



MANIFESTO FOR A WORLD SYSTEM OF COOPERATION FOR TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

On the occasion of Expo 2015, this initiative is launched by international networks of public, associative and private local development actors. These actors are convinced that the production, commercialization and consumption of food can be the basis for a harmonic and equitable development. In fact, if everyone collaborates, the territories where we live and work can be attractive, welcoming, and enriched through cultural and economic relations with local territories from other countries.

With the strength of the good results they have achieved, the actors and actresses of territorial development invite Governments, International Organizations, Banks, Foundations, Associations and the Private Sector to work together to create a World System of Cooperation for the development of Local Territories. The creation of this system, with several development programmes that could be financed in every country, is one of the most enduring results that Expo could produce.

Each Pavilion at Expo is showcasing its successful experiences, but with this initiative they could collaborate with each other to create a working tool that would remain after Expo Milan 2015 has closed its doors.

WE, the women and men who are the actors of local public administrations, associations and the private sector:

1. **We**, who live and work together in our territories, animate millions of local communities in all countries, valorize our natural, cultural and human resources, and work so that development is more equitable, just, inclusive and sustainable, are ready to contribute to the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. We have participated enthusiastically in Expo 2015 because we recognize that the production, commercialization and consumption of food is the foundation of all economic and social policies in many countries of the world.
2. We note that if the finances invested in policies for development and for international development cooperation are used in ways that are not coherent with the guidelines for aid effectiveness agreed on with the international community, the results desired cannot be achieved. In particular, such investments are unable to adequately combat hunger, poverty, unemployment, social tensions, violence, injustice and environmental degradation.
3. We have participated in the reflections of the international community on the limits of development cooperation and, in particular, are aware of the results of the Rome, Paris, Accra and Busan Forums on the effectiveness of development aid that have critiqued the excessive protagonism of donor governments, the lack of coordination of development interventions, the scarce consideration of national and local governments of countries and the little attention given to the needs and involvement of the very persons that are meant to be “aided”.
4. We share the general opinion that the resources destined for development and development cooperation are used in ways that are not effective or efficient, and we are of the opinion that this happens because such funds:
 - are decided and managed in an overly centralized way that limits the access of local actors to the information and opportunities needed to actively contribute to their development processes and hinders the majority of men and women from expressing their creative and constructive capacities. In particular, they do not sufficiently facilitate consultation processes with the direct protagonists of local development and amongst them, women in particular, unheard holders of indispensable knowledge for the valorization of local economies;
 - are destined to disparate and sectorial projects and programmes (agriculture, industry, health, education, etc.) that are often short-lived (on average three years) and overlap with each other without forming part of a coherent strategy for resolving the problems of

unemployment, poverty and inequality. These are complex problems that, instead, require that different sectors and professions work together strategically;

- are assigned through competitive processes such as calls and tenders; their evaluation procedures often represent bureaucratic barriers and increase fragmentation without ensuring transparency, and contribute to wasting resources and reducing impact.
5. For years, we have been engaged in thousands of positive development experiences at local level that have found effective solutions to many of the problems caused by economic fragmentation, exclusionary dynamics and excessive bureaucracy. They have made the local, organic production of food, its commercialization through effective local value chains and intelligent consumption an occasion for convivial relations, modern tourism and economic and cultural progress.
 6. We consider development to be the process through which human societies try to ensure the satisfaction of the needs for survival, wellbeing and security of all their citizens globally: we are aware that, so far, this process has produced many positive results, but, everywhere, it has also produced exclusion, violence and serious environmental damage. We are able to contribute to the changes in national and global development policies needed to more effectively address the dangers that threaten everyone's future.
 7. We believe that women are fundamental actors of local development, in that their care in managing relationships, consumption and biodiversity, if not discriminated against, helps the territory where they live and work valorize its customs and practices, transforming them into extraordinary opportunities to activate processes of change, generate exchanges and sharing, and new opportunities of enrichment for the entire community;
 8. For years, we have been creating international linkages of territorial actors engaged in innovation and have promoted, for example, networks of organic districts, of slow cities, of communities emblematic of the Mediterranean diet, of local economic development agencies, of the social economy, of the fight against social exclusion, of decentralized cooperation, of natural parklands, of traditional practices in agriculture, of universities linked to their local territory, and many others.
 9. We are the foundation of the functioning of all societies, because our local institutions are closest to people's needs and they help them to make a significant contribution to national wealth. But we do not have the power or the resources that are indispensable to adequately assume our responsibilities in development processes.

Therefore

10. We consider that the creation of a ***World System for Territorial Development*** is necessary, so as to support policies and programmes of *democratic decentralization*, of *active participation of men and women* and a *less fragmented and more rational use of resources* that are invested in development and development cooperation.

11. We conceive the World System also as an international financial instrument to promote and support participatory local development, that is, development *realized jointly by public, associative and private actors in their own territories*.
12. We conceive the World System as an innovative means to contribute effectively to overcoming the current shortfalls of development and international development cooperation because it supports *strategies and plans of participatory local development* that are initiated by local communities, value good and successful experiences and help disseminate them, stimulate change with new ideas and a new mentality, and propose to make healthy and sustainable agricultural and food production a way to build, together, attractive territories and landscapes, everywhere.
13. We are convinced that the direct participation of women and men is an indispensable precondition of democracy and high quality development at all levels, and that this is best realized in territories at the local level, as our experiences demonstrate.
14. We desire that finances from central governments and international organizations dedicated to development and international development cooperation are transferred, when the preconditions exist, to our local administrations that commit to using them for the harmonic and internationalized development of their territories through permanent and transparent dialogue with all the economic and social actors, through local committees for participatory development, territorial pacts, spaces for dialogue between social actors and national and sub-national institutions or other mechanisms for working collectively that actively involve citizens and the governments of their territories.
15. We desire to have the best technical support in all fields from specialized centres, universities and research centres, to help us further develop our capacities to manage the complexity of local and global development processes, including through constructive dialogue based on complementarity with national and supranational structures.
16. We are convinced supporters of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and we are engaged in reducing poverty, hunger, environmental degradation, dangers to health, obstacles to accessing information, education and culture, gender discrimination and all forms of exclusion as well as to valuing our natural heritage, transforming our economies to make them more inclusive, promoting peace, creating transparent institutions in which citizens can place their trust, and to building international development cooperation based on solidarity, mutual respect and reciprocal interest and accountability, as well as the constant search for the common good.
17. We consider our territorial approach to be a proven way to correct the limits of the present sectorial approach and we are proud to demonstrate it through our experiences. In particular, we know how to correct the limitations and problems related to:
 - a. Agricultural and economic policies that don't invest enough in the territory and don't sufficiently valorize organic agriculture, local production and consumption, local natural, social and economic resources, clean energy and the other innovative contributions of our good experiences;
 - b. The phenomena of urbanization, emergencies resulting from natural disasters and the abandon of rural areas, by looking for a new equilibrium between urban and rural development, between time for work and time for life;

- c. The widespread lack of participation and responsibility, by offering many opportunities for dialogue among all the social and economic actors, including those actors rarely listened to, on the concrete things that need to be done to best respond to the needs that people and the community consider as priorities;
 - d. The fragmentation of actions, by making different professions and sectors work together to find solutions and tools that are able to resolve the complex problems of agriculture and development, such as poverty, unemployment, exclusion, discrimination, violence and environmental damage;
 - e. Financial fragmentation, by orienting funding, not to a myriad of individual interventions, but to integrated plans for territorial development in the medium term, in which each sector is funded only if it works in a complementary and synergic way with the others;
 - f. The dispersion of human and economic resources, by concentrating on the priorities identified and discussed with everyone and by making the actions of different actors converge towards these priority objectives for the common good;
 - g. Excessive bureaucracy, by adopting procedures that avoid traditional technical and financial bottlenecks, help those who need it to operate in an effective and transparent manner and adopt rigorous evaluation methods that, instead of aiming to block activities, help them to become more effective and efficient;
 - h. The risk of people's lack of confidence in the political system, by demonstrating that institutions are able to work together with social actors and effectively *belong* to the population.
18. We think it is now time to overcome the separation between ordinary development policies and international development cooperation, and we propose the World System of Cooperation for Territorial Development because we know that the consequences of the actual imbalances of development affect *all countries and the entire population* of the world: poverty, exclusion, violation of rights, violence, and a degraded environment. We consider that the idea of aid from rich countries to poor countries is *obsolete*, because what is needed is to *balance the development and reduce the inequalities that exist in the local realities of all countries of the South and North*. We think it is necessary to remove the causes of the present imbalances, which, everywhere, are to be found principally in the poor administration of resources, in privileges, in aggressive competition for individual interests - even at the cost of the common good, in the dynamics of exclusion and in the incapacity to satisfy the aspiration of every person to equal rights and opportunities. For this reason, the fundamental protagonists of the World System must be, ideally, *all* the local communities of *all* countries, because the negative consequences of development imbalances and inequalities exist, to varying degrees, everywhere, and because these imbalances can only be corrected through solidarity partnerships between local communities, that are supported nationally and internationally.
19. We are fully aware that the creation of the World System has to be accompanied by a profound political and cultural change, based on trust in the capacities of people and local institutions. Our desire is that this change takes place in the ways and with the time that is needed. But we want to begin immediately, with international pilot programmes that could be financed by reconverting part of the resources that are already destined to development and to international cooperation. These programmes can draw on the contribution of many successful experiences and can

progressively build the new operational and financial mechanisms needed for the World System to become fully operational.

20. We wish to use the System and its pilot programmes to help local communities and their public, associative and private actors of the South and North to work in networks to fuel an information and cultural campaign which, based on the good results obtained, serves to further convince politicians and the public opinion that the territorial approach to development effectively helps resolve, at national and global levels, the dramatic social, environmental and migratory problems generated by the current unbalanced models of growth: problems which, for example, are the reasons why hundreds of thousands of people flee from their countries and seek asylum and refuge in other territories of the planet.
21. We think that schools, universities, workplaces, associations and the media should be active players in the cultural campaign for change promoted by the activities of the World System.
22. We want to underline that the resources to create the World System already exist, in that present public finances for Official Development Aid (that amount to over 130 billion dollars a year) could be used better and, at least in part, could be destined to the World System of Cooperation for Territorial Development and its pilot programmes that could begin immediately.

In conclusion, WE, the women and men who are the actors of territorial development, intend to organize an International Group of promoters of the World System of Cooperation for Territorial Development, and invite national and federal Governments, the European Commission, the United Nations, national and international banks, foundations, non-profit associations, and the private sector to participate. We are convinced that this is the best possible conclusion of Expo 2015, because the territorial approach to development is the only one that recognizes and values the strategic role of the production, commercialization and consumption of food and for making it the basis for feeding the planet.