

# SOMMET



de l'économie sociale  
et solidaire

# 2006 DECLARATION

Presented at the conclusion of the  
*Social and Solidarity Economy Summit held in Montréal*

On the occasion of the *Social and Solidarity Economy Summit*, **we, actors of the social economy from the community, cooperative and mutual benefit movements and associations, from cultural, environmental and social movements, unions, international cooperation and local and regional development organizations**, affirm with pride and determination our commitment to building a social and solidarity economy locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

For decades now, across Québec and even abroad, we have been constructing a social and economic project rooted in the notion that there should be no losers. A project based on values of social justice, fairness, solidarity and democracy.

Today, we are very proud of the results and achievements of **social economy actors and partners**. Our combined efforts, especially during the past decade, have enabled us to create new instruments and reinforce existing ones. This has facilitated the emergence of new sectors and the strengthening of others. Our efforts have also contributed to the support and creation of thousands of jobs, and the improvement or formation of new spaces of social inclusion, mobilization and governance, and in doing so, they have enhanced citizen participation. They have also enabled women to play a leading role in this value-added economy.

And we must not forget that these achievements represent active resistance to the global situation, in which economic growth too often generates poverty and social and geographic inequality. The social economy plays an important role in combating poverty and social exclusion.

Collective enterprises are not alone in their contributions to economic democratization. We are pleased to see the constant rise of responsible investment, the commitment of labour to economic development, public policy that favours sustainable development, responsible consumption practices, and companies that are acting in a socially responsible fashion. Clearly, the social economy is part of broader movement that is constructing alternatives to pervasive neoliberalism, and a **more democratic solidarity-based economy**.

Social economy is essential to the construction of a more just and equitable world. Today the **social and solidarity economy** is plural and firmly established in multiple sectors. Our ranks are growing constantly.

Employment and wealth creation are major concerns when it comes to Québec's development. We must not forget, though, that human beings produce and consume goods and services and should therefore be central to all economic aims and processes.

Bolstered by our success, we see that our society must revise its distribution, production and consumption practices. We must also consider the integration of Québec's economy into the global economy, while pursuing equity and justice at all levels.

Today, we invite women and men in Québec to join this movement to establish a solidarity-based economy that seeks a more just response to social, economic and environmental imperatives. We encourage Québeckers to innovate and adopt more responsible consumption practices. **We, the actors and partners of the social and solidarity economy**, are determined to reinforce the social economy's contribution to the sustainable development of Québec, and, through our partnerships, to sustainable development in others parts of the world.

We also call on decision-makers and our government representatives to transform their methods of measuring economic activity, moving from a simple accounting of financial results to a triple measurement, that accounts for social, environmental as well as financial impacts.

We face huge challenges and little time in which to change the current development model, which is dramatically affecting the environment and deepening the gap between rich and poor, between territories, and between countries.

For these reasons, we affirm our commitment to continue developing the social economy. We also encourage new alliances among the principal sectors of the social and solidarity economy in Canada, across the continent and internationally.

We will face multiple challenges in the next decade. We can overcome them only if we concentrate our energy on achieving the following actions and encourage women and men in Québec to join us. We want:

- **TO DO BUSINESS IN SOLIDARITY**, by acknowledging, maintaining and developing consistency between our organizational missions and the social, economic and environmental concerns of our enterprises and our movement; by consolidating our networks and encouraging communications within our own networks and with other networks; by supporting marketing and management practices that are consistent with the values we embrace; by being more inclusive of youth, Native peoples, people with disabilities and immigrants; by working with governments to define public policy that recognizes the requirements of democratic management and social and environmental responsibility;
- **TO WORK IN SOLIDARITY**, by making a priority of ensuring sustainable and quality employment; first, by improving working conditions for people working in social economy and community action organizations, which means increased funding of these organizations; by organizing a national task force on working conditions; by promoting the recognition, upgrading and qualification of workers; and finally, by expanding our knowledge of the sector and of those who work within it;
- **TO INVEST IN SOLIDARITY**, by networking with actors in the areas of capital development and solidarity finance; by consolidating and enhancing the availability of solidarity financial instruments and by working to reform public policy in order to facilitate socially useful investment;
- **TO DEVELOP OUR TERRITORIES IN SOLIDARITY**, by ensuring that every region in Québec has fair access to resources for the development of social economy and to financial instruments that meet diverse needs; by supporting regional networks in their efforts to acquire the technical and financial means to achieve their mission; by sensitizing elected representatives to the importance of consolidating resources for the use of enterprises and agencies that support the development of social economy;
- **TO CONSUME RESPONSIBLY**, by establishing greater synergy among responsible consumption actors; by taking the lead in offering socially and environmentally useful goods and services; by recognizing—among ourselves first of all—the importance of responsible consumption and by fostering this awareness in all socioeconomic actors; by raising public awareness about social economy's contribution to responsible consumption;
- **TO ACT IN GLOBAL SOLIDARITY**, by mobilizing the public with our partners in the South and North; by holding our governments to their commitments and by increasing our development efforts; by offering resources that enable our partners in the South to participate on an equal footing and by building continental and intercontinental networks that ensure the full participation of civil society and the social and solidarity economy in developing a global system in which there are no losers.

The social and solidarity economy has progressed considerably in the last 10 years in Québec, but the gains are still fragile and the challenges numerous and substantial. Development of the social and solidarity economy cannot proceed without an overall perspective that draws a link between local and planetary, between where something is produced and the act of consumption, and between the worker's contribution and that of the socially aware investor. Development of the social and solidarity economy cannot proceed without the mobilization of society as a whole.

In concluding this summit, each of us is committing to continue mobilizing for a model of development that leaves nobody aside, so that, more than ever before, solidarity will be at the heart of economic activity throughout Québec and around the world.

Montréal, November 17, 2006