



Platform of the International Network for a Human Economy

Preamble

The **International Network for a Human Economy** brings together local social change actors, persons and organisations, working in their own environment for the « development of the whole person and of all persons », according to the expression of Louis-Joseph Lebet*, whatever be the ethnic, cultural or religious belonging of those they address.

The exchange of experiences and solidarity actions strengthen the capacity of each Network member to realise their objectives. The Network permits:

- exchanging viewpoints among members from various regions in the world;
- enriching the lessons that can be drawn from their local experiences;
- deepening the understanding of the impact of the international environment on their actions.

The **collective reflection on an international scale** gives a more general scope to local experiences. We also believe that it is necessary that this **field expertise** benefits the more global debates regarding development, as well as the conception, implementation and evaluation of public policies.

This text, called “Platform”, defines the values and the approach shared by the persons and the organisations that are members of the Network and what they together work on.

*Louis-Joseph Lebet, economist, Dominican priest, born in Saint-Malo (France) in 1897, died in Paris in 1966, is, together with François Perroux, one of the great thinkers on development issues. He contributed to the elaboration of development programmes in many countries. He participated in the first UNCTAD session and was one of the main writers of the *Populorum Progressio* encyclical.

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Our commitment

Like many others, we are critical of a world economic order that leaves whole populations in extreme poverty, suffering from hunger and malnutrition, without access to basic services; an economic order where the search for financial profits for a minority prevails over the satisfaction of needs of all persons by the work of all; a world where inequality is on the rise, where the needs of future generations are not taken into account; a world where uncertainty and

fear of the other push communities to turn into themselves.

However, we cannot be satisfied with merely denouncing, nor questioning the system. We now need to contribute to the construction of a system that is more just, in the territories where we live. This change must first of all begin with ourselves, with the groups we belong to, and with our own countries.

For human and solidarity-based development

Human development, for the aim of development is not in accumulating wealth but in satisfying the needs of the whole person. That is to say: the development of all human dimensions: *economic* (obtain decent living conditions), *social* (insure equal chances and reduce existing inequalities), *civil* and *political* (respect and promote the rule of law, human rights, participatory democracy), *cultural* (respect local and national cultures, open up to other cultures),

spiritual (adhere to values, transcendental or not, which offer meaning, mobilisation and surpassing the limits of the human adventure, affirm the liberty to believe or not to believe).

Solidarity-based development, because we are co-responsible in giving the possibility for each one to satisfy today his basic needs. Solidarity too with tomorrow's generations that will succeed us for them to be able to inherit a more just world and a viable earth.

For dialogue amongst people from all civilisations

Globalisation multiplies relationships among persons from different cultures and religions. In this intermixing of people, modes of living and convictions, certain individuals and groups are marginalised. Their anguish for the future for themselves and their families are exploited by extremists and fundamentalists in search for power, pushing them to withdrawing into their community and

inciting them to violence. We are convinced that we need to learn how to live harmoniously together and that the best way is to respect the values that assure the cohesion of the different societies. We also need to mobilise the capacities and the talents of those who are marginalised for them to become the actors of their own development.

Since the Second World War, values and principles of universal scope have been defined by the U.N.

In May 1944, the Declaration of Philadelphia, focusing on the key principles embodying the work of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) affirmed, in the terms we relate to : "All human beings, without distinction as to race, religion or sex, have the right to pursue their material progress and spiritual development in freedom and dignity, in all security and with equal chances." Governments proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

and adopted the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). The UN also proclaimed in 1986, the right to development.

These gains are truly important, as they constitute the foundations of a human and solidarity-based development and the dialogue among civilisations. These principles, often ignored if not violated by the same governments that proclaimed them, inspire our action in the territories wherein we are engaged.

Our approach

We think that each one has the expertise on the living conditions of the groups he belongs to and that each one, with others, can contribute to finding solutions to problems encountered.

We give prime importance to actions of persons and organisations attached to a **territory**, to take into account its particular nature, its history and its cultures. It is at this level that conscientisation and collective action can be organized.

The exchanges among different territories, as the Network permits, are important in showing the interdependence between the international and the local problems and for linking the local and the global.

Confronting situations is done firstly among the persons concerned; the intervention of outside experts can broaden or complete the reflection. Indeed, we think it is vital, for the action of change,

not to dispossess the actors concerned: it is precisely this reflection over one's action that brings about change. It means reaffirming that development cannot come about without people — participation is an intrinsic element of development. In using tools like **participatory inquiry, research and action** can thus nourish each other.

Since we are talking about human development, it is important to rely on the process of **conscientisation** of those who suffer injustice and discrimination, as well as of those who ignore them or are even directly or indirectly responsible for them. This process includes information, exchange and permanent education.

It continues into collective action aimed at transforming realities and extends into democratic **construction** which links elective legitimacy and citizens participation.

Objectives of the Network

The Network wishes to be useful to its members and draw from its collective experience lessons to share with all those who have concern for a more humane development. It thus contributes to making policies evolve.

Sharing experiences within the Network

For each one, it means nourishing his experience with that of others, and also, being reassured in his action, knowing that he is not alone and that his work is recognized.

The Network facilitates the exchanges among its members.

There can be moments that are particularly overwhelming or difficult, wherein one of the members of the Network needs the solidarity of others. The Network offers its support in organizing this solidarity, by developing appropriate tools and know-how.

Making experiences speak

The cooperation among the members allows for better analysis of the situation and of the obstacles to a human and solidarity-based development. It enables the members to confront their practice in their varied contexts and to draw out lessons. The Network makes experiences speak.

The Network determines the themes where common work can be conducted, themes around which members do and can analyse their actions.

These last years, these common themes were, for example, "Civil society – public authority relations",

"Dialogue of civilizations and people's development", "Religious diversity, secularism, citizenship and democracy".

This common production is organised by alternating the time devoted by each actor to his own experience and the time for exchange and in-depth reflection on the regional and world level.

The method gives a big place to participatory researches and debates on one's practice that are done during international meetings.

Sharing and communicating the lessons learned from Network activities

The common production of the Network serves also as a basis for dialogue with other entities that act for human and solidarity-based development and for living together harmoniously.

Research bodies that participate in the Network contribute to produce knowledge based on lessons from territorial actions and from the reflections and debates organized by the Network.

The Network diffuses the results of its work through a journal, a website, the publication of reports or books.

Through the intermediary of its members, it addresses issues and recommendations to the decision-makers concerned and presents them as well at international meetings where it participates.

The members of the Network

The Network is composed of organisations and individuals. These are the **members**. The Network has for **partners**, research and training bodies and resource persons.

Member Organisations

The Network is composed of organisations acting in their territory for a human and solidarity-based development and for living together harmoniously, who share the values and the orientation expressed in this platform, practice the approach that it proposes and wish to benefit from the support that the Network can give, and contribute to what it produces.

Their signature to the present platform marks their membership.

Individual members

The Network also welcomes persons engaged in such organisations even if the latter do not participate themselves in the Network. These persons act as relay between their organization and the Network, diffusing information in both directions and facilitating, whenever possible, the convergences in the reflection and action.

It is also their signature to the present platform which marks their membership.

Partners : bodies and resource persons

The Network likewise collaborates with research and training bodies, with researchers or other resource persons sharing its objectives. They contribute to the conceptualization and the diffusion of lessons drawn from the experiences of the Network members, and to the production of knowledge, throwing light on their actions for human and solidarity-based development.

They are invited to sign the present platform to show their commitment in this endeavour.

How is the Network organized?

The Network is run by committees organized on two levels: regional and international.

An organised regional level

For reasons of cultural and geographic proximity, the Network is first organized on a regional level whose form takes into account its implantation in the field.

It is this level which insures communication of the platform, of the journal *Development and Civilisations* and the principal documents in the language or languages spoken within the region. It is on this level that a regular program of exchange and common action-research activities are organized.

One of the members plays a central role on the regional level. He or she participates in the Orientation Committee. He gathers membership signatures for the platform and transmit them to the international secretariat for validation by the Orientation Committee.

An international Orientation Committee

The Network is run by an international Orientation Committee. It is composed at the outset by members of the Board of the association registered under French law "Développement et civilisations – Lebret-Irled", where half come from different regions of the world. The Orientation Committee enlarges itself next through the cooptation of new members, chosen according to their practice, their involvement and adhesion to the principles of the present platform, while being vigilant about regional diversity.

The Orientation Committee relies on the support of an International Secretariat, presently situated in Paris, composed of the full-time salaried or voluntary team, of the association "Développement et Civilisations - Lebret-Irled".

This Secretariat:

- manages the Network's international resources: international meetings, the journal, publications, the website, etc.
- insures the flow of information and exchange as soon as they go beyond a sole regional level
- develops the needed competences to make the Network useful to its members and its publications widely known and transmitted to international bodies.

Financing

The long-lasting activity of the Network demands big financial means.

Members assure, for as much as their resources allow them, the financing of their participation in the Network. Solidarity among members can be organized to finance this participation.

The Orientation Committee of the Network and the Board of the association are co-responsible in looking for lasting modes of financing meant to cover costs of meetings surpassing the framework of the regions, as well as the functioning of the international secretariat.