Text of the Conversation on Sept 25, 2026
at the review of the UNSG report on SSE

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RIPESS-November 2026



Ms Simel Esim (ILO/UNTFSSE)-Moderator

Ministers, distinguished delegates, colleagues, welcome to this discussion on the second UN Secretary General report on the implementation of the General Assembly Resolution 75-213 adopted in 2004 on promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development and to the ministerial dialogue of the group of friends on the social and solidarity economy. We are live streaming from the auditorium of Instituto Cervantes in New York City and in addition to those who are here in the room with us today, we have those joining us online. Interpretation in the room is available in English, French, Korean and Spanish and online in English, French and Spanish.

My name is Simel Isim. I am the head of Cooperative Social and Solidarity Economy Unit at the International Labour Organisation. I also on behalf of the ILO chair the United Nations Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy which serves as secretariat of the group of friends on the SSE.

I have had the privilege of accompanying this portfolio since the first international year of cooperatives in 2012 and over these 15 years I have seen how it has steadily gained momentum across the United Nations system and also within the ILO. Key milestones have included the establishment of the United Nations Interagency Task Force, progress on international statistics, standards for cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy. The International Labour Conference adopted a resolution in 2022 on decent work and the social

and solidarity economy which was subsequently followed by two UN General Assembly resolutions adopted in 2023 and 2024.

I'm therefore particularly pleased to open today's discussion with a few remarks, findings and recommendations from the UN Secretary General's report. The report follows, covers a period from July 1st to 2024 to June 30, 2026 so things that may have happened in August will not be in this report, will most likely be in the next report. What are some of the findings of this report? At the national level, legal policy and institutional frameworks are increasingly addressing the SSE as a whole in addition to particular organisational forms within it.

These frameworks address recognition, registration, governance, supervision, representation and participation and more importantly and increasingly coordination across public authorities. Recognition mechanisms are increasing reflecting the principles that are embedded in the international definition of the SSE including democratic control, member participation, rules governing the distribution and use of surpluses and assets. National approaches also address ownership and remuneration including measures to facilitate transition to worker ownership and to limit excessive disparities between the highest and lowest levels of remuneration.

Governments and social partners are using social dialogue including collective bargaining to address employment conditions within SSE entities. Financial and non-financial services are also on the rise and governments are supporting the establishment and growth of SSE entities in promoting investment and employment and expanding access to markets and public procurement opportunities. In several countries in fact, public procurement gives qualifying entities preferential access or a defined share of public purchasing.

Financing arrangements are also being adapted to different organisational forms like mutual societies, worker cooperatives formed through worker takeovers. We still know much more about the measures introduced and the resources committed than we know about the actual impact on organisational liability, livelihoods and working conditions. So, this is an area for development.

We still know much more about the measures introduced. I hear myself. Beyond SSE specific frameworks, member states are increasingly integrating the SSE and its entities into relevant national sectoral strategies policies like employment, social protection, care, productive development, MSMEs, education, energy, culture and climate action.

Member states are also giving specific attention to social innovation within and through the SSE with national strategies and public support increasingly making this link explicit. Statistical work is expanding at national and international levels and at national level countries are developing measures for employment and economic contribution. Comprehensive statistics covering the SSE as a whole are still not so common and differences in definitions and methods continue to pose challenges in terms of comparability.

Internationally, two interrelated work streams on statistics are underway. One is measuring economic contribution of cooperatives and the other is looking into building the statistical boundaries of the wider social and solidarity economy. Both will feed into the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2028, where guidelines will be coming forward.

Cooperation among member states has also become much more structured at the global, regional levels and specialised mechanisms like the Group of Friends, many of you here are actually members of this group, as well as regional networks and South-South and triangular cooperation. The SSE is also increasingly being integrated into relevant multilateral processes, including those on financing for development, Compromisa Sevilla, like social development, Doha, as well as into tripartite work on care, transition from the informal to the

formal economy and decent work in recycling. The second international year of cooperatives, 2025, last year generated a great deal of commitments that will need to be sustained and carried forward.

Work is also advancing in the African Union, Ibero-American network, the European Union and the OECD. Within the UN development system, the mainstreaming of the SSE into planning and programming at the higher level remains modest. Other forms of support are more common, policy, technical cooperation, research, statistics, capacity development and so on.

During the period covered by the report, the ILO continued to play a leading role in integrating SSE into institutional frameworks, combining normative foundations, policies, statistics, strategic and programmatic work at the global, regional and national levels. The United Nations Interagency Task Force on SSE continues to serve as a key mechanism for this kind of system-wide coordination and we have many members and observers in the room and online with us today. Financial institutions, development banks are also engaging with the SSE.

Some operations are designed specifically for SSE; others are broader development programmes that are integrating SSE as partners and beneficiaries. Financing is also increasing through institutions that belong and serve the SSE, like cooperative banks, like saving and credit unions. And in turn, financial institutions that are themselves part of the SSE are helping to channel international and regional financing to locally rooted entities.

What does the Secretary General's report recommend? These recommendations are, of course, concerning the same areas of work. First, at the national level, countries need coherent legal policy institutional frameworks with meaningful participation from SSE actors. Second, SSE entities need stronger financial and support, along with better monitoring of who that support reaches and what results it delivers.

The report also calls for the SSE and its entities to be more systematically integrated into national and sectoral strategies, policies and programmes, and it highlights the importance of supporting social innovation in and through the SSE. It underlines the need for stronger statistics, including thematic accounts. They used to be satellite accounts, now they're called thematic accounts, where appropriate, as well as continued work on international statistical guidelines.

At the international level, the recommendations encourage continued stronger cooperation among member states, including the Group of Friends, regional networks, South-South triangular cooperation. They also call for the SSE to be considered in relevant multilateral processes and better integrated into UN planning and programming, including development cooperation frameworks, in line with, of course, national priorities. The recommendations also support continued cooperation through the UN task force and recognise the long-standing role of the ILO and its tripartite constituents, including standard-related action.

Finally, they call for affordable, inclusive financing that's adapted to the specific characteristics and different stages of development of SSE entities. In the remaining years, to 2030, the immediate priority is to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to strengthen the contribution of the SSE to this effort. And beyond 2030, the report calls for due consideration to be given to the SSE in preparation for the post-2030 Development Agenda. These are, in fact, the two horizontal horizons for our discussion today, accelerating implementation now while helping to shape the Development Agenda that will follow. I will stop here. Thank you for listening.

Two representatives of SSE organisations

And I will invite two representatives of SSE organisations to share their reflections on this report. First, I invite Michael Peck, from One Worker, One Vote, and Arizmendi Areta, Social Economy, Think Tank, Asset. Michael, you have the floor.

Two minutes. Thank you so much, Simel. I'd like to thank Jaime Iglesias, Special Commissioner for the Social Economy of Spain, the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy, and, of course, Simel Esim for the privilege of speaking today.

Michael Peck, from One Worker, One Vote

What I'm going to talk to you about is something different that you hear in the media, which is what we're actually doing here in the United States right now in social solidarity economy, which is much more than reaches the press, and it's encouraging. To paraphrase Prime Minister Carney, freedom in life, as well as freedom in life, must be earned every single day. I'm the USA and Canada representative for ASSET, the Arizmendi Areta, Social Economy, Think Tank, inspired by Mondragon.

I was the international delegate for the USA and Canada for 19 years in Mondragon, and I would just like to share what we're doing and to give you hope that we're here with you. Last May, ASSET, the ASSET team, orchestrated a real-time interactive social economy roadshow to three U.S. East Coast cities, Boston, New York, and Manchester, New Hampshire, and one town in four days. We were sold out in every single venue that we went to.

We had the participation of over 450 worker owners' cooperatives and labour leaders, professors, entrepreneurs, students, academics, and we did a completely interactive roadshow. So it was no speeches, it was everybody back and forth, and it made a huge impact because people told us, and we have video now on this, that they felt like this was able to lift them out of the silos and the caves where they were hiding and to begin to express their voice and to recreate the bonds with each other that had been lost in the times we live. It clearly showed that the social economy model in the U.S. is at the centre of our transatlantic dialogue on inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic development, and also as a competitive democratic community-centred model for sustainable prosperity.

Today, while we meet in New York City, up in Boston, the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives has their Biennial Social Solidary Economy Conference. Two years ago, they had 600 people from 37 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, and Europe and Asia. This year, they expect much, much more.

So, we're looking at maybe 800 to 900 people meeting in Boston right now, and the conference goal is to encourage us to think innovatively to build an economy where workers and communities thrive. There's a strong presence of the United Steelworkers, who, of course, with Wundergan, created something called the Union Co-op Model, which is also well represented at that conference. Yesterday, RIPESS Intercontinental and U.S. Solidarity Economic Network met at the CUNY School of Labour and Urban Studies in Manhattan to convene the New York Struggle for the Social Solidarity Economy.

This past Wednesday, UNRISD, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, met with CUNY Law School, in particular the Community Economic Development Clinic, led by Professor and the founder Carmen Huertas-Noble, to pursue joint

social solidarity areas of mutual interest in research and development. Almost done. One week after our upcoming fair and free U.S. midterm elections, we hope, ASSET will hold its Social Solidarity Economy Forum No. 2 in San Sebastian, and it will convene global public authorities, companies, social economy organisations, international institutions, universities, and community leaders, and the idea is to transition from theoretical knowledge into practical projects and multi-level coalitions. One point on the concept note, which I thought was very well done, we do need metrics that don't greenwash to reinforce the contribution of the SSE to social justice, decent work, and democratic resilience in the SDGs. That's a quote.

UNRISD has launched the Sustainable Development Performance Indicators with the sponsorship of ASSET to contribute to the SSE role in the 2030 agenda by making its sustainability credentials measurable. Unlike ESGs, which assess outside risk to enterprise value, SDPIs measure an organisation's impact in society and the environment against sustainability norms, such as CEO-to-worker pay ratio no higher than 30 to 1, and no living wage gap tracked over five years. There are over now 1,300 users, including for-profit, non-profit enterprises, examples Mondragon and Cabot Creamery here in the US.

ASSET and UNRISD unveiled the Sustainable Development Performance Indicators at Doha, and in March of 2026, the Vienna Stock Exchange, Vienna, Austria, decided to be the first municipal stock exchange in the world to formally integrate SDPI metrics into its sustainability widgets for listed companies, demonstrating the sustainable performance of their prime market. We think this is incredibly important, and if this can be translated into other bolsas municipales around the world, we can really have sustainability measured authentically for the first time. So, I'm just going to conclude by quoting Mondragon’s father, José María Arrizmendieta, who said, cooperatives must not be closed worlds, but instead centres of social radiation.

We do not live in a world we have conquered, but in a battlefield for social justice and for a more humane and just order. Thank you. Thank you for these inspiring words and reminding us of the inspirational Mondragon model and the worker co-op union connections.

Simel Esim- Moderator

I'd like to now ask Sandra Moreno, Executive Secretary of RIPES, to share her two things.

Sandra Moreno, Executive Secretary of RIPESS

Thank you very much, Simel. Thank you, dear chair, to you and to the Government of Spain, and to the whole UN Interagency Task Force on the Social and Solidarity Economy, and the Group of Friends, of course, especially, for convening this timely dialogue.

Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the Government of Spain, the UNTFSSE and the Group of Friends for convening this timely dialogue.

RIPESS welcomes the 2026 Secretary-General’s report. We are glad to have contributed to these advances. Social and solidarity economy is increasingly recognized in legal, policy and institutional frameworks as a pathway towards sustainable development, decent work and social justice.

The report also makes clear that recognition is moving faster than implementation. The question before us is therefore not only whether the SSEF is visible in policy. It is whether political recognition changes the conditions of life, work and collective power of the communities who build and benefit the SSEF every day.

RIPESS has directly supported and helped the implementation of resolution 79/213 through the Financing for Development process and the Sevilla Commitment outcome that explicitly recognized SSE, cooperatives and the need for tailored financial and non-financial support. This gives us, for the first time, a global normative basis to build dedicated SSE financing windows, guarantees, public-development-bank strategies and solidarity-finance mechanisms. RIPESS calls on Member States and financial institutions to turn this recognition into operational tools and financing that reaches organized territories, women, youth, informal workers, small producers and marginalized communities

We are here in NY also to place SSE at the center of climate justice in different events. The Green Climate Fund has opened the way while proposing a specific and adapted financing framework under its Locally-Led Climate Action window. We need to apply together, replicate this model into other UN thematic tracks ! This is how we would prove our ability to deliver on SDGs, the Climate and Financing for Development Agendas. Because we need to place SSEF at the center of climate implementation.

This is also a human-rights agenda. Implementation must strengthen decent work, food sovereignty, care, housing, land and water rights, equality, democratic participation, rights of peasants and rights of indigenous people. It must protect civic space and the autonomy of movements, particularly at a time of authoritarianism, conflict and rising inequality.

We need and we want to work with each one of the National Governments here represented. It is time for us to join forces, means, strategies, and further, faster and stronger than in the past decade. The moment is now.

"Together we stand, divided we fall" (Pink Floyd)

Moderator: Thank you very much, Sandra. We now move on to the ministerial dialogue segment of our event. This ministerial dialogue would take place in two panels.

They will both be moderated by **Björk Sanyar, Assistant Secretary General for Policy Coordination in UNDESA**. I would like to invite Assistant Secretary General to please come up to the stage. The first panel of this dialogue will focus on moving from recognition to implementation and how we can turn the recommendations of the UN Secretary General's report into concrete action.

The second panel will focus on building social justice through the SSE and cooperativism in a fragmented world. For our first panel, I would like to now invite our distinguished panellists to join us. Her Excellency Nataliya Efremova, Minister of Labour and Social Policy of Bulgaria, if you would be so kind to come up to the stage.

Her Excellency Adélisia Almeida, Minister of Family Inclusion, Social Development and Labour of Cabo Verde. Minister, thank you. Her Excellency Ines Berti Nefer Wumpa Yalo, Minister for the Promotion of Women, Women's Integration into Development, Social Pact and Informal Economy of the Republic of Congo. She's running late, she's joining soon. Okay, thank you. Her Excellency Yesenia Suad de Brito, Minister of Women and Social Solidarity of Guinea-Bissau.

Thank you and welcome. Honourable Susan Auma Mang’eni, Principal Secretary for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development of Kenya. Welcome.

And at the end of this first panel, we will also hear a video message from Her Excellency Enas Attari, Minister of Labour of the State of Palestine. With that, I'm very happy to hand over the floor to Assistant Secretary-General. Thank you, so much and good afternoon, Excellencies, Ministers, distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends of social and solidarity economy.

Björk Sanyar, Assistant Secretary General for Policy Coordination in UNDESA

It's great to be here with you this afternoon to welcome you to New York and to this high-level meeting on driving the social and solidarity economy forward. So let me start by thanking the Instituto Cervantes in New York for hosting us today and for hosting this important discussion because we are meeting at a particularly important moment, both for the social and solidarity economy and for the international system as a whole. As I'm sure everyone in this room is acutely aware of, important discussions are currently taking place on the future of multilateralism and, more broadly, on the structure of global governance.

So at a time when this architecture is being discussed and being reshaped, it's essential that we also define the place that social and solidarity economy should occupy within it. So that's why having such strong political representation here today is particularly significant to set a political agenda for the social and solidarity economy in the years ahead. As we begin, the findings and recommendations of the Secretary General's report have already been presented.

I'd like to acknowledge the partnerships with ILO and others that have gone into producing that report and colleagues in the room who have worked hard to write it and make it available. And I would also like to encourage those who haven't read it yet to have a look. It's a very interesting report, as we also heard from the podium.

But as we have the report as our starting point in that sense, our discussion today really should be around what comes next. How do we translate the growing political recognition of the social and solidarity economy into concrete action? How can government strengthen enabling environments and cooperation? And what priorities should we collectively take forward? And I'm hoping that this discussion also can allow us to reflect on the role that the group of friends on the social and solidarity economy can play in giving greater political visibility to this agenda and in strengthening intergovernmental cooperation. Before we start, I would also like to particularly acknowledge here the leadership that several countries that are represented here today have been providing to advance the social and solidarity economy internationally.

That includes Spain, Brazil and Senegal, as well as many other countries that have actively supported this agenda. So again, our objective today is very practical, to identify priorities, to strengthen our political commitment to look ahead. A practical note before we start, given the number of distinguished speakers with us today, and within the time that we have available, we will have two panels.

And I would like to kindly ask all the speakers to keep your responses to a couple of minutes. I will be timing you, so if you see me waving, it means you are nearing the end of the two minutes. And if we do that, it means all the speakers will be able to come back several times.

I think we can have a good interactive dialogue and exchange to help us move the agenda forward. Now, the distinguished panel here on the podium with me has already been introduced, so I would like to go straight to the topic of the panel, which is from recognition to implementation, turning the report's recommendations into action. And we will do this through a few questions, and I would just like to start.

And I think I'll start from the end, and I'll ask you to move down towards me, just briefly on the first topic or question, which is:-**What are the most urgent actions needed to implement the recommendations of the Secretary General's report?** Please go ahead.

Representative from Kenya Honourable Susan Auma Mang’eni

Thank you. So first of all, allow me to take this opportunity to thank the organisers of this event and also for extending invitation, the Republic of Spain, and for extending the invitation to the Republic of Kenya. I'm here to represent my minister, Honourable Wyclef Ambecho Parana, who would have wished to be here, and I think you have interacted with him before.

Now, what does it take to implement? From where we sit, Kenya is known for very strong cooperative movement. I think in the world, if you look at many countries that have done well, Kenya stands to be among the top five, if I may put it there. But to your question, what it takes to implement, first and foremost is to bring the people to a certain level of understanding, to bring the population, move with the population. Do they know these policies that we are coming up with? Have we created enough sensitisation? Because government alone cannot achieve in terms of we need the people's goodwill. To me, that's the most central thing that we need to achieve, to move along with the population so that they can get to understand the value. But

secondly, we need not just to talk about policy or implementation strategies, but then also to commit budgets around it. Does our national budget reflect the commitment? The commitment begins with Kenya. We have a budget of about 30 billion USD. So you want to look at that and ask yourself, what segment of that budget will help us to achieve the implementation of this commitment?

Lastly, because you said we keep it briefly, is now how do we mainstream this commitment to our other regional integration framework? We have right now, if you come to Kenya, for instance, we have various regional integration efforts beginning East Africa, FCFTA, because even as we look at access to market, we in (2:45) Kenya can be beholden into what the Secretary General is proposing. But the question is, how about the neighbouring countries that you're trading with? Are they reading from the same script? So we need to mainstream this recommendation across our regional cooperation framework so that we move together as one continent and as one world. Thank you.

Moderator: Wonderful. Thank you. Three concrete points there. So let's move down and hear the next panellist. Please, you have the floor.

Representative from Cape Verde-Adélisia Almeida

Thank you very much. Madam Vice President of the Republic of Spain, Madam and Sir Ministers, Excellencies, Madam and Sir Ambassadors, I thank the Government of Spain and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force for this meeting and I congratulate Brazil and Senegal for their leadership of the group of friends of which Cape Verde is part.

On the question, what actions are needed? As it is most urgent to implement the Secretary-General's recommendations. The Secretary-General's report on the development of Cape Verde and the fact that it contributes presents an observation that we share. Political recognition, because progress has already been made on the political recognition of the social and solidarity economy, but implementation remains incomplete.

Based on the report's recommendations, I would like to highlight three actions that we consider the most urgent. The first is measurement. Without data, the social and solidarity economy remains invisible in budgets, in national accounts and in political decisions. That's why, in Cape Verde, we're updating the mapping of organizations in order to begin, under the technical guidance of the National Institute of Statistics, the construction of the first satellite accounts for the social and solidarity economy. But in many countries, particularly small states and African countries, they need technical support to take this step.

The second step is financial. Cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, need an instrument adapted to their nature. Credit, guarantees, revolving funds, access to public markets, support in training and incubation. Incubation is very important for the social and solidarity economy. It is believed that international financial institutions and development banks have a role here that they have not yet fully assumed. The third is to integrate it. Social and solidarity economy organizations cannot continue to operate in a single sector.

They must be present in employee policies, in social protections, in healthcare, in food security, and in local development. Towards this goal, the role of cooperatives and associations is enshrined in national roadmaps for global accelerators for employees and universal social protection. All of this requires a coherent legal framework, strong institutions, and genuine participation from these structures.

Towards this goal, we have built this foundation on three essential pillars: a framework law, a dedicated unit within the ministry, and a national council for the social and solidarity economy. It is within these organizations that the State and solidarity economy organizations engage in dialogue. Towards this goal, we have built this foundation on three essential pillars: a framework law, a dedicated unit within the ministry, and a national council for the social and solidarity economy. Now, the big challenge is that everything we've done in the law, we can translate the law into practical results in that person's life. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that experience.

Moderator: We welcome the minister from the Republic of Congo and I think we'll continue down the panel and then I'll get to you after the other speakers with the same question about translating the recommendations into the Secretary General's report into practical policy. But I would like to go to Bulgaria and here you are two minutes. What should we do? Thank you, Madam Chair.

Representative from Bulgaria- Nataliya Efremova

I would like firstly, of course, to extend my gratitude for the invitation to take part in this high-level event to the Spanish minister and vice prime minister of Spain and the co-organisers, also the Instituto de Cervantes, of course, for being part of this very important event, as I've said I will be very brief, trying to be very brief, putting three or four suggestions, what is the most urgent action that we need to take after this Secretary General report. Maybe the first of all we have to look upon is the legislation that we all have in our countries because building a flexible, inclusive legislation, this means that we are involving not only the governments, but we are involving the NGOs, the social entrepreneurs also, while implementing and introducing new legislation and this is exactly what we did in Bulgaria, establishing our regulatory framework with regard to solidarity and social economy and this is important because we have very good recommendations even from OECD, especially from the Member States of EU, from the European strategic documents and this is the first level. We put focus on good and inclusive legislation.

Then the second thing that I feel is very crucial and it's been mentioned is that targeted financial incentives are very important, but not only financial incentives, not only budgetary flows, but it's important, of course, to have non-financial support for the solidarity and social economy and that's why, for instance, I've put very high in the Bulgarian political agenda the social economy by placing it in our governmental programme. We are a new government that have started work a few months ago and the social economy is in our governmental programme and this brings me and gives me not only satisfaction, but I'm sure that it will be very high in the political agenda in Bulgaria.

Then, of course, we look towards scaling up the social economy, not only having a network of enterprises, but scaling up it with social innovations. That's why we are using very much the EU funding in Bulgaria nd we are establishing a specific national competence centre for innovation, which is the next level of social economy. Thank you very much.

Moderator: Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. And last, but certainly not least, I would like to invite our representative from Guinea-Bissau to take the floor.

Representative from Guinea-Bissau- Yesenia Suad de Brito

Good morning. I'm going to do my intervention in Spanish. Thank you for the invitation given by the vice-president of the Spanish government for the participation of Guinea-Bissau in this event. Answering the question, the experience shows us that no public, isolated policy works on its own. So, there is a need for a focus on integrating and combining legalisation, financing, training, access to the market, social protection and participation. Well, for Guinea-Bissau, this is a very important issue, in particular because a large part of the population is in the informal economy and all their activities are in the same informal economy.

So there is a need for adequate access to social protection mechanisms. For my ministry, considering the considerations made by the Secretary General, we have implemented a social mutuality cabinet. For us, this initiative represents a very significant step in the construction of the social economic policy of Guinea-Bissau that will allow the development of mechanisms of solidarity, mutual aid and social participation in the next realities of our community, particularly those working in the informal economy. It is also very important because most of it is developed by women who work in trade, in agriculture, in product transformation, in fishing and they are the ones who report the well-being of their families. We are also implementing the opening of the National Institute of Social Providence for All. These are the processes that we have been carrying out so far.

Representative from the Republic of Congo- Ines Berti Nefer Wumpa Yalo

Thank you. Thank you very much for giving me the floor. Madam Vice Prime Minister of Spain, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished representatives of Africa, Europe, Asia and America, greetings from the Republic of Congo. With regard to this issue, the most urgent measures in our opinion are to implement the recommendations of the report, i.e. to make the social and solidarity economy of the Republic of Congo consider that it is now necessary to accelerate the passage of commitments to concrete actions, taking into account the realities and priorities, of course, of each country. For our country, for example, several measures appear to be priority. We can talk about the national strategy of social and solidarity economy that is currently being finalised.

This strategy must allow to better structure and integrate the social and solidarity economy in national development policies, in particular in terms of employment, social protection, territorial development and the transformation of the informal economy. It should be noted that the social and solidarity economy has become the most effective model for social inclusion. It is also necessary to facilitate access to funding.

Access to funding remains one of the main challenges for the actors of the social and solidarity economy, especially for women, who exercise in small income-generating activities. We can today realise, allow me to explain a little or remind you a little, the COVID period. During the COVID period, there was a lot of trade that was closed because of COVID.

But in Africa in particular, many survived thanks to the actors of the social and solidarity economy, who occupied the streets, who took markets as targets to be able to sell, even if it

was a little informal, but it was thanks to them that people bought. So it is time today to lend a hand and to take, to take inciting measures that will allow them to better develop, to contribute to the development of their country, and at the same time to be able to reunite, that is, to fight against poverty. From this perspective, for example, we have in the Republic of Congo a fund dedicated to women's income-generating activities, which is called the ELICA fund, which means hope fund.

In feasibility studies, the fund is primarily for women. his is a fund especially for women who exercise their activities in the Omanian markets before being gradually expanded in other sectors of the informal economy with men. It is for us to propose mechanisms of financing that are best adapted to the realities of the actors on the ground. Then we have the acceleration of the transformation and formalisation of the informal economy. What is more necessary than to go through the social and solidarity economy? So today we have all become the levers for the acceleration of this social programme. This means that this approach is part of our national strategy for the migration of the informal economy to the formal economy.

The Republic of Congo has already taken the commitment to go to the social and solidarity economy because after the instructions of Dakar, we made a statement to the Council of Ministers and we explained this approach. To return a little to our question, it is important, of course, to go from the informal economy to the social and solidarity economy before being completely formalised to the formal economy. Minister, thank you.

Summary of Round 1 of presentations

Thank you for sharing those points from the Republic of the Congo. It's great to see the progress made and thank you to all the speakers of the panel after this first round. I think what we are hearing is that implementation requires action on several fronts. We've heard about effective legal and policy frameworks, about institutional capacity, about access to finance and budgets, about coordination across governments within and regionally as well, and the ability to translate policies into concrete support for social and solidarity economy organisations and the people they serve. I'm looking at the time, so we have time for one more round of responses. I would like to just very briefly, if I could challenge you to think about a concrete commitment.

Round 2 of discussion on the UNSG Report: Country commitment to SSE

Many of you have talked about what you do, and I think it's great experiences. But do you have a concrete commitment that your government would make over the next year, so in the very short term, to help implement and make change in this area? I would like to invite you to also very briefly comment on how you see that the group of friends can strengthen political leadership on the social and solidarity economy and reinforce intergovernmental cooperation. Given the time, I'm going to have to ask you to be even more brief the first time around. I'll wave when time is up and I think this time should we start from this end and go down. So, I'd like to invite the minister from Guinea-Bissau to start to kick us off. You have the floor.

The minister from Guinea-Bissau- Yesenia Suad de Brito

Thank you. Guinea-Bissau considers the group of friends an especially important platform to turn the social and solidarity economy into an effective priority of the international agenda. The group can take various actions. First, facilitate high-level political dialogue, allowing governments to share experiences, difficulties and solutions. Second, promote South-South and triangular cooperation, highlighting the experiences that can be adapted to the reality of each developing country. Third, give greater visibility to the specific needs of the most vulnerable countries, highlighting that international policies on the social security economy can

only be achieved from the experience of countries with greater institutional and financial possibilities. Fourth, support the mobilisation of resources and technical systems so that international commitments can contribute to national policy. Thank you very much. Thank you for very concrete reflections. I think, without further ado, we continue on the panel. Bulgaria, you have the floor. Thank you very much.

Representative from Bulgaria- Nataliya Efremova

For the last four or five years, we have established some regional centres supporting the social enterprises all over the country. And this is very important for us. We would like not only to protect them and to make them sustainable, but the next level, as I said in my previous intervention, is to establish the Centre of Competences for Social Innovations and try to connect social innovations with the network of social enterprises in Bulgaria.

Of course, we will be using EU funding for the beginning, and then I hope it will be sustainable and will be financed by maybe the state budget or the local budgets from the municipalities in Bulgaria. So this is something very strongly in our agenda to help these centres who are really created to support the social enterprises, not only to help the social entrepreneurs to create new social enterprises, but to find different ways of supporting them through different projects by connecting with normal business, which is not part of the social economy. This is the first thing.

And of course, for me, the fact that Bulgaria is part of this group of friends brings us a lot of incentives, not only having exchanging know-how and good practises, but this group of friends can make, again, stay the problems of the social economy and solidarity higher at the international agenda. This is very important for us. Thank you so much. Thank you. Two very concrete points there. I would like to then give the floor to our representative, Prabhu Vaidya.

Representative from Cape Verde- Adélisia Almeida

Thank you. The group of friends was born at a particularly opportune time in a context of pressure on multilateralism. I see three ways for the group to strengthen political leadership and cooperation between our governments.

The first is that the group can function as a learning space between countries. In our country, we are in a different stage. We have countries that have already consolidated a framework. We have countries that are starting to work on the first instruments for the first time. The group can promote regular exchanges on the issue of legislation, statistics, and funding. It can also facilitate technical missions and cooperation.

The second is that the group can function as a way of coordinating in the process of multiculturalism. The third is that the group can function as a point between regions. In Africa, the ministers in charge of the social economy and solidarity coordinate and the declaration of Dakar is a clear signal of this engagement. The group of friends can relate this regional dynamic at a global level. It can coordinate closely with the United Nations Inter-Agency Taskforce and with the ILO so that political decisions are translated by technical support on the ground. For this, the group needs to continue and mobilise more governments to ask the group of friends to help solve the multilateralism which is almost failing because of what we are seeing in the global stage where we now want to tend to move towards bilateral and transaction establishing, transactional kind of relationship and working away from the multilateralism because we are not going to support the implementation of a social solidarity economy if we do not come together and pull resources together to support economies that are still struggling. But the second issue is to see what technology, and this is now a commitment, how do we leverage more on technology to build strong partnership that can

help us work with the population. And when you talk about population here, I want to look at the young population.

For instance, Africa, we already have a strategy on the social solidarity economy that came into force a few years ago, but the implementation is the struggle because who are implementing young people? Do they feel themselves in this strategy? Do they feel this economy? So how do we bring young people? And this means that we need to leverage more on the technology because that's the space that they understand better. In Kenya, we are now having digital circles, you know, you can get through mobile technology to create a group, you know, collaborate with somebody who is even outside Kenya. So we want to encourage more of those digital platforms and kind of partnership to help us to consolidate this agenda. Lastly, I want to say that we need to structure our markets so that they can work for the marginalised groups in Kenya, and this is a commitment. We have a preferential treatment for women, persons with disability, and young people. So 30% of all our procureables from our national budget goes to these youth, women, and persons with disability.

However, we need to take this also to private sector and make sure that the private sector also making that very targeted provision so that then we can expand structured market to support the marginalised groups. But even as we do this, one more commitment that we're going to do, it's one way to give access to procurement opportunities, but there is also a challenge of prompt payment. So most of these groups, women, youth, after they have committed to supply to, let's say, public sector or even private sector, they also struggle to get paid. So, this is one area that we are coming up with policies to address. Thank you.

Moderator

And with that, I would like to give the floor to the Minister from the Republic of Congo for a brief reflection on a commitment and or the role of the Group of Friends. You have the floor. The fact that Brazzaville will host the next African Forum in 2027 is, moreover, a concrete commitment of the Congress of Congo in favour of this South-South cooperation, this great meeting which, moreover, we are going to invite you and announce it here officially by distributing some invitation cards to you.

And I would like to thank all the speakers. Thank you for bringing very specific examples and commitments of how we are going to translate the ambitions that we have for the social and solidarity economy into practical, real-life reality. And I think there is also a very clear message that emanates from this discussion, that national action and international cooperation needs to reinforce one another, and how the Group of Friends also can provide that important political space for governments to exchange practical solutions and cooperation, to identify common priorities, to coordinate and strengthen the visibility and the social and solidarity economy within the broader multilateral system. So, thanks again to the countries that have been involved in building this platform and participate in these important mechanisms, and particularly thanks to all our speakers. So, with that, I think we can leave the podium. And before we move to our second panel, we would like to hear from Her Excellency Enas Dahadia Attari, Minister of Labour of Palestine, who unfortunately could not join us today, but we will hear her by video message. So, I think we can take our seats and appreciate the video message. Thank you very much.

Video message - Her Excellency Enas Dahadia Attari, Minister of Labour of Palestine

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to join you today to discuss advancing the social and solidarity economy, a sector of vital importance for building more inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies. The social and solidarity economy is specifically relevant in today's global context, where we are facing growing inequalities,

conflicts, economic pressures and challenges to multilateral cooperation. In such circumstances, we need approaches that place people, decent work and social justice at the centre of sustainable development. The 2026 report of the United Nations Secretary General highlights significant progress in the legal, policy and institutional recognition report of the social and solidarity economy. Yet, it also rightly reminds us that progress remains uneven across regions and policy areas. Our collective priority must now be to translate political recognition into effective implementation and measurable results for workers, co-operative members, communities. In this regard, we emphasise three key priority areas.

First, we need coherent legal, labour and policy frameworks that create an enabling environment for social and solidarity economy entities. National legislation, including labour and co-operative laws, should explicitly recognise the unique identity of social and solidarity economy entities, safeguard democratic governance, protect workers' rights and ensure equal access to social protection and decent work.

Second, access to appropriate financial and non-financial mechanisms is essential, specifically for organisations that create decent employment, strengthen local communities and promote inclusion.

Third, we need stronger data and statistical systems. Better evidence will help governments understand the real contribution of the social and solidarity economy and design policies based on concrete results. As the Ministry of Labour, we are continuously working to mobilise both national resources and international donor partnerships to support co-operatives in various fields that have already integrated social and solidarity economy data collection into the Ministry's database.

However, to scale these efforts, we call upon international financial institutions, development partners and UN entities, specifically the ILO, to establish dedicated financing instruments, technical assistance and capacity building initiatives. Furthermore, international cooperation is more critical than ever. The Group of Friends on the Social and Solidarity Economy provides a valuable platform for exchanging experiences, strengthening political dialogue and supporting cooperation among member states.

Looking ahead, we should focus not only on increasing political recognition but on turning that recognition into practical action. This means sharing successful experiences, strengthening cooperation with the United Nations and the ILO and ensuring that the social and solidarity economy is appropriately reflected in relevant multilateral action and mobilising political momentum toward the upcoming 2027 UN General Assembly Resolution.The social and solidarity economy can make an important contribution to social justice, decent work, inclusive and sustainable development, democratic participation and resilient economies. Let's continue working together to ensure that this growing recognition leads to concrete and transformative results for our people, workers and communities. Thank you for listening.

Moderator: Wonderful. So, I'd like to thank Minister Attari, although she could not be with us today, have shared a strong reminder of the importance of ensuring that the social and solidarity economy does remain part of our collective efforts to advance social justice, decent work, inclusion and resilience, including in the most challenging contexts. So, with that, I would like to invite our panellists for the second panel to join me here on the podium.

PANEL Two: The theme is building social justice through the SSE and cooperativism in a fragmented world and we will have the following participants.

- Sergio Danese, Ambassador and PR to the UN from Brazil.
- Yun Ho-Jung, the Minister of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea.
- Jerome Bonafo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN from France.
- Agnieszka Dziemanowicz-Bak, Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy of Poland.
- Mr. Alioune Dione, Minister of Microfinance and Social and Solidarity Economy of Senegal.
- And Yolanda Diaz, the Second Vice President and Minister for Yolanda Labour and Social Economy of Spain.

So welcome to this fantastic panel. Now this panel discussion, we'd like to take a slightly broader perspective. We do meet at a time of profound global challenges, growing inequalities, conflicts, economic uncertainty, democratic pressures and increasing difficulties in international cooperation. So, in this context, it's worth asking not only how do we implement the social and solidarity economy, but why it matters strategically today and what role it should play in the international system that we are shaping. I have a few questions.

I'd again like to invite all the panellists to, you know, we look forward to hearing your perspectives, but I would like to invite you to be brief so that we have time to hear from everybody and time to get back to you as well, because we would like to hear your reflections. Now my first question, which will go to some of you, is that in the current context of growing inequalities, conflicts and pressures on multilateral cooperation, why is the social and solidarity economy strategically important today? And I would like to start by inviting our host country, Spain.

Representative from Brazil-Sergio Danese

Muchas gracias. Brazil is pleased to participate in this event on such an important topic to help us look at Asia. The social and solidarity economy acquires particular relevance in the current international context, because it offers concrete instruments to address inequalities, promote decent work and strengthen the social issue while contributing to sustainable and inclusive economic development. I think it is also important to remember the direct relationship that the social and solidarity economy has with most of the SDGs and what is very evident, isn't it? Therefore, it is an instrument for the realization of these SDGs. Less than five years ago, from 2030, we were on the 2030 agenda. This in a scenario marked by multiple crises and profound economic, technological and environmental transformations, demonstrates that it is possible to combine economic activity, business generation and employment with social inclusion, democratic participation and sustainable development. For Brazil, the SSE also contributes to strengthening the resilience of economies and communities. Cooperatives, associations, and other SSE entities can expand access to economic opportunities, services, and protection mechanisms, even in contexts where traditional market mechanisms or public provision face greater limitations. Especially in the context of great fiscal difficulties that many countries face. For Brazil, the ISS is directly linked to the promotion of social justice and decent work. Its strategic importance, therefore, lies not only in its economic potential, but also in its ability to place people, work, and inclusive development at the centre of public policies. In this sense, the growing recognition of the SSE in the multilateral system, including through the resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the ILO's, represents an opportunity to transform this political recognition into public policies and concrete results in countries and, as it says, definitively, in the implementation of the SDGs. Much thanks.

Representative from Spain- Yolanda Diaz

I make this simple statement; I shared it before with the Minister of Senegal and with the experience that Africa has. I think that we can also learn a lot from the experience of this continent. I think that today, if there is something that we cannot cut short, it is precisely the social economy. I say it honestly and I make a first statement. The previous panellists have all spoken about it. We need to reduce informality, we need to democratise the economy and distribute wealth, we need the incorporation of women in equal conditions, and all of this, together with the young people, has the name of the social economy. I make a first statement.

We do not share, from the Spanish government, the cuts that are being made in the International Labour Organisation in terms of international cooperation. As you know, 50% of it has been reduced, and much less the practise of the disappearance of the Department of Social Economy. I say this with absolute frankness, because if there is something that we cannot cut short, it is precisely in this matter.

Why is the social economy so important? First, because it is an economy that democratises resources. Second, it serves to reduce inequality in our communities. Third, it is especially dear and close to women, very important.

Fourth, because in the productive sectors, I think they are very important, of course, housing, agriculture, fishing, culture, a lot of elements are key. Therefore, and I finish here, our experience in Spain is very important. For the first time in democracy, we have given €2.8 billion to the social economy.

We have created a vanguard hub, which was mentioned in San Sebastián, to study and learn from the social economy. And now the Minister of Bulgaria was talking about social companies. We are going to take a new step to define well what social companies are like.

And allow me, I want to congratulate the Minister of South Korea, because they have now approved their social economy law. And I think we have the mission of working together to approve the third resolution of the United Nations. I believe that the countries that are here are working in a strong way for this third resolution to be approved in the United Nations.

Moderator: Thank you. Thank you so much, Vice President. And thank you also for Spain's continued and consistent advocacy and support and leadership in bringing the social and solidarity economy really firmly onto the multilateral agenda and the international agenda. So, I would like to give the floor to Brazil next.

Thank you very much, Ambassador. And thanks also to Brazil for the important role that you also have played in placing the social and solidarity economy higher on the international agenda. I would now like to give the floor to the Republic of Korea for your inputs. Thank you. I would like to give the floor to the Republic of Korea for your inputs.

Representative from Republic of Korea- Yun Ho-Jung

On September 15th, we passed the Social and Solidarity Economy Basic Law. I have been working as a member of the National Assembly for 12 years to establish this law. And it is a very special law that has been passed. In the U.N. Resolution No. 213 of the 79th session of the United Nations, it was recommended that the member states be legally and systematically entitled to the social and solidarity economy. This law regulates the definition and scope of the social and solidarity economy, and through the committee of the President, it contains the institutional framework and support for the basic planning, the social and solidarity economy, and the public procurement.

Starting with the bill, the Republic of Korea is actively promoting the social and solidarity economy. I would like to emphasise that the social and solidarity economy is the solution to the population decline, the loss of rural areas, and the energy transition climate crisis, as well as the young people's domestic issues. The social and solidarity economy provides services and jobs based on the participation and cooperation of the people, and it solves issues that are difficult to be solved only by the market and the government.

In particular, the Korean government has announced a comprehensive plan for the social and solidarity economy by joining the 20 ministries in June. This news was included in the Secretary-General's report. The policy that was scattered around the four areas, such as care, housing, energy, rural areas, and so on, is now being implemented. It is related to the social and solidarity economy, and it is a response to the consistency of the policy and the *mainstreamization.* To give you a brief explanation, in the care area, the social and solidarity economy is a key partner of integrated care. The social and solidarity economy is a key partner of integrated care. In the residential area, the social and solidarity economy is providing social housing through the cooperation of social and solidarity economy. In the rural area, the specialisation of rural areas, the social and solidarity economy is being developed. In the energy sector, we plan to build more than 3,000 solar-powered villages by 2030. We plan to build more than 3,000 solar-powered villages by 2030. A solar village is a model where residents make a cooperative combination of solar and solar power generation and instal it in the future. The profit will be used to provide village meals and public transportation services. A solar village will not only help in energy conversion, but will also be a social and economic alternative to overcome the regional disaster by increasing income and revitalising the region. We are working hard. We will move on and we will get back to you.

Moderator: Thank you so much for that contribution. And not least, congratulations on the recent approval of the National Law on Social and Solidarity Economy, which you have described for us. I would now like to give the floor to France.

Representative from France- Jerome Bonafo

We have to share microphones in solidarity. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Madam Vice-President, for organising this meeting. My Spanish is poor. I will speak in French. Thank you very much for having us at the Cervantes Institute. A few brief remarks. France supports the resolution because the sector of social and solidarity economy accounts for 10% of our GDP and employment in France. With foundations, associations, cooperatives and mutual funds, particularly in the health, pension and banking sectors. So, it is a sector that accounts for a good part of the country. It relies on a 2014 law and a new national strategy that we adopted in 2026. You asked the question of multilateralism.

What is the interest? For me, the interest is to move towards sustainable development goals. We have to look at how the social and solidarity economy allows us to move faster towards these goals. Why? There is the market. The market is great. It creates fantastic wealth. But it is of little interest to the distribution of wealth because it is the law of supply and demand that deals with distribution. There is the state, public power, territorial authorities. It is very good, but it is administration. And so, it is something that relies on legal procedures, etc.

The sector of social and solidarity economy is a kind of intermediation through which, in a fairly democratic way, the population itself participates in the creation and distribution of wealth for economic and social development, for the realisation of these objectives, such as fair distribution of drinking water, women's access to reproductive health, etc. I will not name them all. And so, it is interesting in an economy to have this variety, these different poles. And having this strength in a country gives this country a distinct political path through which it

goes more towards multilateralism and less towards confrontation. Why? Quite simply because this sector is based on cooperation. It is based on dialogue and democracy. And so, it carries a lot.

Representative from Senegal- Alioune Dione

Thank you. I may be going to go a little off topic, but I would like to take a concrete case. In this general assembly, almost all the leaders of the South spoke about the digital divide, and expressed their concern about the ability of billions of people in the South to have access to social networks, the Internet, artificial intelligence, whether through equipment or through technology transfers or through the transfer of know-how. And here, it seems to me that the subject that the community of those who believe in this must address is how we put the social and solidarity economy, these structures, these financing and these human resources at the service of the generalization of the use of these technologies and methods, so that we demonstrate the relevance of the social and solidarity economy on one of the major issues that shape humanity today, which is access to these new modes of human behavior. And I will leave it at that. Thank you.

Representative from Poland- Agnieszka Dziemanowicz-Bak

Thank you. Well, I will be brief, because, I think that the next step should be to -- should be something that you already talk about. It should be to translate the growth political recognition. of the social and solidarity economy into concrete policies, institutions and measurable results. So implementation, but also evaluation of that effect. The United Nations and the ILO can play an important role in helping countries create the conditions which the social and solidarity economy can develop. This means supporting appropriate legal frameworks and public policies, strengthening institutional capacity, and importantly, in terms of evaluation, building a stronger evidence-based through reliable statistic and data. What we also need, and you will also discuss that, we need more international cooperation and exchange of experience. So in that context, I congratulate the initiative of creating a group of friends, because countries and regions are developing different solutions, and one of the advantages of multilateral cooperation is that successful approaches can be shared, adapted, and in different contexts, than reinvented from scratch. So the important point is, therefore, coming back to the title of the previous panel, to move from recognition to implementation, from acknowledging the importance of the social and solidarity economy to creating the legal, institutional, and financial conditions that allow it to deliver results on the ground. Thank you.

Representative from Spain – Yolanda Diaz

Yes, because it is very fast, what the ILO does not, perfect. Bene, the ILO could not, of course, continue in the line of cuts in the social economy. The ILO is a hundred years old in the multilateral system, and, as we said in the previous debate, before the League of Nations, but the social economy is also part of the history of the ILO. Therefore, the first thing, it was not possible to cut back on the social economy. 2, we cannot make progress on the 50% cut. In international cooperation, in the ILO, I want to be clear: the previous speakers and the people who are here, are saying that we still need South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. France and Spain we chair, now we co-chair. The Luxembourg Committee, we had enormous challenges *** the club, of *** him, the friends of the social economy, but we need more social economy, and not exactly and no less. And why? I think that the key is, I will say it again, the 4000 million people that we have in the world without social protection. And if there is something that is key. For improving social protection in the world, it is precisely the social economy. I will say it again, we had a

commitment from the Seville Conference to implement social protection. We are moving away, as the Brazilian ambassador says, from the objectives for Sustainable Development. We do not give compliment; we do not get close. In the 21st century, the objectives that we had set ourselves, and this is key, but what the French ambassador says now, which seems to have nothing to do with it, but it does have to do with it, I persecuted technology and artificial intelligence must also be put at the service of the social economy, of economic democracy and, therefore, of social reduction and inequality. And I end *** one. An issue that has also been mentioned by the previous panellists and I think the current speakers, the Brazilian speaker, is that we need data from the social economy to correct and implement public policies. In our country, for the first time, we have satellite accounts in the General Budget of the State that incorporate the social economy, but that is key so that we can also measure the social economy in our country. And I finish. I think there is a risk in these epochal moments of making mistakes, making mistakes, and there are elements that are central to those that could not be cut. I insist, in cooperation, in social economy, perché in short, es parlare di uguale. And I will finish. In my country, recently, we inaugurated the initiative of Women for the Social Economy. I think it is very important, and something that we are bringing to the friends of the social economy, that we were able in the world to launch an initiative of these characteristics.

Présentateur 4

Wonderful. Thank you, thank you very much to Spain for that intervention, for hosting us today and also for your leadership on this issue. We are at time. So, I will not try to summarize what we've heard today. It's been a very rich discussion. But I would like to thank all the panellists again, and I would like to apologize for have to be a bit tough on you, to make sure that we hear from all of you. It's a challenge when we have such a wealth, or panellists with such a wealth of experience and important perspectives to bring into this discussion. So the good news is that, of course, this is not the end. We will continue the collaboration in different formats. We will continue the discussion. As you and ESSA, we remain committed to supporting this work, this very important work in the challenging global situation that we are in. So, I would like to, I'll stop there, but I would like to invite all the panellists to come up for a family photo.