

VI World Forum on Local Economic Development

JUST TRANSITION, DEVELOPMENT FINANCING AND TERRITORIAL SOLUTIONS

Seville, Spain - 1 to 4 April 2025

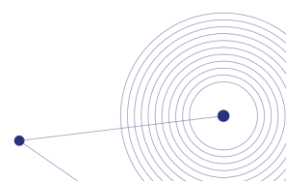
Final Declaration (Reduced version)

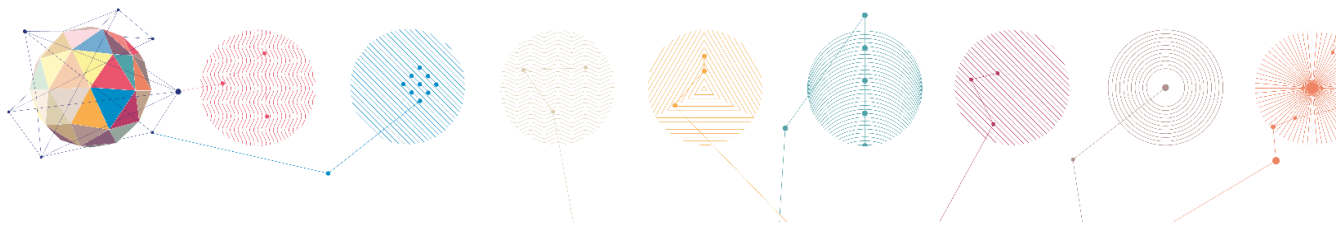
The VI World Forum for Local Economic Development (VI WFLED) was held in Seville, Spain, from 1 to 4 April 2025, four years after the V WFLED, held during the pandemic by COVID-19 and virtually. The Forum returns to Andalusia fourteen years after the holding of the first Forum to renew and strengthen the process that was developed from the territory with the aim of promoting, at a global level, territorial policies for local economic development within the framework of multi-stakeholder and multi-level alliances.

The VI WFLED brought together more than 2,500 actors from over 100 countries linked to local economic development. 500 actors from more than 100 countries linked to local economic development, including representatives and associations of national, regional and local governments; civil society organisations and networks; social and solidarity finance and economy entities (EFSS), agencies and programmes of the United Nations system including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the International Labour Organisation (ILO); development agencies; private sector, knowledge sector, and multi-stakeholder partnerships, among others, under the theme *Just Transition, Financing for Development and Territorial Solutions*.

In a context of polarisation, multiple crises, intersectional discriminations and local and international conflicts, the 6th WFLED once again claims the transformative impact of local economic development in the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The overlap with the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) which will be held from 30 June to 3 July 2025, is a





opportunity to highlight and reclaim once again the role of the territory and its actors in the solutions to the planet's global challenges.

The VI Forum takes place after multiple previous spaces of collective construction and regional forums. It is the result of a process nurtured by thousands of actors in territorial development and subnational local economic development policies.

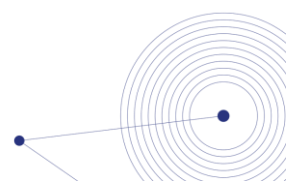
Thematic areas such as infrastructure investment, food security and sovereignty, care, procurement practices, tax incentives, energy transition, ecotourism, circular economy, decent work, public-community and public-private partnerships, as well as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), banking and credit, remittances, peacebuilding and digital transformation were discussed.

In addition, they focused on the needs and challenges of specific populations, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, as well as rural areas, and specific territories such as border areas, small island developing states (SIDS) and intermediate cities.

Held during the International Year of Cooperatives, the Forum recognises the positive impact of cooperatives in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient local economies, in line with this year's theme, "Cooperatives build a better world".

The delegations of the VI WFLED, upon proposal of the International Committee, recognise and agree on the following declaration:

1. We recognise the World Forum for Local Economic Development as a key platform to advance concrete measures to address the challenges posed by the ecological, digital and social transitions. These transformations generate opportunities, but also precariousness and unequal impacts, especially in feminised, informal or vulnerable sectors.





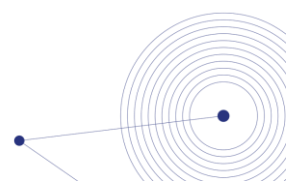
We recognise the role of the Forum in supporting the transition to the formal economy, ensuring that workers have access to labour rights and social protection. We stress the importance of addressing crises caused by conflict and disasters through social and civil dialogue and the inclusion of all actors in decision-making. We reaffirm the urgency of strengthening local and regional public policies for decent employment, innovation, sustainability, universal access to public services and economic and climate resilience from the territories.

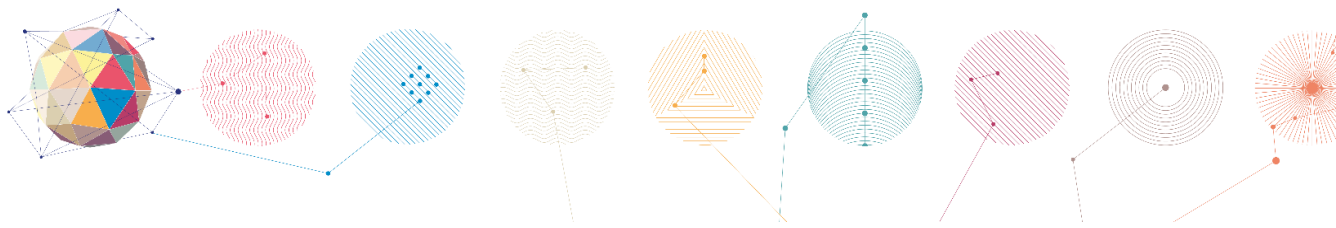
We call for the promotion of social justice, gender equality and inclusion - from an intersectional perspective that recognises the multiple dimensions of inequality and ensures women's active participation - as essential for truly transformative development.

We also encourage the promotion of key economic sectors for a triple just and sustainable transition such as the social and solidarity economy, the green and blue economy, procurement practices, the night economy, the care economy and their interrelationships.

We call on development cooperation actors to decisively support local and regional governments, their competences and funding, as a key element for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in the conviction that only through decentralisation and strict respect for the principle of subsidiarity can the 2030 Agenda be met.

2. We reaffirm the value of the Forum as a space for cooperation between local and regional governments, civil society, the private sector, private investors, public development banks and international organisations to build solutions adapted to each territory. We call for a fair, decentralised and progressive financial architecture for the localisation of financing that guarantees sufficient resources for local economic development and the provision of public services to all populations. This strategy must be based on subsidiarity, co-responsibility and justice.



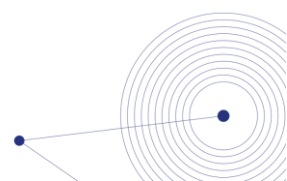


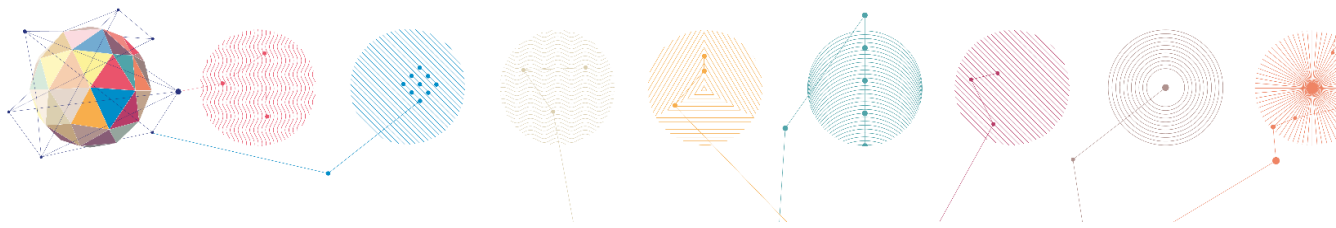
This will make it possible to implement policies that generate well-being, reduce structural inequalities and strengthen local productive systems with a long-term vision.

3. We defend economic models based on territorial development, with policies that strengthen local production, social cohesion and environmental and urban-rural balance. It is urgent to strengthen infrastructures, public services and institutional frameworks that guarantee equitable opportunities, with a key role for intermediate cities. The well-being of people, nature and the planet must be at the heart of economic development, articulating sustainability, gender equality and fair access to resources. The care economy is part of this holistic approach, as one of the pillars for building equitable and sustainable territories. We recognise the positive role of the social and solidarity economy in the development of a care economy.

And for its follow-up, we consider it essential:

1. Further **advance the WFLED process**, strengthening its role in the global agenda and its contribution to current multilateral processes. This momentum must go hand in hand with the strengthening of its governance and the consolidation of a strong and diverse multi-stakeholder partnership, as key elements to position local economic development at the centre of global solutions.
2. Ensure a **stable and permanent WFLED Global Secretariat** to ensure the continuity of the process, facilitate the articulation between actors, accompany the implementation of the commitments made in the different Fora and fully benefit from the contributions of the partners.
3. Enhance the **articulation of the WFLED with national and regional forums on local economic development**, as well as with other strategic international spaces such as the second World Summit on Social Development, among others.



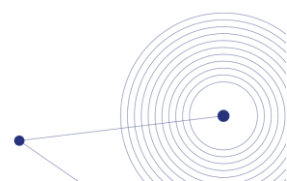


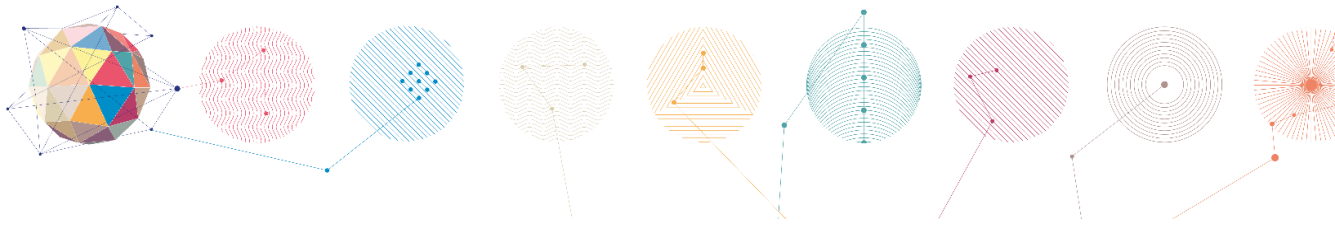
others, to strengthen dialogue and convergence of agendas from the local to the global and vice versa.

4. **Strengthen and enhance the inter-forum work of the WFLED**, promoting spaces for exchange, collaboration and co-creation between actors and organisations linked to local economic development. As a result of the VI WFLED, the structuring of a global collaborative space of agencies/agents and other instruments for the promotion of local economic development is promoted, which, under the WFLED brand, articulates existing networks, agencies and instruments, and facilitates dialogue, exchange, mapping, training and technical cooperation.
5. Initiate the process towards the VII WFLED, opening the nomination process for its organisation and defining a roadmap to ensure the continuity, inclusiveness and impact of the Forum.
6. To raise awareness of the potential of local economic development, which is born in specific places as an endogenous response to unique opportunities and challenges, from the initiatives of committed actors and communities that take risks and connect with each other. To counteract the agglomeration of capital and change the paradigm, the economy and its financing has to be localised, initiated locally, and will serve as a global example. In this sense, any cooperative initiative can not only support and increase capacity, but also give visibility to the diversity of solutions.

Finally, we specifically convey to the FfD4 and other multilateral spaces, the conclusions and declaration of the VI WFLED, as well as the following specific proposals for financing for development:

- a. Explicitly recognise the strategic role of local and regional governments as **key partners and first allies of national states in the mobilisation of funding complementary to national resources** and the concrete dynamisation of the implementation of sustainable and inclusive local economic development.





- b. Establish through the FfD process a **formal intergovernmental space for monitoring and exchange for the localisation of funding** to promote its progress and to inspire and multiply action.
- c. **Ensure fiscal autonomy and decentralisation to local wealth** and generate leverage in the financing sustainable and resilient investments needed to secure the future of populations, particularly in the area of financing the adaptation of territories.
- d. **Encourage the horizontal exchange of experiences and innovative solutions**, as well as the integration and scaling up of social and solidarity finance instruments in existing financing schemes.
- e. **Promote gender-transformative**, care-focused and solidarity-based **solutions** across the entire financing for development agenda, promoting progressive and sustainable financing models, and prioritising public investment in the implementation of care policies and systems as central components of local economic development. In this sense, to expand and contribute to the work of the Global Alliance for Care, as a global multi-stakeholder platform, promoting a change in the global financial architecture that is based on a care society, in which well-being, sustainability of life and social justice are at the heart of development.

The members and partner organisations of the International Executive Committee of the World Forum for Local Economic Development, recognising the complexity and challenges associated with the organisation of the VI WFLED in the current context, express their gratitude to all the institutions and individuals of the National Committee for their commitment and effort, as well as to the people of Andalusia and Seville for their hospitality, which have made the holding of this event possible. Returning to the city where the first Forum was born is an inspiration and a new impulse to the open, collaborative and territorial process of the WFLED: a unique and necessary space.

Seville, Andalusia (Spain), 3 April 2025

