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Decent Work and the Social and Solidarity Economy recommendations adopted by the International Labor Conference 2022

On June 10, 2022, the International Labor Conference (ILC) adopted a resolution on Decent Work and the Social and Solidarity Economy.

RIPRESS welcomed the decision by the Governing body of the International Labour Organisation in of March 2021 to hold a General Discussion on Decent Work and the Social and Social Economy for ILC 2022. We did so in the current global situation of multiple crises, (Covid-19, wars, environment, food and finance combined) to show that SSE is truly a concept whose time has come. The neoliberal long supply chains and disrespect for people and planet are in sharp contrast to the human-rights-based logic of SSE. Which clearly explains why and increasing number of people, including within the UN system are considering the importance and relevance of SSE as an overall economic paradigm and alternative to capitalism, albeit with significant push-back from the multinational corporations who have a strong foothold within the UN system.

These elements, combined with the strong determination of the leadership of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on SSE and their influence within the ILO, explain the choice of subject of this year's conference. The Office Report provided a good overview even if we were not in full agreement with the proposed definition and various other aspects. But the role of the conference was precisely to debate the paper and negotiate the conclusions.

It is very important to bear in mind that the process of the ILO is unique and tripartite, with representation for governments, employers, and workers. The RIPRESS application to be observer at the ILC was accepted. However, since observers could only participate on-line, we actively worked with allies who were physically present in Geneva, which meant explanatory processes and advocacy so that governments and workers representatives could include our points of view and proposals in their work. Judith, Yvon and also Stephanie Barrial were present throughout the full 2 weeks of the conference. RIPRESS LAC also contributed a paper that was much appreciated by our trade union allies.

On the second day of the initial debates, there was a very small space of 2 minutes allocated to leading CSOs to make an intervention, including RIPRESS. We had to adjust our intervention very quickly, as we had thought we would be able to intervene on at least three of the four points under discussion (list the points), and discovered at the last minute that this would not be the case. Judith and Yvon very quickly adjusted the planned intervention, which was then successfully delivered by Judith ([link to intervention text](#)) to considerable applause.



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Although not all the points for which we advocated were accepted, we did manage to significantly influence many of the outcomes in the conclusions, from the definition of SSE that was accepted, the inclusion of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a reference. Also, the references to cooperatives (especially the 'new generation' of smaller worker-controlled coops) as being far more relevant to SSE than social enterprises that all too often mask for-profit aspects. In particular, the reference made by Ms Toni Moore, the Workers Vice Chair in her concluding speech to agroecology and short food chains as significant aspects of SSE was very heart-warming.

We are proud and thankful to have had this opportunity to work with such partners in both governments and trades unions and make what we see as a substantive contribution to the **ILC Conclusions**.

A history of the RIPESS Intercontinental contribution

The first Globalization of Solidarity meeting held in Lima in July 1997, which marked the beginnings of the RIPESS network. At that time, the expression used was solidarity economy, evolving to SSE in 2002 at the RIPESS Globalisation of Solidarity meeting in Dakar. This was when RIPESS was formally founded. Since then, we have promoted SSE at all levels, since the people at the grassroots who we represent are those who suffer most from all the impacts of neoliberalism, and are those who strive to improve their lives, and lift themselves out of poverty and exclusion. The Sarvodaya concept, welfare for all that is used by our colleagues in India, represents this well.

In June 2009, Nancy Neamtan, who was then CEO of the Chantier de l'économie sociale, and just before becoming RIPESS coordinator, was invited to Geneva to speak at a one-day conference called the "**Recovering from the crises: a Global Jobs Pact**" during that International Labour Conference (ILC). The reason she had been invited was that due to the global financial and economic crises of 2008-2009, the ILC was interested in looking at innovative approaches to job creation, given that global unemployment had risen by at least 25 million. The participants were very interested when she explained the progress made in job creation using SSE in Quebec. This led the ILO to organize an ILO Regional conference for Africa in October 2009 in Johannesburg. Nancy was invited as RIPESS coordinator, as well as Madani from Mali, who was also a RIPESS Board member, as well as the late Elandria Williams, an American Afro-American woman who was also involved in building the movement in the USA. The outcome paper of this conference, used the word social economy, although the real meaning was SSE. That led to the First SSE Academy held in Italy, in Torino in October 2010. Nancy was on the drafting committee for the



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Reader (book) of the event. Eleven other Academies were organised in subsequent years up to the last event in December 2021. RIPESS participated in most of these meetings.

In May 2013, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) held a first conference on SSE in the UN system. This was followed by the creation of the UN Inter-agency Task Force on SSE in September 2013. This has always been a strong priority for RIPESS. As an official observer, we participated in the first meeting with observers held in February 2014. Since then, RIPESS has not missed a single meeting, with either Judith Hitchman or Yvon Poirier – or generally both – being present. We have fully contributed and partnered with the UNTFSSSE since the outset in both an informal and formal manner.

Now that the table is set, and also with high hopes that the UN Resolution on SSE will be adopted later this year, another chapter for SSE can now begin!

