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RIPESS statement to the inaugural forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice

Theme: Ensuring coherence between economic and social policies

13.06.2024_ As a partner of the coalition RIPESS represents the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy. The social and solidarity economy (or SSE) brings together a myriad of not-for-profit and democratic enterprises, cooperatives, associations, and other collective community initiatives from around the world that have federated into a global movement to bring about social justice through solidarity. This movement has developed in response to the social and environmental devastations caused by neoliberal globalization. We stand at the juncture between economic and social policies as we promote economic and social activities that have as a primary objective to meet societal goals through democratic forms of decision making.

The ILO Conference of 2022 adopted a landmark [resolution](#) on decent work and the social and solidarity economy, which provided the basis for universal recognition and commitment to support SSE to meet the sustainable development goals through a [UN General Assembly resolution](#) adopted in April 2023 that calls for public policies to scale up the SSE at local, national and global levels.

A major obstacle faced by the SSE movement is the lack of policy coherence. SSE development plans and policies require the involvement of a wide variety of ministries and government departments, ranging from employment promotion, agriculture, housing, culture, or health care provision. Policy coordination across ministries and departments is of paramount importance. Beyond surmounting entrenchment between bureaucratic turfs is the need to overcome conflicting policy orientations favoured by rival parts of the government, usually split between those that promote social policies and those – usually most dominant – that deal with finance and the economy. Across the world, many economic and finance ministries tend to follow a conventional economic model that disregard the social consequences of their policies, including on the special needs and conditions of the SSE. As an example, what may be viewed as “distortions” to free-market competition, such as reserved public procurement contracts for certified SSE organizations and enterprises, should rather be understood as “corrections” to level the playing field between conventional profit-maximizing enterprises and SSE entities that place social and environmental objectives above profit. Likewise, such social justice and sustainable development-oriented measures should not be hampered by international trade and investment agreements that impose a one-size-fits-all view of the world in which social justice is a void concept.

RIPESS also joins other partners that call for global tax justice to counter the neoliberal agenda of giving tax breaks to the rich and large corporations while downsizing public services, imposing stricter fiscal discipline and controls over public spending, which also affects the scope for meaningful implementation of SSE development plans.

This quest for policy coherence requires a paradigm shift that places people and planet before profit. It must be advanced through democratic co-construction of optimal policies with all the actors involved and which we hope the Global Coalition will fully endorse to help make policy coherence for social justice a plausible reality.