



ICSSE POSITION PAPER

For the **110th International Labour Conference**
and the general discussion on SSE and decent work

The **International Coalition of the Social and Solidarity Economy** (ICSSE) has been established to **represent the interests of all SSE actors in the international debates, by sharing experience and expertise between the members**. It has been set up in September 2021. Five of the main representative organisations of the SSE in the international arena decided to join their forces in this coalition: the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), the Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF), the SSE International Forum (SSE IF), the International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF) and the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM)¹.

1. You can find in annex 1 the full Charter of the ICSSE and in annex 2 a presentation of its members with their activities scope.

THE ICSSE KEY MESSAGES

FOR THE 110TH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

The International Coalition on Social and Solidarity Economy (ICSSE) welcomes the discussion on Decent Work and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) during the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC). ICSSE largely supports the contents in the ILO report on Decent Work and SSE that outlines the main points of the SSE and reflects SSE actors' voices.

The ICSSE invites the ILO constituents to grasp this historical momentum for the promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy. With the Declarations of the ILO (in 2008, 2019 and 2021), the creation in 2013 of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (**UNTF SSE**, chaired by the ILO) shows growing interest for the values and accomplishments of the SSE. More specifically on the **international labour standards**, three recommendations (No.193, No.204, No.205) make direct or indirect reference to the SSE. However, with the 110th ILC, **it is the first time the spotlight is placed on the Social and Solidarity Economy in such an international forum.**

The ICSSE underlines that SSE is an integral part of the economy, in which existing, and newly emerging organizations, enterprises and initiatives share common characteristics based on shared principles and values, thus providing an important social, economic, cultural and environmental contribution to facing the growing challenges in our changing world. In particular, they contribute to all sectors of the economy and offer opportunities for creating and maintaining quality jobs, including for otherwise underprivileged or marginalized groups.

Representing value-based organisations, the ICSSE supports the definition of SSE proposed in the ILO report, with the common characteristics of the SSE organizations and enterprises (SSEOs) based on shared values and principles and is aligned with the ICSSE Charter².

ICSSE calls on the ILC to recommend the elaboration of inclusive legal frameworks that cover the diversity of organizational forms and different legal regimes of the SSE. This includes cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations, social enterprises as well as new legal forms that share common characteristics, principles, as well as the values of the SSE.

ICSSE emphasises that its mission is also to formalise the informal economy and, to promote decent work by improving the working conditions for hundred millions of people to live the dignified life.

SSE organizations and enterprises should be clearly distinguished from conventional for-profit enterprises which do not share the common characteristics, principles, and values even though they can also have significant social impacts.

ICSSE calls for the recognition of SSE organisations and enterprises in order to clearly distinguish them from conventional for-profit companies while allowing them to take full advantage of the sustainable social market economy to be promoted at a global level. The recognition of SSE should take into account different legal frameworks for all SSE actors and organizational forms. Existing legal frameworks should be updated, if necessary, to contribute to the maximization of their specific missions. ICSSE emphasizes that the formulation and adoption of SSE policies and laws should accommodate for the integration of existing legal frameworks into a wider SSE legal framework allowing for the promotion of decent work.

ICSSE demands for a robust enabling environment to be established with solid prudential regulation, protecting democratic governance, autonomy, as well as voluntary and open membership. SSE organisations and enterprises need an enabling environment and support towards the promotion of SSE following an actor-based approach, ensuring that the specificities and needs of the various SSE actors are considered. They should be involved in the co-creation and co-production of public policies for the promotion of SSE.

ICSSE calls for the scaling up of international activities to create alliances and partnership among SSE organizations and enterprises. This should be an inclusive process of maximizing their force and impact for SSE organisations and enterprises to develop and comply with their mission.

ICSSE urges the ILO to continue spearheading the promotion of the SSE within the United Nations system and beyond as well as in keeping the synergy of existing work done by the ILO COOP Unit given its long-term relationship with cooperatives since its inception over 100 years ago. Some development opportunities could be to contribute in the analysis of the legal frameworks in countries around the world (supplying technical assistance to countries wishing to draw up their national plan in favor of the development of the SSE or have just enacted SSE laws and strategies if requested) or in the development of statistics on the SSE around the world (one enforcement could be the creation of an International Observatory of the SSE).

2. "The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) encompasses institutional units with a social or public purpose, engaged in economic activities, based on voluntary cooperation, democratic and participatory governance, autonomy and independence, whose rules prohibit or limit the distribution of profit. SSE units may include cooperatives, associations, mutual societies, foundations, social enterprises, self-help groups and other units operating in accordance with SSE values and principles in the formal or informal economy."

ANNEX 1: CHARTER FOR AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF INTERCONTINENTAL NETWORKS OF THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

PREAMBLE

Considering that the social and solidarity economy concerns people in every part of the world,

Considering that our initiative takes its full place among the answers to be provided to the questions raised in particular at the 2020 High Level Political Forum of the United Nations on "Accelerated Action and Transformative Solutions, a decade of action and results for sustainable development",

Considering that the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the heavy consequences already suffered, is a crisis whose social, economic, health and ecological repercussions will continue for years to come and will be unprecedented,

We, International Coalition of Social and Solidarity Economy (ICSSE), inter-continental networks of associations, cooperatives, foundations, social enterprises, mutuels and local and territorial authorities, are committed to joining forces in order to deploy a common voice and actions to make our achievements and resources visible and recognized. Those of the women and men who keep this resilient economy alive, a people-centered economy in an approach that reconciles ecological, social, civic, economic and financial solutions.



MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY (SSE)

The Social and Solidarity Economy is a mode of development engaged in all sectors of activity that places the person before maximizing profits while aiming for profitability to serve social missions.

SSE organizations and enterprises (SSEOs) produce, sell and/or exchange goods and services that contribute to improving the well-being of its members and/or the community, and to the creation of sustainable and quality jobs by contributing to social inclusion and equity.

SSE exists in all sectors of the economy and economic activities. The SSE provides a response to many contemporary societal challenges through social innovations in the field of environmental protection, the fight against exclusion, health, or equal opportunities, generating decent work.

The signatories of this Charter intend to build an essential link in the action for the promotion and development of SSE. To do so, they recognize themselves through the SSE's founding values of solidarity, social mission, autonomy, democracy and participation, and through the following SSE characteristics:

- Primacy of the person and the social mission over capital;
- Voluntary and open membership;
- Democratic control by members;
- Protection of common or joint ownership;
- Conjunction of the interests of members, the common interest of communities and the general interest;
- Defense and implementation of the values of solidarity and responsibility;
- Autonomy of management and independence from public authorities;
- Limited distribution of surpluses by the reinvestment of the surplus: surpluses are intended primarily to strengthen the sustainability and development of the business project (strengthening of common capital, investments, discounts for members, experimentation, social innovation, sustainable development, etc.) and not for the remuneration of shareholders.



OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARTER

By this Charter, we seek to:

✔ **Bring together, strengthen and raise the profile of a community of SSE actors**

- **Build** a network of international organizations & enterprises with a wealth of experience, expertise and know-how of women and men in the SSE;
- **Strengthen** the UNTFSSSE observer block and support the work of the UNTFSSSE;
- **Consolidate** this block of SSE networks and organizations within the relevant and existing broader international initiatives and will be working towards establishing synergies whenever possible.

✔ **Deepen advocacy efforts for the recognition of SSE**

- **Lobby** national and local governments on legal frameworks, public policies, and financial support measures;
- **Work** together with national governments and relevant bodies, to promote SSE in the UN system and other inter-governmental institutions, including the adoption of a resolution on SSE at the UN GA;
- **Influence and advocate** with international bodies that bring about reforms and action measures;
- **Highlight**, disseminate and make use of the tools and research outcomes developed by the coalition member organizations.

✔ **Promote the Social and Solidarity Economy as a field of economic activity that must be recognized and is useful for the implementation of SDGs**

→ **Convince** UN agencies, funds and programs to promote and support the inclusion and recognition of SSE;

→ **Promote** SSE as a tool for achieving Agenda 2030 and the SDGs;

→ **Promote** the social and solidarity economy and its constituents at the world economic summits, such as G20, COP Climate, COP Biodiversity, United Nations General Assembly, which must take stock of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, Davos Forum, Local Economic Development (LED) and other conferences at global and regional level.



COMMITMENTS OF THE SIGNATORY ACTORS

The approach, initiated by the GSEF, ICA, SSE International Forum and their partners is open to all economic actors of the same community of interest and who are of the same nature, namely being:

Member-based organizations whose members are partly or totally SSE organizations

Action -and advocacy- based organizations

Networks or organizations of SSE with international dimensions

The signatories of this charter commit themselves to:

- ✔ Carry out joint events and implement concerted actions;
- ✔ Communicate and inform as widely as possible about the actions carried out together;
- ✔ Share the desired initiatives and organize occasional collaborations –advocacy, forums etc. in order to promote the development of joint projects.

ANNEX 2: THE ICCSE MEMBERS



THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE (ICA)

The ICA is an independent, non-governmental organisation established in 1895 to unite, represent and serve cooperatives worldwide. It provides a global voice and forum for knowledge, expertise, and coordinated action for and about cooperatives. ICA's members are international and national cooperative organisations from all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, industry, services, banking, retail, fisheries, health, housing, and insurance. ICA has members from over one hundred countries.

Cooperatives in the world

Cooperatives contribute to the sustainable economic growth and stable, quality employment, providing jobs or work opportunities to over 280 million people across the globe, namely around 10% of the world's employed population, whereas the number of cooperative members reaches more than 12% of humanity. Cooperatives are present significantly in most sectors of the economy (agriculture, fisheries, banking, insurance, industry, services, retail, housing, energy production and distribution etc. The cooperative movement has been evolving as a coordinated organizational reality since 1895 around the ICA and its various regional, sectoral and thematic bodies, with over 330 members in over 110 countries and a common worldwide cooperative model governed by an identity composed of a definition, values and principles that are interlinked, integrated, indivisible, and universally applicable (see below) regardless of national realities, capacities, and priorities. ILO recognizes the relevance of cooperatives which is a key constituent of SSE and constitute the most organized segment of the SSE in many countries of the world.

Cooperatives – Definition, Values and Principles

The ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity, adopted by the ICA's 31st World Cooperative Congress in 1995 and is fully integrated in ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (no. 193), states that "a cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise".

The ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity further states that: "Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Cooperatives put their values into practice through the following principles:

VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Open to all persons who are able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Cooperatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members."

These common denominators of cooperatives are to a substantial extent shared by the SSE actors in general, according to both the ICSSE Charter and the ILO Report. cooperatives represent a significant part of SSE organizations and the most organized and institutionalized part of the SSE.





INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES (AIM)

AIM is the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies. Our 54 members from 28 countries in Europe, Latin America and Africa and the Middle East provide compulsory and/or supplementary health coverage to around 240 million people around the world, including close to 200 million people in Europe, on a not-for-profit basis. Some AIM members also manage health and social services.

AIM is active in the following areas:

- Promote solidarity in re-shaping our welfare systems
- Enabling universal access to health and long-term care
- Affordability of and access to medicine
- The power of data for better health
- Promotion of mutual welfare models
- Promotion of health in all policies

What are mutuals?

Mutual societies were the first forms of solidarity-based coverage protecting against the consequences of illness. In their modern form, they were first established at the beginning of the 19th century in many European countries. Very quickly, public authorities encouraged their development by giving them legal status, recognising their social usefulness and granting them legal and tax advantages in order to encourage their development.

The generalisation of public social protection systems in the aftermath of the Second World War profoundly changed the role and place of mutuals in Europe. Nevertheless, wherever they are established, mutuals continue to play an important role in promoting solidarity and improving social rights.

What are the main characteristics of mutuals?

"In the EU, there is a large diversity of legal forms for mutuals, but all have the above key characteristics. **Mutuals are private legal entities, governed by private law.** Mutuals are a grouping of persons (natural persons or legal entities), rather than a pooling of funds. Members own the mutual by providing funds which can mean that these 'own funds' remain the property of its current members and are therefore truly collective and indivisible. **The governance of mutuals is democratic.** Voting rights are allocated to the members instead of to the amount of funds contributed. In general, each member has one vote to elect the governance bodies. This principle can be implemented via the use of delegates or interest groups. **The principle of solidarity is important among members,** often enshrined in law. It means that benefits delivered do not depend on contributions. Risks are pooled among the members, they are not individualized: it means age or wealth do not impact or have a minor impact on one's health premiums and therefore one's access to healthcare. The application for admission of a natural person who meets the criteria for membership cannot be rejected. This principle allows free entry and exit of everyone who fulfils the conditions as agreed upon in the statutes of the organisation. **Profits are used for the benefit of the members, as the members are the owners of the mutual.** Such

benefits can be in the form of investments to improve services for the members or the development of the business, to increase 'own funds', or to give discounts or rebates on premiums. They can also be used for the benefit of the society/community at large. **Thus, the primary purpose of a mutual is to satisfy the common needs of the members. discounts or rebates on premiums.** They can also be used for the benefit of the society/community at large. Thus, the primary purpose of a mutual is to satisfy the common [SR1] needs of the members." (Panteia 2012 Commission Study on the current situation and prospects of mutuals in Europe').



GLOBAL SOCIAL ECONOMY FORUM (GSEF)

The Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) is a global network aimed at promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as a strategy for the sustainable local economic development of cities and regions and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through their localization. GSEF accompanies local governments across the world in the collaboration process with SSE actors towards the co-creation of public policies and the establishment of sustainable ecosystems conducive to the development of SSE. Established in 2014, GSEF brings together, as of March 2022, 83 members on the 5 continents coming from 34 countries, including 25 local governments.

VISION	MISSION
GSEF aims to achieve inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development by the harmonious partnership of market economy, public economy, and social economy through the solidarity among SSE actors.	Through the collaboration between SSE organizations and local governments, GSEF pursues the creation of quality jobs, fair growth, progress of grassroots democracy, and sustainable development. Values such as human dignity and sustainable ecology are to be the underlying principles for every activity of GSEF.

WHY CO-CREATING PUBLIC POLICIES WITH SSE ACTORS?

By enabling the conditions for the co-creation of public policies with SSE actors, local governments can best support the SSE in their territories and unlock its full potential toward responding to challenges faced by cities globally. Through the implementation of solid local and regional SSE ecosystems, Québec, French regions, and Seoul – among other cities and provinces – have witnessed undeniable results in reducing poverty and inequality, creating decent jobs, and the strengthening of inclusive communities.



SSE INTERNATIONAL FORUM (SSE IF)

Born from The Mont-Blanc Meetings, SSE International Forum is an international network including SSE member organizations and enterprises from 14 countries in 4 continents that value and promote the Social and Solidarity Economy as a means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations by 2030 and, more generally, as the foundation of an economic, political and social model that puts people and ecosystems at its center. We are aware that it is only by forming a social and economic movement, by carrying a political voice on all continents, that we will be able to achieve a profound transformation of our current model of growth and development which is slowly cracking under the weight of the crises. SSE International Forum aims to make the Social Solidarity Economy a reference in this transformation.

For over 10 years, SSE International Forum is working in **four fields of action**:



INFLUENCE

policies and agendas for SSE, because stronger international acknowledgment will further develop this efficient and resilient model on all continents.



GATHER SSE

leaders and major players, because sharing and the willingness to build together are at the core of our economy; for this purpose, we organized nine biennial meetings Les Rencontres du Mont Blanc. The next Mont Blanc Meeting will be held on October 17-19 2022 in Cartagena, Colombia. During these meetings, we explore global themes in order to highlight the solutions that SSE brings to the challenges of our time.



CO-CREATE

sustainable and inclusive projects, because field initiatives provide clear evidence of SSE's social, civic, environmental and economic efficiency.



ADVANCING

knowledge about the SSE to be able to demonstrate its impact.

SSE International Forum, as a representative of its member enterprises and organizations, defends SSE's inherent principles, disseminates practices, gathers expertise and peoples. SSE International Forum is go-between actors who are transforming the world.

Our organizational principles are:

The core place of participatory democracy, recognized and promoted.

Democracy is a crucial principle of SSE: a democratic functioning which involves the participation of all stakeholders –workers, users and beneficiaries– in the management of the company. It also covers a democratic influence that enables citizens to exercise their rights: to participate in collective action and to contribute to social debates. The SSE International Forum contributes to those achievements through the circulation of those practices, its imprint on the market economy and its advocacy for limited profitability. In this sense, its role is eminently political. In the current context, where the social contract cementing our societies is shaken, the political task of the SSE International Forum and its members, is to reverse priorities: the economy serving social goals, rather than the subordination of the social field to profitability.

The primacy of the person and of the social purpose, over capital

This primacy, for which the SSE International Forum is promoting, is based on several guarantees: voluntary and open membership; control and democratic governance by members; the inviolability of collective or social property; the combination and complementarity of the interests of members, users and the general interest; support and implementation of the principles of solidarity and responsibility; management autonomy and independence vis-à-vis public authorities; limited profitability: the use of the majority of management surpluses for investment, sustainability and project development and not for shareholder remuneration.

SSE is a proven resilient model, in all daily life domains

Social and Solidarity Economy provides proven, but also innovative, solutions to the many challenges of the 21st century, created or aggravated by the current growth model. The SSE is an instrument for local-based economy. Its fields of intervention cover all areas of daily life: social protection, education, culture, banking services, agriculture, environment, etc. Its model is resilient because it rejects the excesses of the financial system, and channels profits towards the needs of the enterprise or organization and its members. Its principles improve the enterprise's internal democracy and bring citizens and political decision-makers closer. Together, its operation and principles shape a responsible growth, on both social and ecological levels. It contributes to the plurality and stability of the economic fabric.

We, women and men of the Social and Solidarity Economy, are working for the emergence of a transformative path, the raising of these different economic voices, promoting a more transparent, more sustainable, all in all, a more responsible model. We stand up for another economic model. We advocate for the largest possible spreading of the principles, assets and components of the Social and Solidarity Economy. This is a model that does not thrive on financial speculation, on the exploitation of human beings and on the irreversible use of natural resources. In an era of major economic, ecological and social changes, the Social and Solidarity Economy is in a position to establish itself, develop and transform the dominant economy.



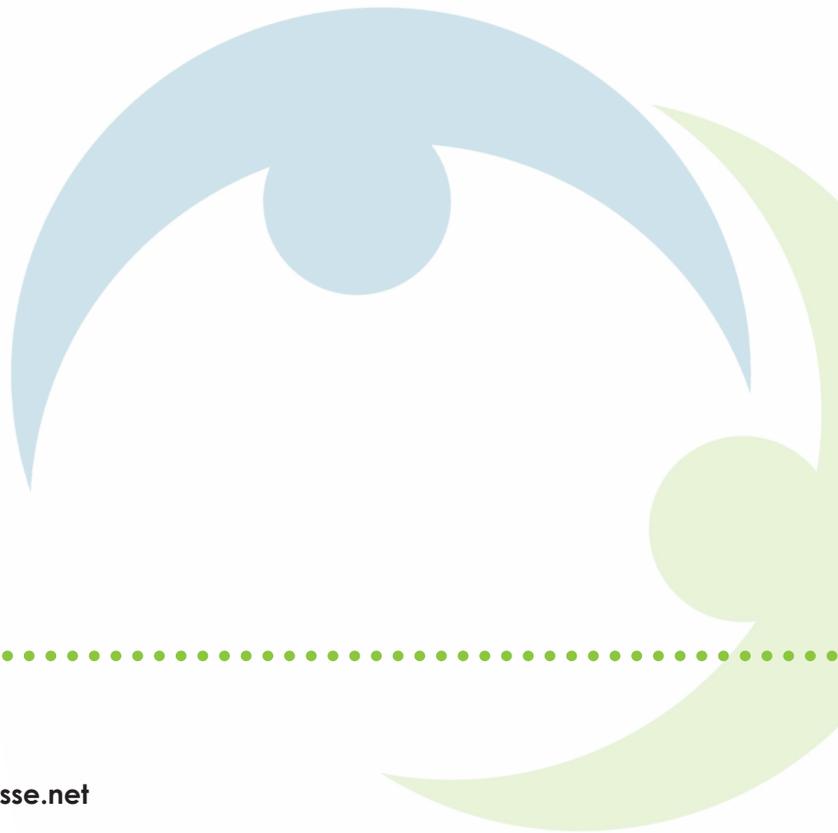


INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE AND MUTUAL INSURANCE FEDERATION (ICMIF)

The International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation is a voluntary association for cooperative and mutual insurers. The ICMIF is a sectoral organisation of the International Cooperative Alliance and pursues its mission on the basis of mutual activities among its members.

ICMIF purpose is to help member organisations achieve their strategic goals and sustainably grow in their markets by leveraging the knowledge, competencies and experience of ICMIF's global network and represent the sector's interests to key stakeholders.

ICMIF is a place where values-led insurers from across the globe come together to strengthen their organisations within a non-competitive environment. It exists to support, to boost the organisational capabilities, and to be the voice of the sector wherever it is most needed.



CONTACT US

secretariat@internationalcoalitionsse.net



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