

CLOSING SESSION

CLOSING SESSION OF THE 5th EDITION OF THE CONVERGENCES 2015 WORLD FORUM

[CS]

Salle des Fêtes
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MAIN FINDINGS

In the light of current social, economic and environmental changes, a new approach to development is necessary in order not only to alleviate poverty, but also to reduce inequalities, both in the North and the South, and to do this with respect for environmental imperatives. In order to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a convergence of actors and actions is necessary, given the operational complementarity among all stakeholders: civil society, NGOs, politicians and businesses. Local governments also play an important role, not only in alleviating poverty and responding to local challenges, but also on the national and international level. Indeed, local regions are at the heart of development issues. Finally, in order to ensure this convergence in the long term, a political system should be put in place which does not contribute to exclusion and which also doubles up as an inclusive economic model. Civil society has an important role to play in helping the current setup evolve in this direction.

SPEAKERS

Jean-Marc Borello

General Delegate, Groupe SOS / Chairman, Mouves
/ Vice-Chairman, Convergences 2015

Pascal Canfin

Minister delegate for Development, France

Bertrand Gallet

Managing Director, Cités Unies France

Anne Hidalgo

First Deputy to the Mayor of Paris

Jean-Luc Perron

Vice-Chairman, Convergences 2015 / General
Manager, Grameen Crédit Agricole Microfinance
Foundation

Frédéric Roussel

Co-founder, ACTED / Founder, Convergences 2015

Jean-Louis Vielajus

Chairman, Coordination SUD

MODERATOR

Jean-Michel Severino

Chairman, Convergences 2015 / CEO, Investisseurs
& Partenaires

SUMMARY OF INTERVENTIONS

Anne Hidalgo greets all the stakeholders who have taken part in the Convergences 2015 World Forum, and highlights the vitality of the solidarity-based economy fabric within the city of Paris, which seeks to place human beings, solidarity and the promotion of development at the heart of their projects. With several thousand participants, the Forum constitutes a major gathering for combating poverty around the world. Paris is also committed to this fight as a member of a number of international city networks, such as United Cities and Local Governments, which allows it to discuss the Millennium Development Goals with a number of different cities around the world. As a matter of fact, decentralised cooperation has an important role to play in fighting against poverty. This is why Paris is involved in the international fight against AIDS, water management, promoting education and international solidarity. Innovation carried out abroad and at a local level can and should be replicated and spread further afield, particularly if it contributes to solving certain problems which are a consequence of the current crisis. Local governments therefore have a role to play in responding to challenges that arise at all levels, be they local, national or international.

Jean-Louis Vielajus welcomes the dynamic that the Convergences 2015 initiative represents, with more than 4000 registered participants. The Forum allows all change stakeholders to come together in order to work for international cooperation. Given the fact that all stakeholders share operational complementarity, an immediate convergence should be put into implementation. It is through the mobilisation of all that change in local areas will be achieved both in the North and South. Convergence also has to be achieved for 2015, in order to ensure that what follows the MDGs is effective and relevant, and that poverty continues to be reduced around the world. In his recent publication, François Bourguignon observes that although poverty has been pushed back since the MDGs came into being, globalisation has also accentuated inequalities both within and between countries, and reducing inequalities requires the mobilisation of all actors. The Sustainable Development Goals must also be taken into account in doing this and the relationships between economic,

environmental and social aspects must be invented anew. Regulations will have to be put in place in order to reach the development goals, and new forms of funding for development will have to be brought into being along with a broad international taxation system. With this backdrop in mind, Convergences 2015 is an arena for proposals.

Bertrand Gallet underscores the potential of local collectivities in the social economy field and explains that United Cities and Local Governments brings together collectivities that work on international action. As well as their local influence, local authorities have an influence on the macroeconomic level. Firstly, democratic governance allows the responsibility of political actors in both the North and South to be placed on a level playing field. Furthermore, the social, economic and political rights of individuals, which are absent from the MDGs, can rightly be ensured by local administration. Finally, the MDGs were defined using a top-down approach, with mandatory results without indications on methods to achieve them, particularly regarding the involvement of affected populations. Also, national averages conceal local inequalities. However, local authorities represent an unchanging constant, a basis from which to rethink development issues. Evidently, local bodies cannot solve all the questions that arise, and many issues are to be dealt with nationally. As a result of this not being the case in Madagascar, a step back in progress on many development indicators has been seen there, despite the presence of many NGOs with many means at their disposal. Solar panels will never replace national energy planning. Nonetheless, local authorities do have a role in development, particularly in cases of rampant urbanisation, which requires true multidisciplinary political supervision, and therefore local areas must be governed by elected political officials who are accountable for their actions. The Convergences 2015 platform, which highlights the lack of opposition put forward by civil society, the political arena, NGOs and businesses, bears testimony to the common desire to reflect upon complex issues by bringing all stakeholders together around the same table.

Jean-Marc Borello explains that economies should converge on several different levels. Firstly, stakeholders should converge in reconciling a certain number of concepts that have traditionally been opposed. For example, economic efficiency should be

made to serve the common interest. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that economic growth is not always accompanied by development, but to the contrary, it can lead to inequalities being deepened further. The French Social Entrepreneurs' Movement (Mouves) seeks to work in this way for the common good. Furthermore, common rights and the fight against exclusion should be made to converge. Poverty has become more widespread in France. Given this backdrop, the French Prime Minister announced that a conference is to take place in December 2012 on this topic area, bringing together NGOs and political representatives in order to draw up proposals for alleviating poverty and instability. Moreover, on 20 September 2012, 50 million euros were set aside for the homeless. On a broader level, a political system should be set up which does not lead to exclusion and an inclusive economic model should be created. Access to health and education is also an important matter in working for the common interest.

The Deputy Minister for Development, **Pascal Canfin**, explains that seeking convergence between the MDGs and the Sustainable Development Goals which came out of the Rio+20 Summit (SDGs) is one of the challenges of his term. The current challenge is that on the one hand, 1.3 billion human beings have to be lifted from extreme poverty, while on the other hand, 9 million human beings have to live in a sustainable way on a planet with finite resources. For the minister, sustainable development is not a luxury for rich countries but a necessary condition in preventing a terrible slip backwards in terms of development in countries in the Global South. Already today, the first victims of climate change are the most impoverished and vulnerable in the world. In order to progress on this agenda, the minister believes that firstly, work should be based around actors who bring about change in the least developed countries. The minister concludes his intervention by calling to mind the fact that development policies should be thought out by going beyond simply providing public subsidies for development. The minister cites the example of financial transparency and country-by-country reporting as measures which could significantly contribute to development.

Jean-Luc Perron, a stakeholder in microfinance and the solidarity-based economy, explains that the ambition of

Convergences 2015 is to open itself up to all actors, going beyond microfinance and social entrepreneurship in the Global South and in France, the sectors they sprouted from. This enlargement is addressed to all development actors, whether they come from NGOs or universities, Europe or anywhere else in the world. With this in mind, the European Social Business Initiative, led by Michel Barnier, must be welcomed; Convergences 2015 encourages the creation of European Social Entrepreneurship Funds, which aim to channel solidarity-based investment towards social businesses. Finally, Jean-Luc Perron announces that the Global Appeal for Responsible Microfinance is set to replace the Paris Appeal for Responsible Microfinance, which he presented a year ago at this very podium, and which has already mobilised more than 500 organisations and well-known figures. The Global Appeal updates and completes the Paris Appeal and has received support from the eight main microfinance networks based in the United States.

Frédéric Roussel concludes by noting that since 2008, there have been three major challenges that stand out ever more glaringly: firstly, the fruits of global growth can no longer be used to favour poverty alleviation; secondly, the limits on natural resources put man at risk; thirdly, social protection systems are being weakened and are bereft of inclusivity. This situation urgently calls for a renewed economic model, which will have to tackle the central question of how to grow with limited natural resources. Therefore, the new development goals will have to take into account this observation in addition to the quantitative aspects. Even though international experts have a role to play, civil society remains the main actor of change. As a matter of fact, man is already at the centre of the co-construction of the common good, and this will allow for a transition from a situation in which one is forced to be subjected to globalisation to one in which globalisation and trade-offs are brought under control. Experiences and innovation should be made to converge in order for politicians to make the right decisions. The New Paris Appeal fits into this framework for the future millennium objectives; ones which will seek to strive towards sustainable and equitable development.

REPORTER

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- **The Global Appeal for Responsible Microfinance :**
www.convergences2015.org/Content/biblio/Global%20Appeal%20EN%20final.pdf
- **François Bourguignon. 2012. *La mondialisation de l'inégalité*, Seuil-La République des idées. 112 pages.**
- **New Paris Appeal for the future millennium goals, aiming at a sustainable and equitable development :**
www.convergences2015.org/Content/biblio/New%20Paris%20Appeal%20ENG.pdf