

4° FORO REGIONAL DE

**DESARROLLO  
ECONÓMICO LOCAL  
PARA AMÉRICA LATINA  
Y EL CARIBE**

26-28 agosto 2024

## **Final declaration**

### **4th Regional Forum of Local Economic Development for Latin America and the Caribbean**

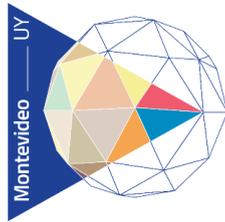
**Montevideo, Uruguay, 28 August 2024**

In the city of Montevideo, Uruguay, we gathered together all the actors involved in local economic development topics, representatives of local governments, workers' and other civil society organisations, intergovernmental organisations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and other agencies and programmes of the system, the private sector, academia, and other interested and interested actors, to share the challenges and opportunities we face in the promotion of inclusive, sustainable and gender-sensitive economic development. We assume this responsibility convinced that only through joint reflection, collaboration and knowledge sharing can we effectively address the complex and multifaceted challenges facing our society in order to promote social justice and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Latin America and the Caribbean has had a long tradition of political and academic debate on development issues dating back more than 70 years. Recently, the adoption of a local perspective has provided new tools for understanding this phenomenon. Recurrent themes in these debates include deep inequality, poverty, labour informality, productive heterogeneity and dependency, among others.

We especially value the fundamental role of local governments in local economic development. Their proximity to the community allows them to better understand the needs and potential of their environment, and their transformation into results for inclusive and equitable development. It underlines the need for a public policy environment that recognises their competencies and provides them with the necessary resources to do so.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to reconsider our local economic development strategies, prioritising people's well-being. Local governments were at the forefront of the response, showing their capacity for innovation and adaptation to meet the needs of the population. This situation showed that it is crucial to prepare for diverse crises, and to implement policies and partnerships that promote equity, sustainability and the comprehensive resilience of our communities in the face of future crises.



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We consider the need to implement innovative and equitable public policies that promote economic growth, reduce inequalities and protect the environment in dialogue with other actors at international, national and local levels. We stress the importance of engaging all stakeholders, including local communities, to ensure that our initiatives are inclusive and reflect the needs and aspirations of the whole population.

The World Forum of Local Economic Development to be held in Seville, Spain, 1-4 April 2025, will take place at a key time and place for the future of development. It is a time to join forces, consolidate our alliances and renew our commitment to building a more just and sustainable world to contribute to a renewed multilateralism in the perspective defined at the Summit of the Future, and in preparation for the second World Summit for Social Development.

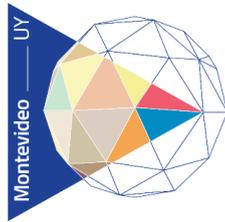
In 2025, also in Seville, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development will take place, ten years after the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which represents an opportunity to define and strengthen the financial mechanisms needed to support the local dimension of development and local finance. It is essential that resources are distributed equitably and that investments are directed towards projects that promote sustainable development and social inclusion. With just over five years to go to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals, we need to take this opportunity to reflect on our achievements and challenges, and to design a way forward, even beyond 2030, that is based on cooperation and solidarity. Together, we can create a lasting positive impact that benefits all present and future generations.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) urge us to leave no one and no territory behind. It is crucial to put people at the centre of development, promoting policies that integrate the whole of government and society in an inclusive and participatory governance system.

Local economic development is a fundamental pillar for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. By strengthening local economies, we promote the creation of decent jobs, empower communities and improve people's quality of life. In addition, local economic development fosters innovation and resilience, which are crucial to address current and future global crises.

Therefore, we reaffirm our commitment to work together to promote inclusive and sustainable local economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean that can contribute to the process of the World Forum of Local Economic Development, and we call for the participation of everyone to promote it.

With this conviction, the participants of the Regional Forum on Local Economic Development for Latin America and the Caribbean:

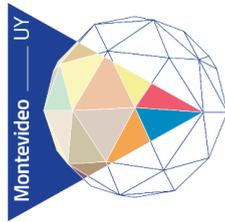


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1. We recognise the importance of promoting local economic development that is sustainable and inclusive of all sectors of society, particularly the most vulnerable people, and we commit to integrate practices that build equity, social justice and environmental protection into all our policies and programmes.
2. We underline the need to upgrade the capacities of local and regional governments to fully engage the people, and to manage economic development effectively, fostering decentralisation and substantive participation, promoting adaptive governance, closer and more responsive to the needs of our communities.
3. We recognise that climate change is one of the major challenges of our time, with profound impacts on economic and social development. It is urgent to adopt measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote just transitions to a green economy by including all actors in a process of social dialogue and protect the most vulnerable populations.
4. We stress the importance of multi-level and multi-stakeholder collaboration as an essential element to address the complex challenges of local economic development, fostering the exchange of knowledge, experiences and solutions, including through South-South, triangular and decentralised cooperation. Only through the joint work of governments, academia, the private sector, social organisations and the population can we generate sustainable and inclusive solutions based on the principle of solidarity.
5. We affirm our commitment to building resilient local economies in the face of natural disasters and the multiple effects of climate change, implementing adaptation and mitigation strategies that strengthen the capacities of our communities to cope with and recover from recurrent shocks and crises.
6. We commit to promote, in particular, the integration of women and youth and their leadership in all local economic development initiatives, and recognise their critical role as drivers of change on the path to sustainable development.
7. We recognise local development agencies as catalysts for sustainable and equitable growth, facilitating coordination between public, private and community actors, promoting development strategies tailored to local needs. We urge the strengthening of support to these agencies, valuing their role in implementing policies that foster innovation, job creation, and economic resilience in communities.
8. We recognise and value the care economy as a fundamental pillar for sustainable development and the transformation of gender relations. Its adequate visibility, positioning in the agenda and redistribution between social spheres and between



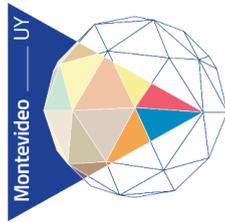
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men and women is key to guaranteeing social wellbeing. Reducing gender gaps and promoting an inclusive environment in which all people, regardless of their gender, can participate equally in economic and social activities is an objective that local economic development embraces. Promoting public policies that support the care economy and recognise unpaid work as part of the social protection framework is essential for building fairer and more sustainable societies.

9. We highlight the key role of the Social and Solidarity Economy and cooperatives in local economic development, being these entities engines of social and economic innovation; capable of addressing local needs in a participatory and inclusive manner. We urge governments and international actors to support these entities, valuing them as relevant to build resilient and equitable local economies, especially in the framework of the International Year of Cooperatives in 2025.
10. We underline the need to invest in education and continuing vocational training to develop the skills and competencies needed in the local workforce, including by promoting technical and vocational training that responds to the demands of the current and future labour market.
11. We recognise the importance of measuring and evaluating the impact of our local economic development policies and programmes and commit to implement information and evaluation systems that allow us to continuously adjust and improve our strategies.
12. We are convinced that human mobility must be seen as an opportunity and a factor for development, which requires integrated and coordinated policies that promote inclusion and social cohesion, and recognise the valuable contributions of migrants to our societies and economies. Local governments must be provided with the necessary resources to address the challenges that exist today in tackling migration. Working with a rights-based perspective for the inclusion and integration of the reference population in receiving territories is fundamental to creating a peaceful, integrated and diverse coexistence.
13. We highlight the promotion of social justice and decent work in public management as a fundamental element to build a social network based on dignity, equity and well-being. The creation of quality jobs, the protection of labour rights and equal opportunities are essential pillars for a prosperous and cohesive society.
14. We emphasise economic-productive integration and complementarity as key to the sustainable development of our regions. Collaboration between local actors allows the transfer of knowledge, technology and resources, strengthening capacities and creating synergies that benefit the whole community.



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15. We recognise the crucial role of strategic innovation and new technologies in economic development, and to promote fair and inclusive governance of digitisation by pursuing and adopting emerging technologies to enhance the sustainability in all its dimensions of our local economies, while ensuring equitable access to these technologies.

As we conclude this Forum, we reaffirm our commitment to these principles and actions, and pledge to work together to transform our local realities. Facing the challenge of closing those 'open veins' and breaking the dynamic in which development seems to be a sea with more castaways than navigators, and promoting economic development that is fair, equitable and resilient for all inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean, facilitating the voices of the territory in multilateral processes that will strengthen the social, inclusive and sustainable dimension of development.