

Co-Ops, Social and Solidarity Economies a Boon to SDGs

Tuesday, July 04, 2023



Cooperatives and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises CS Simon Chelugui with KUSCCO Limited National Chairman George Magutu, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Cooperatives Patrick Kiburi and KUSCCO Managing Director George Ototo during the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Kenya Union of Savings & Credit Co-operatives at the Mercure Hotel in Nairobi on May 18, 2023.

Billy Ogada | Nation Media Group



By [Isaac K. Nyamongo](#)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

The Co-operative University of Kenya

A recent UN resolution, A/77/L.60, describes the social and solidarity economy (SSE) as “enterprises, organisations and other entities engaged in economic, social and environmental activities which serve the collective and/or general interest, based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic and/or participatory governance, autonomy and independence and the primacy of people and social purpose over capital in the distribution and use of surpluses and/or profits”.

SSE organisations closely align to cooperatives; both contribute significantly to social integration, job creation and the reduction of poverty. The entities are established on a voluntary and open membership basis; are democratically governed; have autonomous management; are entrepreneurial in nature; and reinvest surpluses to carry out sustainable development objectives and services of interest to their members and to the society.

The International Cooperative Alliance president, Ariel Guarco, observed that the historic resolution will help to increase the visibility of the SSE and provide the opportunity for a

focused exchange of knowledge and learning by member states, guiding UN agencies on the entities' priority areas of work and documenting their contributions to sustainable development.

SSE contributes to the achievement and localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly in terms of employment and decent work, especially through worker cooperatives, provision of social services, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, access to affordable finance and local economic development as well as inclusive and sustainable growth.

Recognise their role

As part of the SSE, cooperatives should engage to provide decent work opportunities and empower groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations. They should recognise their role in building community and social cohesion and fostering diversity, solidarity and protection and respect for traditional knowledge and cultures among all communities.

Through SSE entities, cooperatives can play a key role in eliminating poverty and catalysing social transformation, helping to achieve the objective of leaving no one behind and to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs while ensuring social inclusion.

Prof Nyamongo, an anthropologist and Fulbright scholar, is a Deputy Vice-Chancellor at The Co-operative University of Kenya. inyamongo@cuk.ac.ke. @Prof_IKNyamongo

Article available at: [Co-ops, social and solidarity economies a boon to SDGs | Nation](#)