



► Decent work and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE): **Focus on Africa**

Cooperatives Unit, Enterprises Department

April 15, 2022 version

► General Discussion on Decent Work and the SSE at the 2022 International Labour Conference

- Why a General Discussion on Decent Work and the SSE?
- What is the Office's proposed definition on the SSE for discussion?
- What is the state of the art of the SSE at the global and in Africa?
- How can the SSE contribute to decent work and sustainable development?
- How is the SSE related to the work of the ILO constituents?
- What does the ILO do to advance the SSE?
- What are the next steps in the lead up to the general discussion?

► Why a General Discussion on Decent Work and the SSE?

► The decision

- Decision taken by the 341st Governing Body (GB) of the ILO in 2021 hold a General Discussion on “Decent Work and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)”
- This is the first time that the International Labour Conference (ILC) will have a general discussion on the SSE



▶ The global context leading to this ILC General Discussion

- ▶ Growing attention from governments and social partners on **human-centred economic models**.
- ▶ Opportunity to shed light on the growing **diversity of enterprise models** that combine social, economic and environmental objectives.
- ▶ The SSE has gained further recognition for its role during the **global financial crises** and the recent COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Relevance of the SSE in **building resilience** in the **post-pandemic era**.



▶ The expected outcomes of the ILC Committee on Decent work and the SSE

- ▶ Propose a **universal definition** of the term “social and solidarity economy”, including its associated principles and values
- ▶ **Assess the contribution of the SSE** to managing and promoting the overall support for people through the transitions they face in their working lives
- ▶ **Provide policy guidelines** for a conducive environment for the SSE
- ▶ **Provide guidance to the Office** on how to engage in promoting and advancing the SSE
- ▶ Encourage the Office to **establish and maintain partnerships** with SSE stakeholders



What is the Office's proposed definition on the SSE for discussion?

▶ The SSE is an umbrella term that covers institutional units based on values and principles

Values and principles have featured prominently in recent legislation on the SSE, based on a review of selected legislation on the SSE. Most common **values** include:

- ▶ Care for people and the planet
- ▶ Egalitarianism
- ▶ Interdependence
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Self-governance



▶ A set of SSE **principles** operationalizes the set of SSE values

- ▶ Voluntary cooperation
- ▶ Social or public purpose
- ▶ Autonomy and independence
- ▶ Prohibition or limitation of profit distribution
- ▶ Democratic and participatory governance



► The SSE includes **organizational forms** operating in accordance with values and principles

They include:

- Cooperatives
- Mutual societies
- Associations
- Foundations
- Self-help groups
- Social enterprises



► Proposed **definition** based on values, principles and organizational types

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 and the informal economies.



► **What is the state of art on the SSE
at the global and regional levels?**

► A global overview of the SSE

Traditional and new forms:

- Terminology rooted in different traditions (e.g. social economy, third sector, non-profit sector)
- Traditional forms (e.g. associations, cooperatives, mutuels) and new forms (e.g. social enterprises) and sectors

Institutional support:

- Growing support from regional institutions (e.g. African Union, European Union, Organization of American States, Association of Southeast Asian Nations)

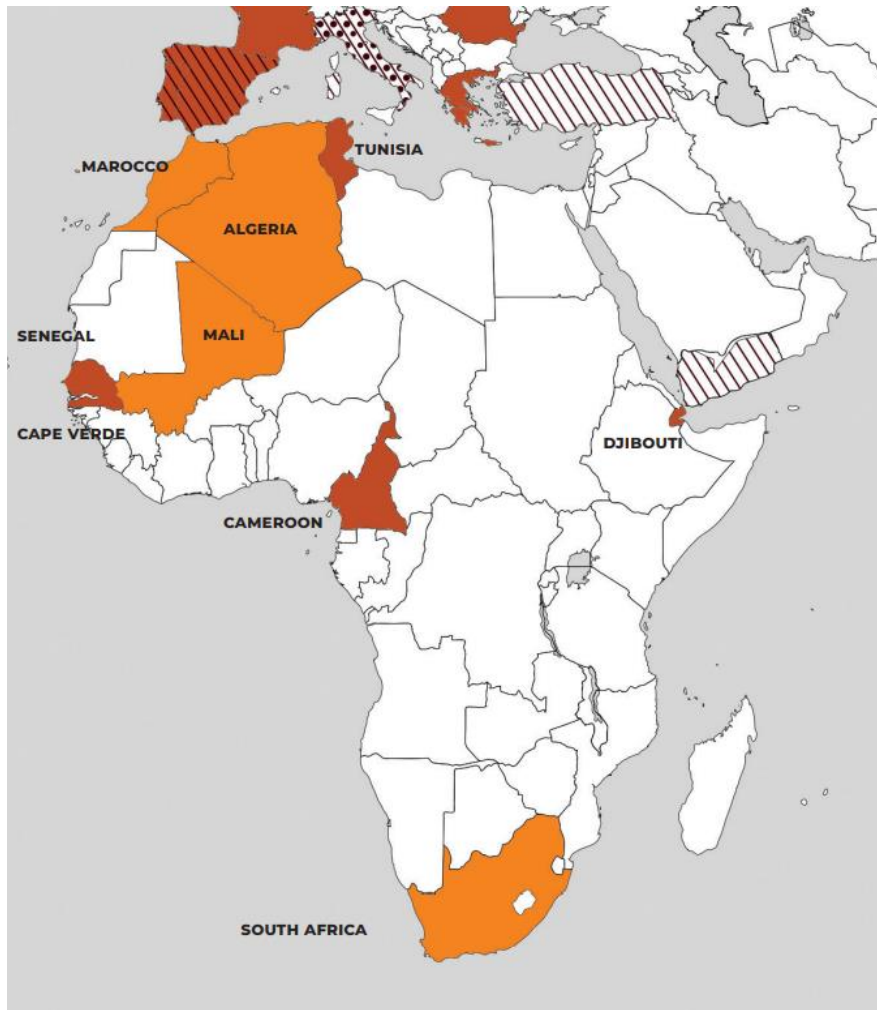
Policy and legislation:

- Emerging policies and laws on the SSE
- Update of existing policies and laws of organizational forms under the SSE

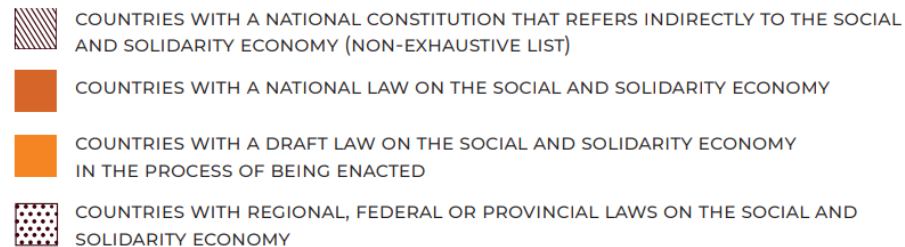
Statistics:

- Lack of internationally agreed guidelines on SSE statistics
- Few regions, countries with statistical initiatives, including by their SSE organizations (e.g. Quebec, Portugal)
- International federations (e.g. International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation, International Cooperative Alliance) gather data on the organizational forms under the SSE

Overview of the SSE in Africa (1)



- ▶ Many traditional practices of cooperation exist in Africa **across centuries**
- ▶ Formal cooperatives are prominent across the continent;
- ▶ Mutual associations are active in many countries of West Africa;
- ▶ Social enterprises are a growing phenomenon in Southern, and Eastern Africa although without related legislation in place
- ▶ Countries in the region are adopting **legal and policy frameworks on the SSE** - Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Djibouti, Senegal and Tunisia
- ▶ Others have **draft laws or policies** under review for adoption – Morocco, Algeria, Mali and South Africa



► Overview of the SSE in Africa (2)

- **Lack of reliable and comparable statistics on the SSE**
- **Growing institutional support** and recognition by regional and national bodies (African Union and African Development Bank)
- **SSE specific regional** institutions being formed (African Network for the Social and Solidarity Economy)
- **Strong presence of international development agencies** in advancing the SSE



▶ The SSE in the region: SOUTH AFRICA

FOCUS AREAS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN

SSE POLICY

- ▶ Legal and Regulatory
- ▶ Finance Mechanisms
- ▶ Access to Markets
- ▶ Social Innovation

TIMELINE AND MILESTONES:

- ▶ 2009: Regional conference on the SSE organized and Action Plan adopted
- ▶ 2010-2016: Preparatory activities and researches
- ▶ 2017: Project started and MoU signed
- ▶ 2018-2020: Green paper drafted and launched, broad consultation process in place
- ▶ 2021: White paper launched

LESSONS LEARNT

- Target SSE entrepreneurs outside of existing networks
- Learn from international experience BUT
- Research at every step to understand your specific SSE context
- Understanding barriers: reframe standard questions: instead of “what are your barriers?” ask “What would you ask the President?”
- Intergovernmental Advisory Committee
- Citizens Panel
- Networks and Database
- Ensure both Policy and Implementation

▶ The SSE in the region in numbers (1)

SOUTH AFRICA

- ▶ 21,000 associations
- ▶ 160,000 cooperatives
- ▶ 48,000 non-profit organizations
- ▶ Over 24,000 social enterprises
- ▶ The National Stokvel Association of South Africa represents 810,000 stokvel groups, with over 11 million members.

Department of Trade, Industry and Competition of South Africa, *Measuring the Social Economy in South Africa*, 2019

KENYA

- ▶ 3,244 social enterprises
- ▶ SACCOs provide financial services to over four million Kenyans
- ▶ 21,000 cooperative societies with 14 million individual members and 555,000 employees

British Council, *The state of social enterprise in Kenya*, 2017.

Nairobi, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *Economic Survey 2020*, 2020.

► The SSE in the region in numbers (2)

TUNISIA

- 48 mutual benefit organizations
- 3,000 producers' associations
- 358 agricultural cooperatives
- 289 microfinance institutions
- 33,000 social enterprises
- 21,000 associations

Akram Belhaj Rhouma, *Public Policies for the Social and Solidarity Economy and their Role in the Future of Work: The Case of Tunisia* (ILO, 2019).

CAMEROON

An ILO survey of 395 SSE units in 2019, showed that among them:

- 58% were common initiative groups
- 1/4th were cooperatives
- 15 % were associations
- Women represented 44% of the members and 57% of employment in these SSE unit

ILO and MINPMEESA. *Evaluation des besoins des unités d'économie sociale et identification des chaînes de valeur prioritaires pour la création d'emplois décents au Cameroun.* (ILO, 2021).

► **How can the SSE contribute to decent work and sustainable development?**

▶ Contributions of the SSE to decent work and sustainable development

- ▶ Employment and income generation
- ▶ Social protection and the provision of social services
- ▶ Rights at work
- ▶ Gender equality
- ▶ Social dialogue
- ▶ Transition to the formal economy
- ▶ Crisis prevention and recovery, and promotion of peace and resilience
- ▶ Just digital transition
- ▶ Just transition to environmental sustainability

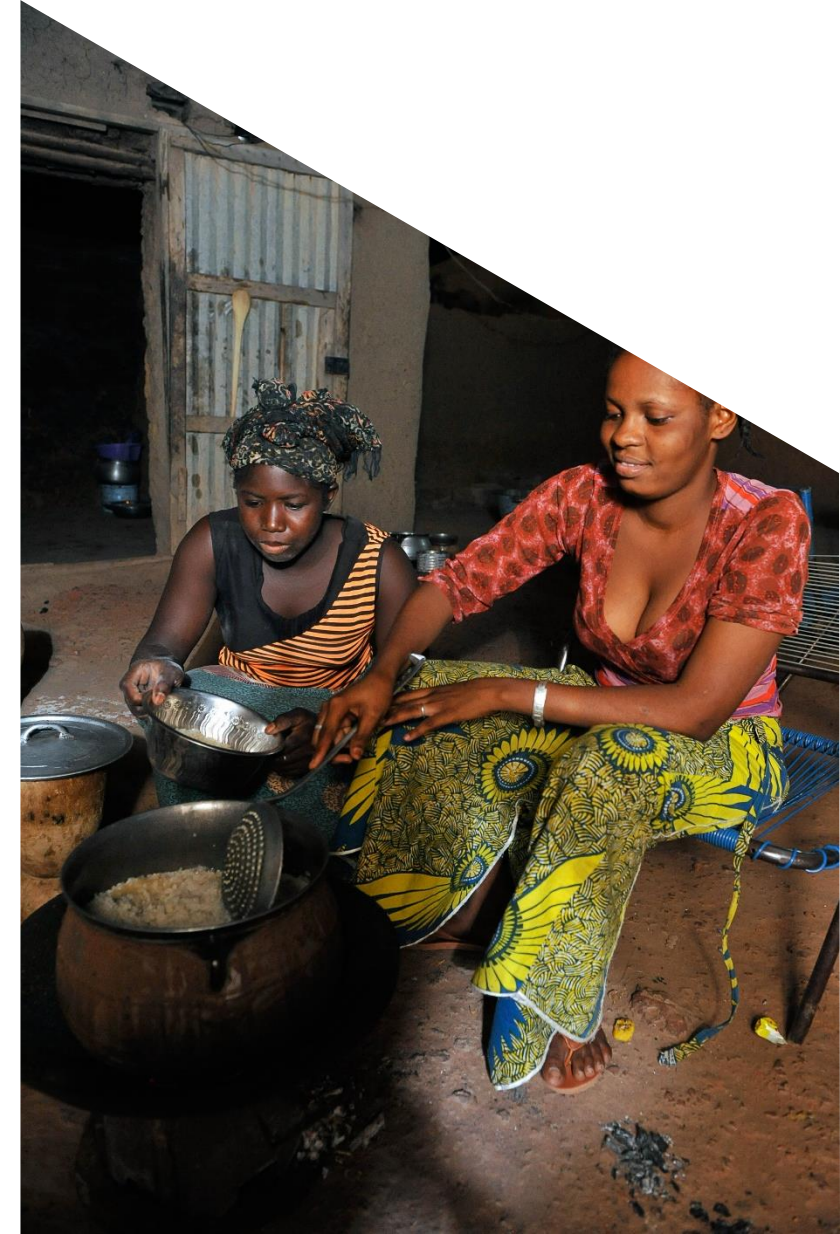
▶ The SSE and employment and income generation

- ▶ The SSE generates direct and indirect employment
- ▶ SSE units participate across various stages of supply chains (e.g. Inter-professional Cotton Association of Burkina Faso through the National Cotton Farmers' Union).
- ▶ SSE units provide a wide range of services to their members, and/or in their communities that improve incomes and livelihoods (e.g. the Bela Bela Communal Property Association in South Africa)
- ▶ SSE units create jobs through worker-owned enterprises
- ▶ Access to finance remains a challenge for SSE units



► The SSE, social protection and provision of social services

- The SSE facilitates access to social protection for their members
- SSE units provide health and care services to their members
- SSE units can be further integrated into the social protection system (e.g. Universal Health Coverage subsidized scheme in Senegal is implemented via mutuals)
- SSE units are established to provide health care and other care services (e.g. pharmacy cooperatives, care cooperatives, community associations)
- SSE units play a critical role for rural and informal economy workers who may face challenges accessing formal social protection system



► The SSE and **rights at work**

- SSE units are required to comply with international labour standards (ILS) and national labour legislation in respect of their employment relationships
- ILS refer to the SSE or organizational forms that fall under it (e.g. R. 193, R. 204, R. 205)
- The SSE promotes compliance with ILS among their members and undertake joint initiatives with other community actors to advance their rights
- Labour laws must be applied to avoid the misuse of the organizational forms that fall under the SSE (e.g. pseudo cooperatives)



► The SSE and gender equality

- SSE units promote gender equality and advance SDG 5 by:
 - strengthening participation of women in the SSE, in membership and leadership positions
 - developing SSE units in economic sectors with higher participation of women (e.g. care economy)
 - providing affordable and accessible services for women
 - giving women the opportunity to engage in decision-making and power-sharing
- SSE units may be constrained by legal provisions, social norms and historical inequalities
- When established by and for women, SSE units can help overcome social and cultural constraints



► The SSE and social dialogue

- In some countries, SSE vertical structures take part in social dialogue institutions (e.g. cooperatives participate in the National Social Dialogue Committee in Niger; the South African National Economic Development and Labour Council comprises community organizations in addition to government and employers' and workers' organizations; the Mali's Economic, Social and Cultural Council include SSE units as "other stakeholders")
- Representatives of SSE units can take part in cross-border social dialogue mechanisms, notably in regional integration communities (e.g. Cross-Border Traders' Association in Southern and Eastern African countries)



► The SSE and the transition to the formal economy

- The impact of COVID-19 has been particularly severe on the world's two billion informal workers (IW)
- Their earnings remain far below pre-pandemic levels
- Women IW are disproportionately burdened with unpaid care work within households
- Informal own-account workers can organize into SSE units to transition to the formal economy
- Vertical SSE structures of IW provide them with voice and representation
- SSE units help scale up informal economy units via:
 - Enhancing their bargaining position
 - Scaling up their activities through collective forms of entrepreneurship
 - Facilitating workers' access to social protection



► The SSE and crisis prevention and recovery, promotion of peace and resilience

- The SSE plays a role in preventing and recovering from crises caused by conflict and disaster
- SSE units were agents in addressing adverse effects of COVID-19 crisis
- SSE units support members & communities during economic downturns
- SSE units cooperate with governments and development partners seeking to address needs of refugees and host communities
- The SSE participates in rebuilding communities in post-conflict settings (e.g. Mozambique, Rwanda, DR Congo)



► The SSE and **just digital** transition

- SSE units contribute to making digital transitions fairer, by connecting businesses and customers to employees
- SSE units use digital work platforms to help transform business processes with implications for the future of work
- The SSE offers a range of alternatives for workers, producers and users of digital services, including online applications that they own and control



► The SSE and the **just transition to environmental sustainability**

- SSE units in agriculture, housing and energy are greening their operations and lowering their environmental footprint
- SSE units contribute to environmental sustainability by producing and selling products and services in green sectors (e.g. renewable energy, recycled materials, e-waste recycling)
- Waste pickers in informal economy have set up a variety of SSE units
- SSE units in sectors ranging from agriculture and housing to energy are greening their operations and lowering their environmental footprint (e.g. the Dunga Fishermen Cooperative Society in Kenya)
- The SSE contributes to food networks associated with fair trade, solidarity purchasing and collective provisioning



► **How is the SSE related to the work of the ILO constituents?**

▶ ILO Constituents and the SSE

- ▶ The promotion of the SSE to advance decent work and sustainable development calls for **new forms of cooperation** between governments, employers, workers and societies at large
- ▶ Respecting SSE values and principles requires putting **workers' rights** and the **needs, aspirations and rights of all people** at the heart of policies and enterprise-level practices
- ▶ A **conducive environment** for the SSE can best be developed through tripartite participation and in consultation with other relevant and representative SSE organizations



▶ Governments

- ▶ Recognition of the SSE in **policy** and **legislation** (e.g. constitutional level, framework laws, strategies, decrees)
 - ▶ Enactment of SSE policy and legislation followed by the creation or strengthening of **government institutions** that regulate and support the SSE
 - ▶ Commitment to developing the SSE often generate **policy coherence** and **coordination** mechanisms across policy areas
 - ▶ An **environment conducive** to sustainable SSE enterprises applies to sustainable enterprises more generally
- ▶ It is important to ensure **a level playing field** for SSE units, on terms no less favourable than those accorded to other forms of enterprise and social organization



Workers' organizations

- ▶ Workers' organizations and SSE units share **common values** and **principles, history**, and occasionally **intersecting institutions**
- ▶ Workers' organizations **have established SSE units** in retail, affordable housing, small-scale finance, mutual insurance, education and training, and employment preservation to benefit their members
- ▶ Workers' organizations and SSE units collaborate in the **informal economy**
- ▶ Workers' organizations occasionally build **alliances** with the SSE to pursue common goals
- ▶ Workers' organizations could **advise and assist workers in the SSE** to join workers' organizations, and assist their members to establish SSE units



Employers' organizations

- ▶ SSE units and SSE vertical structures **may join existing employers' organizations**
- ▶ Employers' organizations may **develop structures and extend services** to SSE units and their horizontal and vertical structures
- ▶ SSE units may also **set up** their own employers' organizations
- ▶ Vertical and horizontal structures of the SSE may be represented in **international private sector platforms** along with other employers' organizations
- ▶ Employers' organizations could consider, where appropriate, **the extension of membership** to SSE units and provide appropriate support services on the same terms and conditions applying to other members



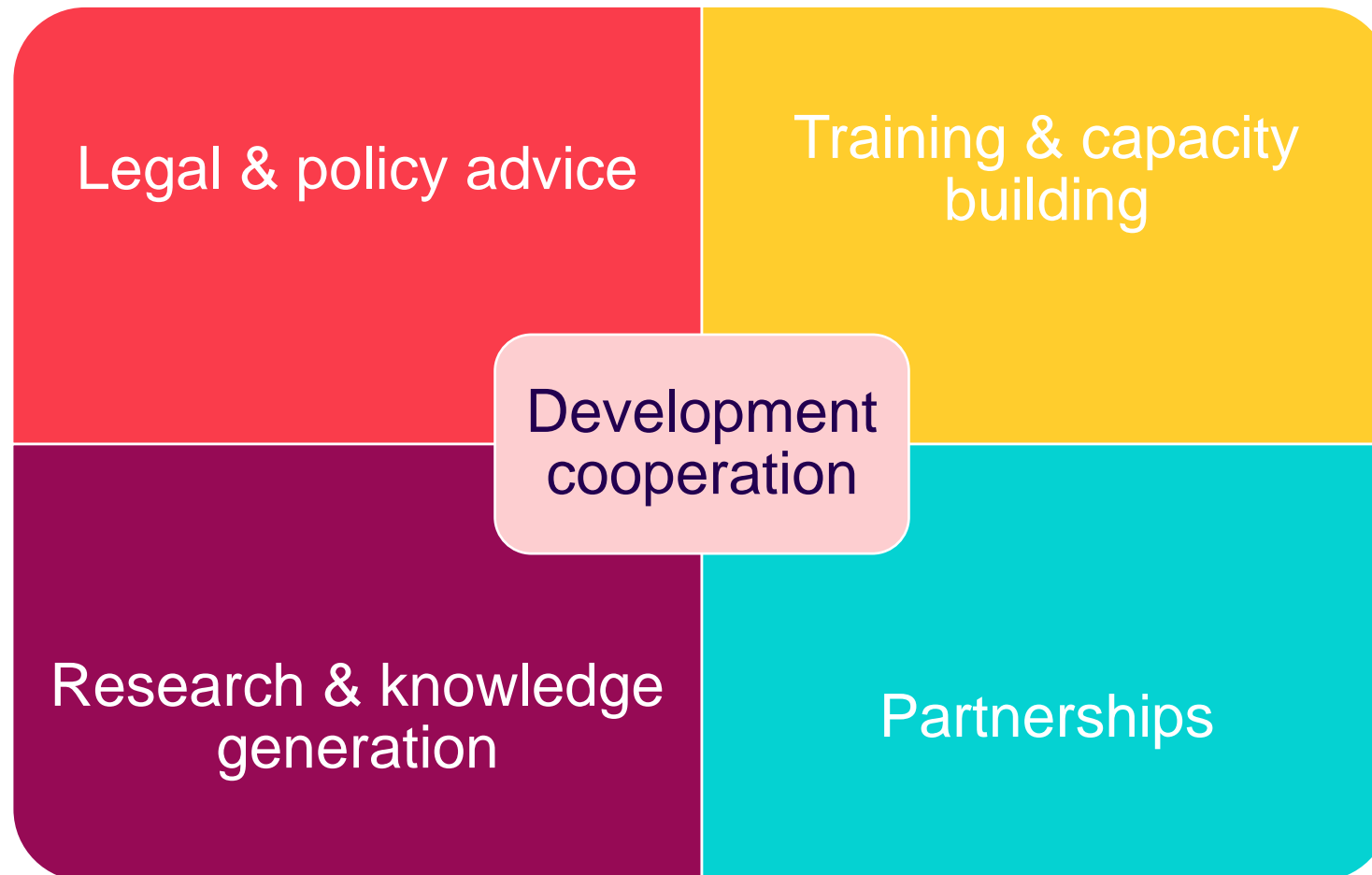
► **What does the ILO do to advance the SSE for decent work?**

ILO's Cooperatives Unit (ILO COOP)

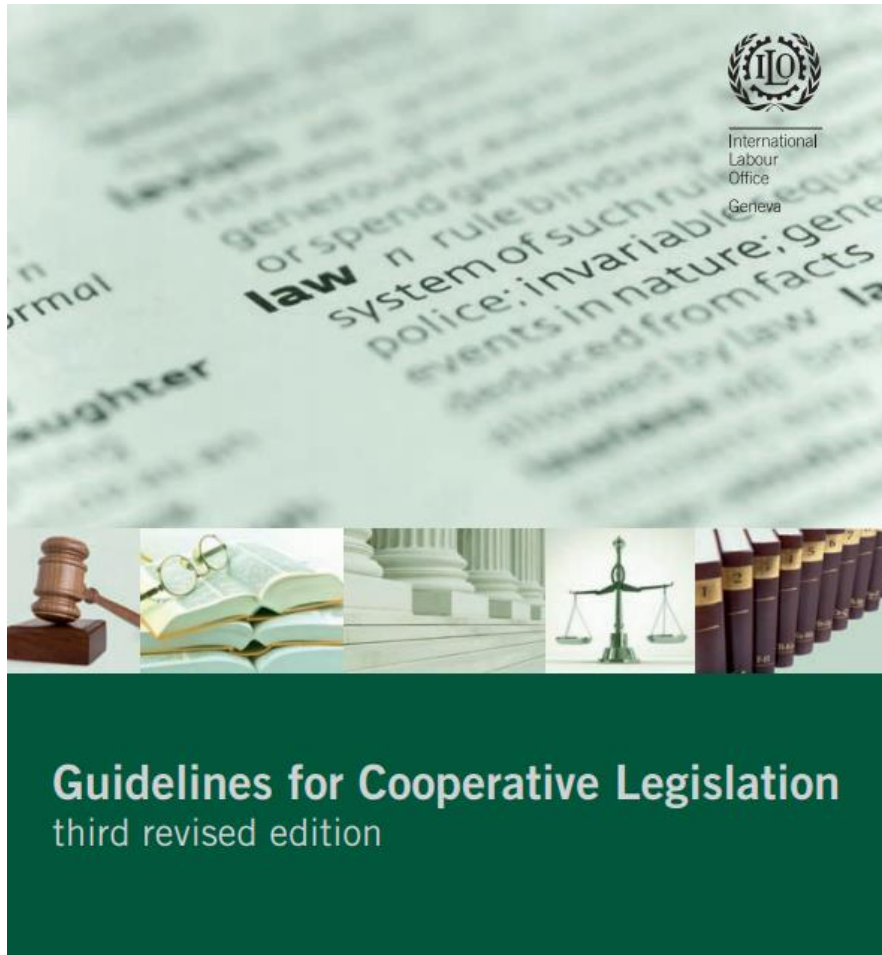
- ▶ ILO COOP was established in 1920 by a decision of its Third Governing Body
- ▶ It has worked on advancing cooperatives for over a century in responding to Constituents' requests in partnership with cooperative organizations
- ▶ In the past decade the ILO has been developing a portfolio of work on the wider SSE
- ▶ The Office uses a “one ILO” approach in incorporating SSE units into its programmes



► ILO Services on the SSE



Legal and policy advice



- ▶ The ILO provides legal and policy advice based on its Recommendation on the Promotion of Cooperatives, 2002 (No. 193)
- ▶ More than 117 countries have used the recommendation and the ILO's guidelines for cooperative legislation to support the review and development of cooperative policies and laws
- ▶ The Office has been receiving requests from the Constituents in Member States to support development of SSE policies and legislation (e.g. Tunisia, South Africa, Costa Rica)
- ▶ Recent requests for support include technical assistance in implementing SSE policies (e.g. Cameroon, Djibouti)

Research and knowledge generation

- ▶ Improving the understanding of the role of cooperatives and the wider SSE in advancing decent work and sustainable development
- ▶ Advancing the international guidelines concerning statistics of cooperatives adopted at the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians for harmonized and comparable data on cooperatives
- ▶ Producing research papers and briefs (e.g. child labour, forced displacement, platform economy, renewable energy, and the creative economy)
- ▶ Dissemination of knowledge through the ILO topical pages on cooperatives and the wider SSE, monthly e-newsletters, videos on cooperatives and the wider SSE on, webinars, blogs, podcasts, interviews and conferences



[Monthly newsletter >](#)



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[Transforming our world: A cooperative 2030 series >](#)



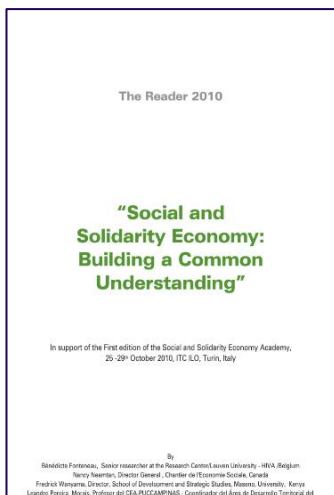
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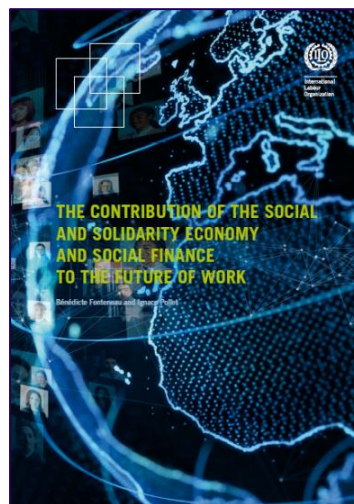
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Select ILO Publications

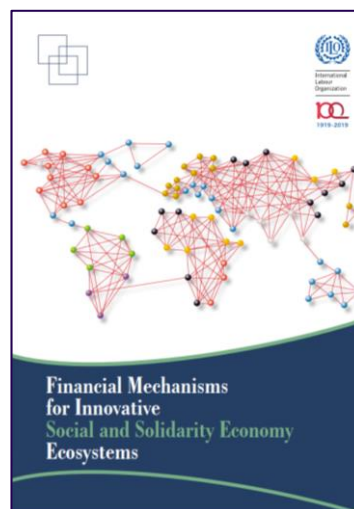
Social and Solidarity Economy: Building a common understanding



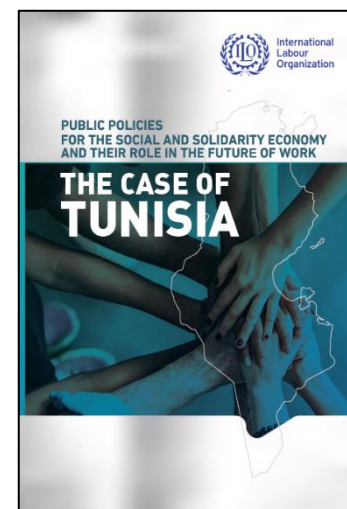
The contribution of ESS and social finance in the Future of Work



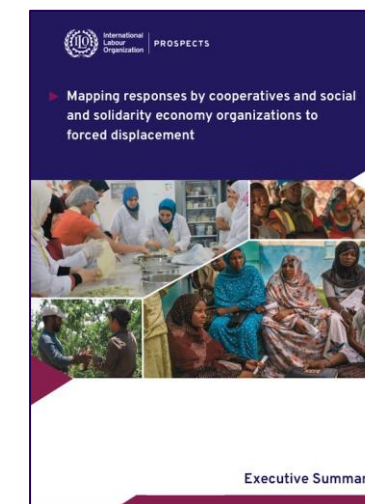
Financial Mechanisms for innovative ecosystems of SSE



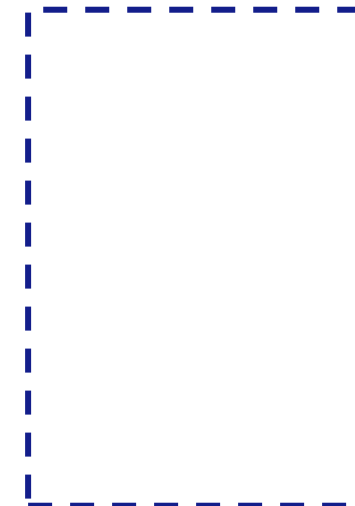
Series of studies on the public policies for SSE



Mapping the responses of cooperatives and SSEOs to forced displacement



Upcoming publication on social innovation in Africa



► Training and capacity building - **Key** ILO tools

Our.Coop
Activity-based training tools for those who
want to understand, create and manage
cooperatives



► Policy dialogue & knowledge platforms

- **SSE Academy**: Brings together practitioners and policymakers from around the world to share experiences, good practices and lessons learned on the SSE (2 editions organized in Morocco, South Africa)
- **SSE Collective Brain**: Knowledge hub of the ILO SSE Academy to facilitate exchange and cooperation beyond the face-to-face interactions during the SSE Academy



► Development Cooperation (DC)

The ILO's DC projects support development of SSE units in advancing decent work and sustainable development.

- Formalization of the informal economy
- Promotion of universal health coverage
- Elimination of child labour and forced labour
- Advancement of youth employment and women economic empowerment
- Creation of income-generation opportunities in conflict/disaster affected communities and promoting peace and social cohesion
- Trade facilitation

Development cooperation: Focus on Africa

Tunisia

Support to youth employment through the SSE and Strengthening of the resilience of women-led SSEOs affected by COVID 19

Sierra Leone

Enhancing, conflict-sensitive, agricultural value chain and entrepreneurship development through cooperatives

Senegal

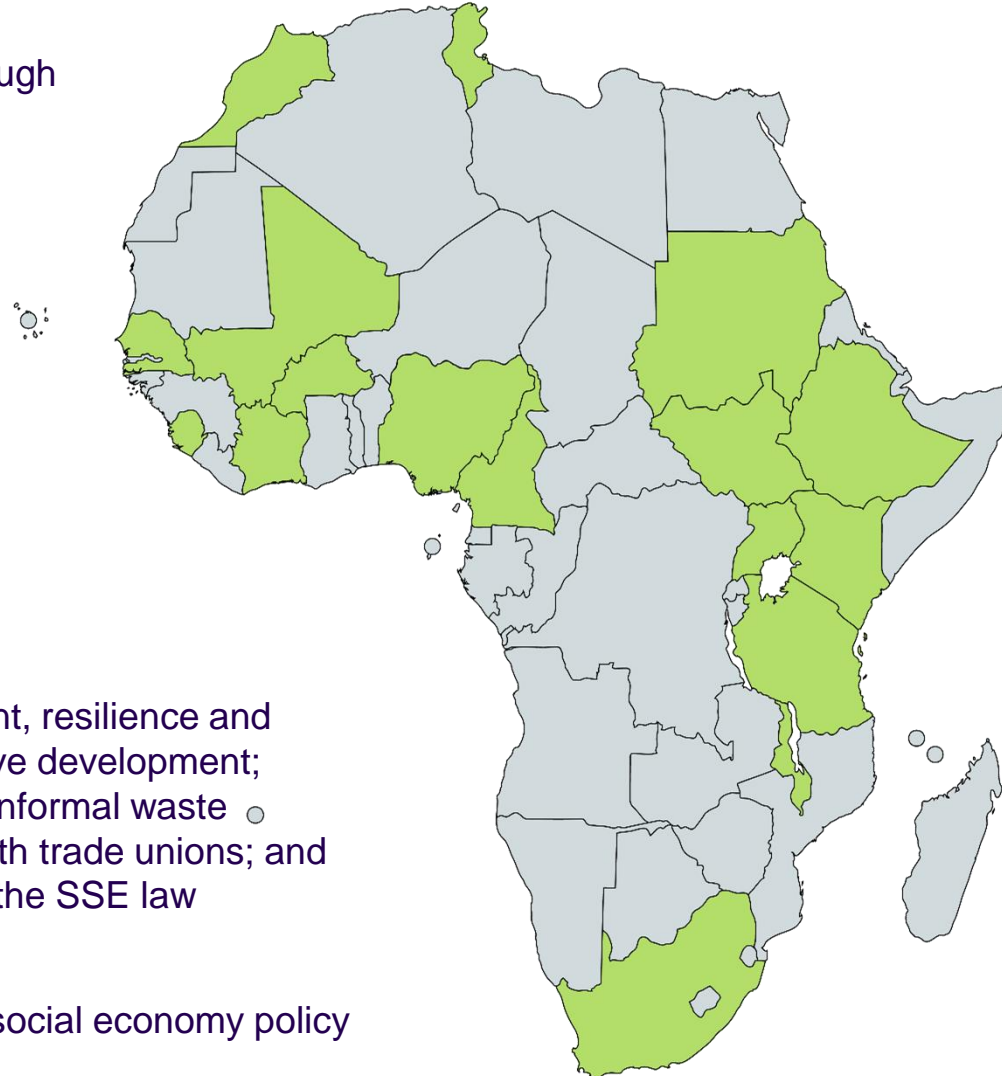
Promotion of cooperatives in the informal waste recycling sector

Cameroon

Promotion of women empowerment, resilience and social cohesion through cooperative development; Promotion of cooperatives in the informal waste recycling sector in collaboration with trade unions; and Support for the implementation of the SSE law

South Africa

Support for the formulation of the social economy policy



Ethiopia

Support for cooperative development in agricultural value chains

South Sudan

Support for rural development through cooperatives

Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia

Support for refugee populations and host communities through cooperative development

- **Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Malawi, Mali and Uganda, Tanzania**
Promoting fundamental principles and rights at work through cooperative development (focus on child labour) in the agricultural and mining sectors: cocoa, tea, coffee, gold panning and cotton
-

Partnerships

UN Task Force on the SSE (UNTFSSSE)

- ▶ The ILO co-founded and currently chairs the UNTFSSSE
- ▶ 18 UN Agencies and the OECD as members and 13 civil society organizations as observers

SSE organizations and research centers

- ▶ SSE umbrella organizations at international (e.g. GSEF, RIPESS) and national level (e.g. JCCU, Legacoop)
- ▶ Research institutions, such as: CIRIEC international; EURICSE; HIVA, EMES International

Cooperative focused partnerships

- ▶ The ICA has a General Consultative Status at the ILO since 1919 and has an MoU signed in 2019 using the Future of Work as a framework
- ▶ The ILO is member of COPAC, a multi-stakeholder partnership between representatives of the cooperative movement

Regional focused partnerships

- ▶ African Union (AU): The ILO has supported the development of a ten year SSE strategy

▶ The SSE in the African Union: The Ten-year Strategy and Implementation Plan (2023 – 2033)

- ▶ Developed between August to December 2021
- ▶ Technically supported by the ILO
- ▶ The SSE Strategy is aligned with:
 - AU 2063
 - AU Social 2063
 - Ouagadougou + 10
 - Abidjan Declaration (2019) on Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa

AFRICAN UNION

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**The Social and Solidarity Economy
(SSE) in the African Union**

**Ten-year SSE Strategy and
Implementation Plan
(2023-2033)**

African Union SSE Strategy Next Steps

- ▶ Strategy was discussed during the Fourth Session of the Specialised Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment (4-8 April)
- ▶ It was agreed that this is an important sector for employment creation and should be supported by legal, programmatic and institutional coordination in Member States.
- ▶ It was agreed to convene a validation workshop for the AU SSE Strategy with Member States and Stakeholder Partners.

27. The social policy themes identified in Social Agenda 2063 signify ample space where the SSE can become operative. This is in addition to possibilities of **combining social and environmental products and services** among the social policy pillars and augmenting service delivery by public and private sector actors. In this regard, the SSE can assist in transitioning vulnerable informal SSE activities to the formal economy with their sustainability anchored in public and private support to the relevant service or product.



Related AU policy instruments with direct bearing on the SSE in Africa

28. The Ouagadougou +10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development (adopted in 2015)¹⁸ outlines six key priority areas (KPAs). Inclusion is inherent in all six KPAs:



leadership, accountability and governance for inclusive economies



employment of women and young people



social protection for productivity and sustainable and inclusive growth



well-functioning and inclusive labour market institutions



labour migration and regional economic integration



partnership and resource mobilisation



In 2019, the South African government facilitated consultations on its national SSE policy – this session was held in Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape province.

¹⁸ African Union Commission. 2015. The Ouagadougou +10 declaration and plan of action on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development. Assembly/AU/Decl. 6 (XXIII), January 2018.

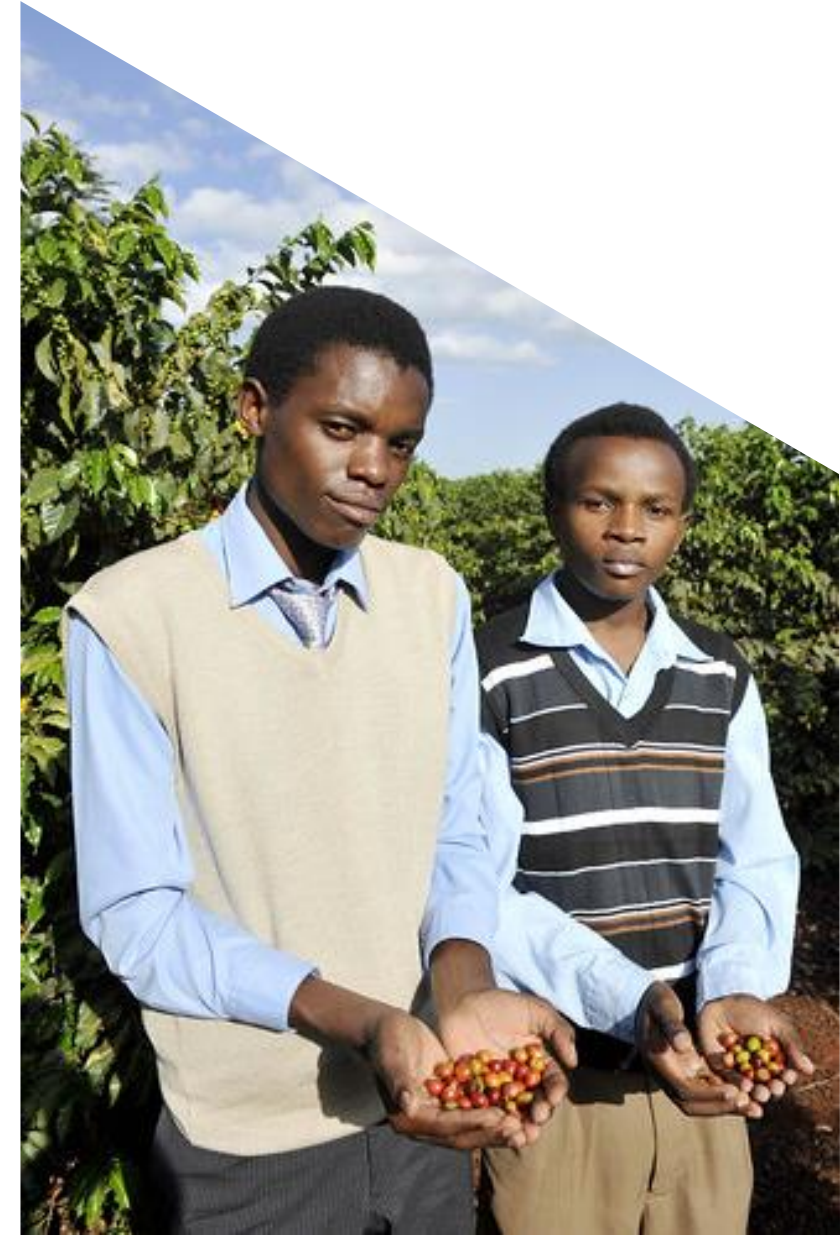
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What are the next steps in the lead up to the general discussion?

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Challenges and Recommendations

- ▶ Despite the growing momentum around the SSE, significant challenges remain regarding data, legislation, support institutions and services
- ▶ A conducive environment for the SSE should be developed through tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers
- ▶ Based on the conclusions of the general discussion, the Office is expected to further fine-tune its services on the SSE in support of its Constituents and in partnership with SSE organizations



How to engage with the general discussion on Decent Work and the SSE

Download and read the report (available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian Bahasa, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish).

Disseminate the report and hold discussions around it in your countries

As ILO constituents or observers, **follow** the ILC general discussion in June 2022 at the ILC



Thank you!

For more information, see:

- ▶ [ILO topical page on cooperatives](#)
- ▶ [ILO topical page on the SSE](#)

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- ▶ [Sign up for ILO's monthly enewsletter on cooperatives and the wider SSE](#)
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