



## “Peace Meetings”

"Interdependence and Shared Prosperity: Crisis and Opportunities for a Fair and Sustainable Economy"

ZOOM, Italy, July 2, 2020

By UPF and WFWP Italy

The 4th webinar of the series "PEACE MEETINGS" organized by UPF Italia with the collaboration of WFWP Italia and IAED, was followed with interest by 200 live participants plus other participants on live streaming on the facebook page UPF Italia and on the channel "ECO dei PALAZZI" that broadcasts within the institutional sites of the Chamber and Senate. On the first day of registration on the UPF Italia facebook page, 500 views were reached. The main theme of the meeting was "Interdependence and Shared Prosperity: Crisis and Opportunities for a Fair and Sustainable Economy".

The speakers were: Dr. Marco Ricceri (Secretary General EURISPES) - Elisabetta Palmisano (Head of Press Office and Institutional Reports TECNOPOLO) - Emanuela Reale (Director IRCRES- CNR Research Institute on Economic/Sustainable Growth) Prof. Stefano Bartolini (Professor of Political Economy and Social Economics University of Siena).

The meeting was presented by Gabriella Mieli; greetings and introduction to the theme were given by Elisabetta Nistri, president of WFWP as co-sponsor; Carlo Zonato president of UPF Italia moderated the meeting; Franco Ravaglioli Secretary General UPF Italia introduced the questions & answers session while the technical and directing aspect was conducted by Giorgio Gasperoni, director in charge of Voci di Pace (the quarterly magazine of UPF and WFWP).

Some significant passages of the speeches:

**Dr. Marco Ricceri:** In September last year, the United Nations published its four-yearly report on sustainable development, issuing a precise warning: "if we do not accelerate this process of sustainable development, we risk irreversible damage to our global

system". A very strong warning for decision-makers in both the public and private spheres. The coronavirus crisis has highlighted the fragility of the current development model. In the coming months, it is widely believed that we may face considerable difficulties given the highly depressed situation we are facing. A second concept is the term 'sustainable', which means a growth model that avoids breaking points with respect to possible social, environmental or economic imbalances. We therefore need a balanced vision of progress. The problem is that these warnings or possible imbalances are shared and confirmed by all the member states in moments of international sharing; in reality, however, we find continuous conflicts, contrasts and wars. It is therefore necessary to shift the focus and strategies to what unites rather than what divides. A further element is contained in a document, again from the UN, which asks how the model of globalisation will develop. Is it a process that will continue or regress? This is because two contrasting phenomena are consolidating: on the one hand, tensions and conflicts animated by sovereignty, and on the other, a series of collaborative and cooperative modes. From this point of view, Associations and Governments should decisively promote towards a cooperation perspective also involving public opinion. The same phenomenon of the coronavirus has determined on the one hand closures and blockages but in the situation of closure people have largely sought new forms of connection, cooperation, work and exchange. In any case, the concept of sustainability requires an "adequate and balanced vision" with respect to the three fundamental factors of development, i.e. economic, social and environmental, in a logic of integrated vision and not in separate compartments. It is necessary to prepare companies for this perspective by encouraging them towards an integrated budgetary logic that takes these three factors into account. In addition, it is necessary to raise awareness of the intervention of governments for a programming of incentives and

support, but directed more towards a qualitative development than a quantitative development.

**Dr. Elisabetta Palmisano:** Within the Tecnopolo, I am in contact with a reality of about 140 companies including those in the agri-food area. From the data of the chamber of commerce it is clear that from the beginning of the Covid until about October unfortunately 35,000 companies will close. This depends on two basic aspects: the first that if after two months of closure a company is forced to close, it means that it does not have a serious and prudent budget policy, the other that it relies too much on bank loans without capitalizing more solidly on its own means. Another phenomenon found was "smart working" which, despite the resumption of activities, is continuing thanks to government regulations. However, this aspect has forced the closure of many other induced activities such as bars, diners, etc. whose activity revolved around these industrial or technological poles.

Unfortunately, certain declared government commitments are still not operational (redundancy fund). There is a need to provide companies with advisory support to train and prepare them more adequately for crisis situations. In any case, there is a strong need for financial support so that they can move forward because the situation is very critical.

**Dr. Emanuela Reale:** The pandemic is making us experience effects that I would define as disruptive both for health first of all, but then for the economic but also psychological consequences that follow. As far as the economic aspects are concerned, we are witnessing a growth that has been stuck between a strong reduction in GDP and heavy job losses, as well as a financial liquidity emergency. There is less talk of the social effects with the closure of schools, work at home, etc. as well as psychological effects such as sleep disorders, inability to go out and proactively resume their commitments, or phenomena of anxiety and depression up to more extreme situations such as the intensification of domestic violence induced by confinement. These phenomena will probably produce their effects more in the medium/long term. In this worrying scenario, however, a series of "new awareness" are emerging that

we are recording in our research work. The first is that the awareness of aiming at a sustainable development model is emerging in a more decisive way; another is that it is a matter of acquiring more skills in the use of digital technology but that it requires a technological leap forward as a country and a more adequate degree of training. The third awareness is the most urgent need to have data in a rapid or even immediate way to be able to manage unexpected phenomena; at the same time it brings out the need for transparency and reliability of the data itself linked to the quality of information in the broad sense. Like Italy, we are lagging far behind the investments linked to digital development. A final note about smart-working that, if started by necessity in this phase, shows opportunities for future use with various advantages if well organized. Ultimately we should not waste this "momentum" of greater awareness to reset a new system of "welfare" and sustainable development.

**Prof. Stefano Bartolini:** Congratulations on the choice of a fully appropriate theme. The Covid has triggered changes that I can certainly define as epochal in scope. In recent decades we have experienced a utopia (neo-liberalism) according to which development was guaranteed by the strengthening of the private economy which also becomes a guarantor of good social functioning. In this dimension, the public sector is of limited importance. Covid, however, showed us without a shadow of a doubt that collective action, of public and therefore common good to be safeguarded, is absolutely vital. In this sense, however, there is a fundamental problem that unfortunately affects millions of people who think that the Covid problem does not exist, that it is not dangerous; this important mass of people is perhaps underestimating itself, but unfortunately their approach risks being "anti-system" and braking with respect to the opportunity to take now for a concrete change of system. In order to avoid this risk we must present real, concrete proposals for system change because this clearly does not work. Therefore, concrete, reasonable and feasible proposals to change things are urgently needed.