



V WORLD FORUM OF
LOCAL
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
CÓRDOBA, ARGENTINA

May 26th > June 1st
#ledworldforum2021

V WORLD FORUM OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FINAL DECLARATION



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The **5th World Forum of Local Economic Development (WFLED)** was celebrated in the city of Córdoba, Argentina, from May 26 to June 1, 2021, in an unforeseen and dramatic global context derived from the **effects of the global health crisis** caused by the COVID-19, without this being an obstacle to covering a crucial event for local and regional governments around the world.

A global crisis that has shown **how fragile our territories can be**, and that has impacted all social spheres, all actors and the institutions themselves at different levels of government, aggravating situations of vulnerability and inequality.

In this context, the **World Forum of Local Economic Development** has consolidated as a **global political advocacy process**, started a decade ago, aimed at **improving political and institutional dialogue** among actors who participate in local and regional life. The Forum **promotes alliances** for a development that includes economic growth as a way to achieve **cohesive and sustainable societies**; sharing ideas, purposes, good practices and innovative initiatives.

The 5th Forum has paid special attention to the **new opportunities** to promote territorial policies based on criteria of economic efficiency, equity and ecological balance that, fundamentally, tend to reconsider and promote new production models and new forms of consumption, always with the aim of achieving a standard of living respectful of human dignity for all inhabitants.

The 5th Forum has shown that territories are spaces for the **generation of knowledge and social empowerment**, capable of creating social and economic value, where local and regional governments, and their basic public services, play a fundamental role as guarantors of access to health, water, sanitation, education, employment or housing of the citizens.



The 5th Forum has provided a **framework and a space for reflection**, exchange of experiences and debate, based on the **commitment and co-responsibility** of the participating actors. Based on the thematic lines and



dynamics on which it has developed, the Delegates of the 5th Forum recognize and agree to undertake the following actions:

In the political - institutional sphere

- 1. Promote processes of political and institutional strengthening**, to face both supervening crisis situations and global phenomena, strengthening democratic institutions, promoting public services, improving public-private collaboration, increasing resilience to situations of fragility and promoting networking between local and regional governments.
- 2. Promote the political incidence of local and regional governments**, and their associations, mobilizing their leadership capacity, increasing their presence on the international scene as a key actor to achieve objectives and goals such as those committed in the framework of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations system, and promoting international cooperation and the dynamics of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation that favour more effective, egalitarian and horizontal alliances among territories.
- 3. Strengthen multilevel alliances** and collaboration between cities and urban and rural networks, promoting strategic planning, supporting value chains, promoting the creation of decent work and improving local economies and social, solidarity and sustainable economic models.
- 4. Promote a territorial approach** that guarantees social dialogue, innovation and relations of cooperation and joint responsibility among all the actors in the territory, including the Labour Sector.
- 5. Promote decentralization and increasing processes of the powers of local and regional governments**, as well as an adequate financing by national governments, to offer better services in the territory.

In the field of innovation



6. Promote **territorial-based economic models and practices** such as the social and solidarity economy, the green economy, the circular economy, among others, not in a marginal way, but as true ways to generate wealth, inclusion and equality and favour a more effective response to local and global challenges. For this reason, it is essential that these models and practices are fully incorporated into public policies, planning, and the systems and structures that support local development processes.

7. Recognize the fundamental work of **companies as key agents** in the territorial development process, especially those that carry out experiences of innovation, generation of wealth and employment, promoting dynamic territorial ecosystems, promoting diversification and productive transformation in emerging and traditional sectors. Special consideration must be given to promoting the creation of new companies and supporting the survival and growth of micro, small and medium-sized companies with innovative potential.

8. Make a special mention of the **Social and Solidarity Economy**, deeply rooted in local development processes and recognized as a key driver of transformative dynamics at the local level. Without doubt, it must be recognized as one of the main drivers of economic development, cooperation among cities, and the green transition towards a new global balance.

9. Promote **innovation in digital transformation and energy transition processes**. Local and regional governments must spearhead the digital revolution and energy transition, which have enormous potential for job creation. It is necessary to increase the capacities of governments and public sector professionals in these areas.

10. **Strengthen the public sector and public management** of basic services at all levels of government; especially, in those critical competencies for the transformation of our territories and the reduction of imbalances.



In the field of equality and cohesion

11. Promote financing mechanisms and equitable business models that increase access to capital by economic actors, as well as social finance instruments promoted by state and international organizations, adapting them to entrepreneurial initiatives.

12. Generate territorial and inter-territorial cohesion, reducing disparities among territories, especially between cities and rural areas, as well as between territories in the global north and south, improving synergies and international and local cooperation.

13. Strengthen gender strategies and promote definitive processes and mechanisms that allow, once and for all, to achieve **full equality between women and men** in all areas of society and in all positions of social, political or economic representation, an essential element for a local economic development based on full equity.

14. Strengthen the practices of civil society entities, in particular organizations that bring together informal economy producers and those that pursue activities inherent to the state or complementary to it, in strengthening social and institutional ties that promote diversity and sustainability.

In the field of work

15. Encourage social dialogue between social and economic agents and promote transition processes towards the formal economy, recognizing the work of those who work in the informal economy, all of them generators of social and economic activity and all of them depositories of the right to a decent and quality job.

16. Strengthen knowledge systems and spaces for education, both higher and professional training, as well as training, qualification and lifelong learning, linking production systems and the generation of quality employment and skills that improve the employability of people, strengthening management and adaptation capacities in the public and private sectors.



17. Commit to the application and promotion of **Human Rights** in all areas of local development and promote the construction of a culture of peace.



The organizing entities of the 5th World Forum, after the process of reflection and exchange in search of **ways for a sustainable and inclusive recovery**, and based on the contributions made, commit to continue working to reinforce local economic development, particularly in:

(i) Sharing response and resilience mechanisms to **address situations of risk, crisis or emergency** that minimize the impacts on people, quality jobs, economies and institutions and that contribute to a sustainable recovery.

(ii) Prioritizing and promoting **innovation, technological solutions and the reorientation of production and consumption models towards sustainability, equity and cohesion**, by strengthening the capacity to generate wealth and employment while responding to not resolved situations of social inequality, precarious employment, exclusion, forced migration, discrimination based on gender, and other factors that hinder the formation of a free citizenship.

(iii) Increasing **social dialogue** among business organizations, trade union organizations and local governments, and making **all development actors** jointly responsible, by promoting alliances, improving cooperation, orienting policies reasonably and gradually towards green, efficient and sustainable economic models, in order to face to new challenges in a world that is global and local at the same time.

(iv) Maintaining the **process of reflection and debate**, by promoting networking and political advocacy in multilevel spaces and international forums, deepening the thematic lines developed in the 5th World Forum such as **territorial innovation, new models of sustainable production and the decent, stable and quality work**.



And the organizing parties also encourage all participating entities to join these initiatives.



The International Committee values, recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the National Committee in organizing this V World Forum, which has been pursued even in extraordinary situations.

After five days of debates, we consider the WFLED process and the knowledge, policy, action and partnership management process that it entails as more relevant than ever. For this reason, we undertake to review the governance and alliances system that allows amplifying the potential of the WFLED, as well as establishing a permanent HUB - WFLED secretariat to guarantee the inter-forum process.

The International Committee will open, as of September 2021, a candidacy process to host the VI World Forum of Local Economic Development where we hope to meet again, but in person”.

Córdoba, June 1, 2021