- **“We are not only part of nature, we are nature, so to act in a negative way towards the environment is to harm ourselves.”**

• **René Audet**, Profesor de la Universidad de Quebec en Montreal (UQAM), Canadá
1st Round

• There are different versions of the ecological transition. What is generally understood by this type of transition in the Americas is an ecological substitution strategy, which involves substituting, for example, the type of energy used such as fossil fuels. But this approach does not consider society. In Canada, money is given to so-called green companies in the hope that they will create jobs. But this approach is limited. We can imagine an ecological transition based on a social transition. There is motivation for people to commit to ecological transition. And what motivates people is to develop links with each other. What has been deprived is individualization, but what people yearn for, is the need for social contact and bonding.

• **We must put aside technological transitions and seek a social transition.**

- The ecological transition is seen from different perspectives depending on the sector.
- It is important to define what the ecological transition is, understood from a technocentric vision, as a strategy of technological or energy substitution, that is, replacing fossil fuels with cleaner energies.
- In Canada, as a result of COVID-19, a Green Reactivation Plan was implemented

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that offers economic support to companies that are in the field of green ecologies for the generation of employment; however, it lacks perspective, for example it encourages the use of natural gas when cleaner energy can be used.

- We must think of an ecological transition based on a social transformation that allows for greater economic diversification and greater autonomy and resilience of communities.
- The SSE would help dismantle the structures of economic domination that we have called unfair trade.
- It has been demonstrated that with citizen projects there is a greater commitment of the people to the ecological transition, since it allows close interaction and the generation of close social bonds.
- Both the ecological and the technological transition need to focus on socialization.

2nd Round

- The vision for transition must be built on democratic processes. We can imagine a thousand ecological transitions, but they must be rooted in the territories. We also need economic planning, which the big transnationals do. We cannot consume as we are doing now. The ecological reality forces us to make consumption more conscious. If there is no democratic planning, nothing will be achieved. Long-term, participatory and fair centralized planning has to be done.
- Links are very important when thinking about a strategic vision for the local economy and social development.
- One should think about the SE role in the communities and broaden the reflection towards the ecological transition considering two general principles and that the realities are different in the countries: 1) The vision for transition should be built on the basis of democratic processes, and 2) Greater economic planning as a matter of environmental climate justice, counteracting the exploitation of resources.
- The ecological reality today imposes a more rational and planned management of resources, there are such strong anthropic pressures that we have no other choice.
- Activities must be managed, practices decentralized and democratized, it is a matter of finding the right level to reach a consensus at the planning level while maintaining the principles of justice and common and differentiated responsibility according to the countries.
- The SSE plays an important role in overcoming ecological challenges.

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• Ana Karina Quintero

1st Round

- In Colombia, the government has developed the Green Business Plan to reach communities where there is now discussion of social inclusion, of participation. The SSE contributes a lot to sustainability because local actions contribute to achieve changes at the country and global level.
- For Colombia, the SSE and the implementation of green growth and ecological economies are a challenge, for which there is a development policy with sustainability criteria, of creation of goods and services that contribute to sustainable development.
- There is also the National Green Business Plan, which is a strategy of the Colombian government to reach each of the regions through accompaniment and technical assistance for the implementation of economic, environmental and social sustainability criteria.
- Now we are addressing issues of partnership; social inclusion and social responsibility; generation of shared value; strategies of shared guarantee systems to commercialize local products, all of this in favor of the community development of the localities.
- **The SSE contributes to the strengthening of sustainability and the mitigation of climate change thanks to its organizational, productive and cooperation structures.**

2nd Round

- A strategic vision involving communities, the public and private sectors is required to carry out planning to anticipate the consequences of climate change. From innovation we must seek solutions to social and ecological problems. We also have to work on the cultural issue since in Latin America there is no confidence in working as a team so we have to look for how to do things differently.
- It is extremely important to have a strategic vision that involves communities, public and private sectors in decision making in order to understand the context and prevent changes.
- From innovation we must seek solutions to solve environmental and social problems, solutions that are in line with the environment and that benefit the communities.
- Also, we must work on cultural issues, building trust so that people get

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organized to work as a team.

- A strategic vision must be built that leads to doing things differently and contributes to an environmental, social and economic solution for the communities.

- **Rahmatouca Sow**

- **1st Round**

- This pandemic has shown that the classical economic model is flawed in addressing socio-economic problems.
- Crises should make us think. The ecological transition leads us to rethink the way we consume, the way we produce. The SSE creates synergies at the local level that are important at the level of creating public policies; of creating new forms of governance for both the SSE and the ecological transition.
- The green economy is not in contradiction with development. The ecological transition must be supported by the collective, and this is a lesson from the SSE. Today the city model is based on a colonial model that must be broken to reach a new model that takes into account the welfare of citizens. We do not need intelligent cities but cities of solidarity.
- The SSE creates synergies at the local level, it is necessary to create synergies with local governments in Africa to make a real change, through the definition of new policies according to the needs of the community and its regions.
- Currently there is talk of the green economy, which from the perspective of the SSE, is a factor of development and growth and which is not in contradiction with the development of the classical economy.
- We are working on a development model based on the process of ecological transition, in which the different actors of the SSE participate.
- In Africa, there is awareness, but progress must be made towards a coalition between SSE actors, and work must be done with all forms of organization of the SSE to form a legal framework for the definition of public policies.
- **“The ecological transition has to be supported by the collective”**, this is one of the lessons of the SSE.
- It is necessary to change the current model of the city that has a classic colonial scheme for one where there is a transition in governance, in local democracy and in demography, for which the model of the SSE can provide support.
- The city must appropriate ecological dimensions, it must take into account the

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well-being of the population and the SSE provides lessons in these aspects.

2nd Round

- A new form of governance must be defined that includes two types of planning: 1) It is necessary to first define a project from the strategic planning, to define a joint project for future generations. 2) Local democracy is an important concept that we cannot forget, as well as the principle of subsidiarity, who does what, and who is better prepared to do it; and the principle of solidarity, from a perspective of transformation.
- In African cities there are several projects; however, it is necessary to move from a set of projects to a project for the territory for which the different actors must be brought together.

• Sébastien Proust

1st Round

- Communities need to be supported to achieve transitions. The adoption of clean energies such as solar energy requires solidarity. **Resilience is also very important in overcoming crises, but solidarity is also essential in making decisions since it is during crises that the importance of the social fabric stands out.**
- The GEF Small Nations Program is present in 120 countries and its work consists of giving donations to cooperatives, solidarity companies and local communities to carry out agro-ecological, energy, resilience, soil management and biodiversity conservation transactions.
- In Mexico, there is an important ecosystem of cooperatives and organized communities such as ejidos.
- Cooperatives are a good example of how to carry out this transition process in an appropriate and respectful manner, both ecologically and socially.
- An example of this transition process is the adoption of ecotechnologies for the generation of clean energy, solar energy and the use of biomass by a cooperative in the southeast of the country, whose work implies a lot of solidarity and joint work.
- Another relevant issue is resilience in the context of climate change. This year there have been three hurricanes in that area of the country that have affected local producers and in view of this, cooperatives have come together to face the situation and seek the best solutions together through the solidarity that

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characterizes them.

- Solidarity in a context of climate change is also essential for dialogue and decision-making to adapt to that change.
- In the face of the Covid phenomenon that affects rural communities, cooperatives in the region that have savings funds have supported those organizations or producers that were affected by the lack of sales and market closure, thus framing the importance of solidarity over the generation of capital.

2nd Round

- The work being done by the cooperatives, particularly in the care of the environment, must be made visible. The SSE exists, but the work of the communities that take care of their territory in solidarity is not seen.
- For a strategic vision it is very important to link the SSE concept with the territory, there is a symbiotic relationship between both.
- The territory must be placed at the center of the discussion on the ecological, energy and sustainable forest management transition.
- The theory of governance of common goods is linked to the concepts of solidarity, of negotiation to set rules together and to have internal decision-making mechanisms.
- A great effort must be made to make the work of cooperatives visible.
- The SSE is sustainable, linked to the territory and promotes the transition to a healthier planet.

Conclusions

Patsian Low

- It is clear that strengthening and empowering local communities, engaging them, giving them a role in co-creating partnerships is critical. The SSE already exists, but to reach the ecological transition it is important to strengthen local ecosystems in harmony with nature and indigenous territories.
- We must think of ecology as more than our traditional environment, beyond technical definitions and think of the convergence between the environment and the economic and social outcomes we seek.
- A new model of governance either at the local level for cities or at the central level for countries is essential for success.
- The right message must be sent, as well as educating and spreading much information among young people, children and adults about respect for

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territories and, above all, considering that localities may have different needs. We must learn from each other.

• **The SSE is here to stay, there are many lessons we can learn from the SSE to make the ecological transition.**

Ester Vidal

• In order to transform the present and build a better future from the SSE, it must be recognized that SSE organizations are socio-economic agents. The great potential of the SSE and the role that it should play in the transition and as an engine of change based on solidarity and generosity must be exploited.

• We need strong SSE organizations that assume the challenges of the moment of digitalization; likewise, they must assume necessary dimensions in sectors to be sustainable and work on models of scalability and cooperation that allow them to be an option for citizens, acting with criteria of respect for people and the environment.

• **Social majorities, such as consumers, must be reached in order to change the consumption model by prioritizing responsible and conscious consumption.**

• There are great opportunities and a fabric from the SSE, which is a reality and has a great perspective towards the future and is more necessary than ever in the current context.

Rajiandai Bariam

• **We must assume greater responsibility and respect for nature.**

• Nature and people must be seen as a unit, the idea of responsibility must be taught to all to achieve ecological transformation.

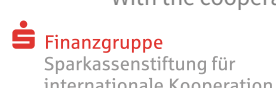
• Entrepreneurs, who have spearheaded this transformation, must take into account the vision of indigenous peoples and how they manage to be congruent with nature.

• Governments must recognize that indigenous peoples are very important for conservation, collaboration and environmental protection and, to that end, their rights to collectively manage resources and land, must be respected.

René Audet

• In Canada, it is time to recognize the competence of indigenous peoples to

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manage their territories and natural resources.

- The starting point for the actions to be implemented is to recognize that the basis of all institutions is the social relations between people and groups.

Ana Karina Quintero

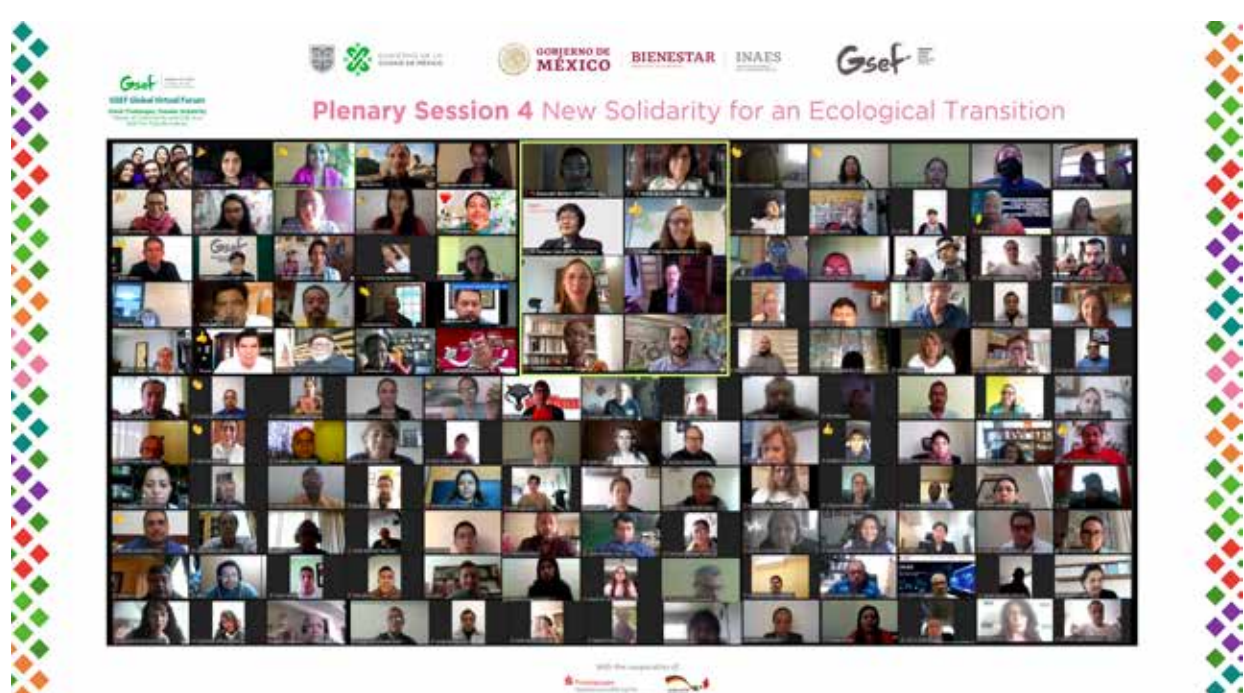
- In order to make changes towards the future, we must begin to educate the whole society in different aspects that will allow us to reach a solidary and environmentally sustainable society to face those changes in a better way.

Rahmatouca Sow

- A strong partnership between local governments and communities is required to achieve local economic development that is strong and sustainable.
- It also requires solidarity and cooperation among the various actors.

Sébastien Proust

- Adult and youth education are key.
- It is important to build networks and alliances so that the SSE model grows. The technologies developed in the pandemic should be used to strengthen these partnerships.



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