

Statement by Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, UNCTAD Secretary

General

at the occasion of the event organized by the Government of Spain, UNCTAD, and ILO on the role of Social and Solidarity Economy in achieving the SDGs

New York, 22 July 2022

**Su excelencia, Yolanda Díaz Pérez, Vicepresidenta segunda y
ministra de trabajo del gobierno de España,**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to join the Government of Spain and the ILO in organizing this Side-event on the important role of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in achieving the SDGs.

As we are all aware, the Covid pandemic, climate change and the conflict in Ukraine have all exposed deep flaws in our global economic system.

Sharp inequalities, vulnerabilities, and environmental costs, have caused many to be left behind.

If the world was already off track to achieve the SDGs before the pandemic, these compounding crises are threatening to transform

gaps that keep getting wider into abysses that seem impossible to fulfill.

Given these systemic flaws, UNCTAD has taken the stance that our goal today cannot be to simply re-build the same system, or to revert to the same business-as-usual policies and economic models of before.

Instead, for a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable recovery, we need to look for alternative economic models that can deliver better results for people and planet.

It is in this context that today's meeting on the social and solidarity economy (SSE) is so timely.

The SSE describes economic activities that prioritize social and often environmental objectives over profit motives.

Often, these activities will involve citizens – such as producers, entrepreneurs, workers, consumers - acting collectively and in solidarity.

For example, because of their social goals, values and local roots, SSE enterprises are often natural agents to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

SSE is transformative: By being “people-centered and planet sensitive”, SSE can contribute to sustainable economic growth as well as decent work.

SSE improves inclusion and reduces inequality: By giving a stake to a broader group of actors, such as local communities, farmers, health workers, SSE enterprises can contribute not only to local economic development, but also to better governance and policy making.

Often, SSE is a localizing agent: Because most SSE enterprises operate at the community level, they help to strengthen local communities and connect them to national and international markets.

Lastly, SSE is cross-cutting: it operates in all sectors. It empowers individuals and communities and helps to achieve many SDGs goals and targets at the same time.

The UN task force on SSE, which is led by the ILO and UNCTAD, and which includes 15 other UN agencies as well as the OECD, has examined the opportunities and lessons learnt from this sector for almost 10 years.

In a soon to be published report by the task force, we found that the SSE is making a substantive contribution to all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, the strongest contributions were found on Poverty Reduction (SDG 1), Decent Work (SDG 8), Gender Equality (SDG 5), and Sustainable Production and Consumption (SDG 12).

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Social and Solidarity Economy signals a concrete pathway for placing people and planet front and centre in the development agenda.

UNCTAD stands ready to support you in your consideration of this important, innovative model as part of a New Economics for sustainable development.

I congratulate the Government of Spain, and her vicepresident Yolanda Díaz, for taking the lead in raising awareness about this crucial issue.

I thank you.