

The voice of Maria Dolens

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE PEACE BELL FOUNDATION OF ROVERETO

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Goal 8 of the Un 2030 Agenda

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



WORK - Mixed Technique
Nicla Ferrari - Italy

*On display until 5 October
as part of the «Human
Rights?» exhibition on the
Foundation premises.*

This textile work originates from the sack passing through lace to then arrive at jeans, today an icon of casual fashion. The production of jeans – developed in the poorest countries – pushes towards increasingly lower production costs to the detriment of the environment and the rights of workers.



A multidisciplinary approach

Things are almost always more complex than they seem. Not even almost but basically just always. Trying to achieve the goals set by the United Nations 2030 Agenda is no mean feat and it cannot be up to our foundation to complete it. Nevertheless, it is a duty for a foundation such as ours, which

holds special consultative status at the UN, to reflect on the issues raised by this organisation, highlighting, as in this case, the deep relationships that exist between elements that may appear distant.

To be continued on page 12...

The seminar

Thinking back to the days immediately preceding the Round Table of talks which we wish to present, albeit in summary, the first feeling is that of satisfaction at being able to conclude a much desired initiative which in some moments seemed impossible to accomplish. The pandemic and the restrictions that have duly followed have made "face to face" meetings ever more complicated, but this project justified a particular determination due to the need we felt to offer a multidisciplinary reflection on a central theme such as that of Goal 8 of

the United Nations 2030 Agenda. In addition to the speakers who guaranteed a high professional level, special thanks go to Achille Spinelli, Councillor for Economic Development, Research and Labour of the Province of Trento and to Giulia Robol, Deputy Mayor of Rovereto who wished to participate in the meeting as a gesture of their closeness and support to the activity of Maria Dolens.

Reggente Marco Marsilli,
Foundation President



ADALGISO AMENDOLA

End poverty

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) was adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action, with two ambitious missions: to end poverty and “achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions - economic, social and environmental - in a balanced and interconnected way”.

The concept of sustainable development to which the 2030 Agenda refers is a process aimed at achieving the objectives of improving the overall quality of life of present generations without compromising the overall quality of life of future generations. For this condition to be met, it is essential to ensure an adequate level of intergenerational equity concerning access to resources (reproducible and non-reproducible) and opportunities. This challenge is seemingly utopian but is certainly exciting, difficult and very courageous.

A particularly qualifying element of the strategy adopted by the UN General Assembly is that this challenge is addressed by explicitly placing people at the center of attention. A very clear reference to the notion of human development originally proposed by Amartya Sen and endorsed by the United Nations Development Program (Undp).

Human development, on the assumption that people are the true wealth of nations, consists in creating an environment in which everyone may realize their full potential and lead a productive and creative life in accordance with their needs and interests.

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A challenge that may appear utopian, but which is certainly exciting and very courageous

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Consistent with this approach, therefore centered on the binomial human and sustainable development, the 17 SDGs prompt a “supremely ambitious and transformative” vision, as stated in the Introduction to the UN Declaration. These SDGs further divided into 169 targets, are strongly interconnected and as a whole they balance, to varying degrees and proportions, the three main aspects of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.



Goal 8, which we deal with, mainly but not exclusively, concerns the economic element of “human and sustainable development”. It outlines a multi-objective mission, aimed at achieving three fundamental strategic results: (I) establishing higher growth rates, especially in less developed countries, (II) creating employment, focusing mainly on increasing productivity, (III) guaranteeing decent working conditions for all.

Four of the 12 targets pertaining to Goal 8 refer to the aim of encouraging “lasting, inclusive and sustainable economic growth”, directed principally towards intervention, also structural, which would operate in terms of supply: (I) increase productivity by focusing on innovation and diversification of production, (II) make banking, insurance and financial services more efficient and inclusive, (III) support the expansion of trade in developing countries, (IV) intervene on the structure of production and consumption in order to contain the trade-off between growth and environmental protection. However, there is a lack of: (I) adequate attention to policies to support domestic demand, which could be supported by infrastructure investment programs or expansion of public spending; (II) sufficient attention to a more balanced distribution of income, possibly pursued through the tax lever.

As regards the intention to create “abundant and productive employment”, the basic strategy is to focus above all on the link between growth and employment, with perhaps I might add too little attention given to active labour policies, whose aims should be precisely those of increasing the number of jobs in relation to growth. Among the four targets referring to this end, we note in particular that of “reducing the percentage of young people unemployed and not involved in any study or training cycle by 2030” (the so-called NEETs). However, the most appropriate strategies necessary to achieve this goal - investment in education and training to improve the quality and availability of the human capital of young people - are not indicated here but are instead defined within Goal 4 (“Providing quality, fair and inclusive education, and learning opportunities for all »).

The goal of providing decent work is based on three objectives: (I) “by 2030, guarantee abundant, productive and decent employment, ensuring equal pay and working conditions for all” (8.5), (II) to end, in the world “forced labour and human trafficking, and by 2025 child labour in all its forms” (8.7); (III) protect “workers’ rights and promote safe working environments for all” (8.8). A strategy which, as we can see, is realistic and courageous but which however, does not take into account the need to combat undeclared labour, which constitutes a structural factor of precariousness of workers the world over.

With regard to the degree of accomplishment regarding the goals of the 2030 Agenda, several periodic monitoring reports have been developed in recent years. Examples are: the UN Sustainable Development Goals Report (2018); on a regional level the report on *Sustainable Development in the European Union - Overview of Progress towards the SDGs in an EU Context* (Eurostat); the *Sustainable Development Report*, (Cambridge University Press).

The data from the Sustainable Development Report shows that overall the Covid-19 pandemic has marked a significant setback. In fact, in 2020, for the first time since 2015, the global index that measures the degree of performance relative to the SDGs decreased in value compared to the previous year, largely due to an increase in the rate of poverty together with unemployment.



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Human development consists in creating an environment where everyone may realize their full potential

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Unfortunately, Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) is among those goals for which results achieved worldwide have been less than satisfactory, with very slight progress of just 0.8 percentage points until 2019. Furthermore, the effects of the pandemic have slowed down growth enormously with a strong negative impact on the labour market, creating the conditions for the most dramatic increase in global unemployment since the Second World War. This increase is affecting and will affect, in particular, self-employed workers, day workers and those employed in the sectors most exposed to restriction policies, unfortunately significantly compromising the prospects of “abundant, productive and decent employment for all”

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, published by the UN in 2021, offers more detailed information on this. The annual growth rate of real GDP per capita between 2015 and 2019 remained around 2% in industrialized countries and just over 4% in less developed countries. In 2020, due to the pandemic, there is a reduction of more than 4% globally, with a probable recovery of 4.5% in 2021. An overall figure that is very far from the expected goal of a constant growth in real GDP of at least 7% in the less developed countries indicated in the 2030 Agenda.

In 2020, the pandemic had a devastating impact on global unemployment, which in several areas should have reached an all-time high as a result of the policies adopted. The reduction in working hours was 14% in the second quarter of 2020, equivalent to the working hours of around 400 million full-time workers. Finally, despite some improvements in some countries, the prospect of guaranteeing decent work for all still seems a long way off. With reference, for example to occupational safety, in 9 of the 71 countries with available data, more than 10 work-related fatalities have been recorded for every 100,000 workers since 2010. The same data shows that migrants are exposed to more risks and dangers at work.

Adalgiso Amendola, University of Salerno

ELENA DUNDOVICH

Sustainable development and gender equality

Within the Agenda for Sustainable Development, among the 17 goals to be achieved by 2030, Goal 5 is focused on “achieving gender equality” while Goal 10 is specific to “reducing inequalities”.

The first question that naturally arises is what unites the concept of sustainable development with that of gender equality and the reduction of inequalities. The intertwining lies in the fact that sustainable development is not just any form of economic development but must be economic development that is fair. From a cultural point of view, this is a relatively new idea: for the first time, with the 2030 Agenda to be precise, the principle of interdependence between economic and ethical elements is established, in a perspective that recognizes the close relationship between the first - that is, the world of facts - and the second - that is, the world of values.

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The existence of this relationship was certainly not unknown before 2015, but the principle has since been indicated as one of the main drivers of action within the international community. A sustainable society is therefore one in which traditional economic objectives, such as the promotion of productive activities, increase in employment, wages, etc. exist alongside those of an ethical nature, that is, social justice, poverty reduction made possible through inclusiveness and the value of differences and equal opportunities between genders.

A second equally legitimate question is how close or far we really are to gender equality today. The answer is certainly not encouraging, neither globally nor regionally. Given the current situation, it is estimated that, proceeding at the current pace, it would take 135.6 years to bridge the gender gap worldwide even if, of course, the situation varies significantly from country to country. Although no country has yet achieved this parity, some prove to be more virtuous than others: Iceland and Finland, for example, have covered 85% of their gap and seven others - Lithuania, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Rwanda and Ireland - are around the 80% mark. Again on a global level, the situation worsens as one ascends to senior professional roles: of the 156 countries examined, women represent only 26.1% of approximately 35,500 parliamentary positions and only 22.6% of around 3,400 ministers worldwide. In 81 countries there has never been a female head of state. At this rate, the World Economic Forum calculates that it will take 145.5 years to close the gap at the highest professional levels.



If we deal more specifically with the European Union, the differences in and between genders persist and in some domains are even greater than ten years ago. With an average score of 67.9 (regarding gender equality) the EU is still far from achieving complete parity. Also here the differences that exist between each country must be taken into consideration.

Consequently, the third question that arises spontaneously is, “What is the situation in our country?” but here too the data is far from positive, especially since the emergence of the pandemic that has highlighted already existing criticalities. Despite the numerous steps forward made globally, Italian women have much more difficulty than men in accessing the world of work, receiving salaries consistent with their skills and in reaching top positions in the professional field. If, on a global level, Iceland, Norway, Finland and Sweden hold the top positions, Italy is in 76th place with a score of 0.707 between Thailand and Suriname losing, among other things in 2021, 6 positions compared to the

previous year although this was mainly due to the pandemic. In terms of wage parity, we are in 125th place among the 156 countries examined. The low employment levels of Italian women correspond to the difficulty in managing time and the double role of breadwinner and parent. Their full-time equivalent employment rate is 31%, their average monthly pay is nearly a fifth lower than that of men whereby women earn an average of 18% less. According to the National Labour Inspectorate, 24,618 women resigned in 2018 in order to provide for their children. An exorbitant number of women workers forced to resign as a result of the high costs of pre-school care, the almost total absence of welfare services and the lengthening of professional life which has made the involvement of grandparents in childcare difficult. What makes this picture even more unforgiving is the comparison with the number of men forced to resign in the same period of time: 7,859 resigning fathers, of which only 2,250 were motivated by family and not strictly professional reasons.



Turin, mural by Camilla Falsini dedicated to Christine de Pizan, born in 1364, poetess, writer and feminist philosopher, is recognized in Europe as the first professional female writer

Also on a European level, Italy is one of the countries where gender disparity seems to have a more widespread impact. The data collected by Eurostat (European Statistical Office) demonstrates that before the pandemic, in 2019, at EU level, female employment had stood at 67.3%. At the top of the ranking, the results of Iceland and Sweden shone, with 83% and 79.7% respectively of the female population between 20 and 64 years active in the world of work. The last position was occupied by Greece, with a percentage of female workers equal to 51.3%, slightly above Italy, with a female employment rate of 53.8%. At the bottom of the ranking were also Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and North Macedonia.

The situation is all the more remarkable if we consider the excellent scholastic results obtained by the female component of the Italian population. An ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics) report on education levels and employment figures in 2019 made it possible to shed light on the characteristics of the Italian school population. The data highlighted a contradiction that indicates how discrimination is a criticality determined by deep endogenous causes. In fact, on closer inspection women in Italy are more educated than men: 64.5% of them have a high school diploma compared to 59.8% of men while 22.4% of the female population of working age have a degree compared to only 16.8% of the male population. However, by moving the magnifying glass on employment returns, a clear reversal of the trend can be seen. 56.1% of women work compared to 76.8% of men, although the occupational disadvantage is reduced as the level of education increases. Therefore, women with lower educational qualifications would suffer the most adverse effects of gender discrimination. In any case, the presence of women still decreases as the hierarchical level increases. Istat analyses therefore highlight both horizontal and vertical discrimination in the labour market.

With the pandemic, the situation has clearly worsened since Covid has amplified the asymmetry existing between men and women, who have found them-

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selves having to manage remote work in family situations with the burden often on their shoulders. Istat data leaves no room for doubt: in December 2020, of 101,000 layoffs, 99,000 involved women, 98%. This data which is already dramatic, takes on an even more emblematic value taking into consideration those relative to the whole of 2020: of the 444,000 fewer employed persons registered in Italy throughout 2020, 70% are in fact made up of women. And here we have an image of a country that continues to deal with the endemic scourge of gender discrimination. The problems therefore, were already present and Covid-19 has made them even more evident: victims of ancient stereotypes and a still strongly sexist conception of society, Italian women seem to be relegated to jobs characterized by low salary levels and ridiculous contractual protection regardless of education levels. It is evident, then, how the high rate of female unemployment generated by the pandemic is the result of problems that go well beyond the health emergency. The structural causes of female segregation have to do with problems of a cultural nature that are difficult to eradicate and for which it is necessary to think deeply in order to act in the best possible way.

Elena Dundovich, University of Pisa

ALESSANDRA PIETROBON

The question of the Arctic

Sustainable development is the challenge of the near future, but in the Arctic regions it already presents itself as particularly difficult. The Arctic may be considered a kind of laboratory for the conflict between strong interests and divergent values. There is still little talk of this in Italy: for obvious geographical reasons other problems are more evident here, but what is happening in the far north deserves attention from various points of view.

Climate change is more dramatic there than elsewhere. It is said that "white becomes blue": a suggestive image that may seem poetic, but in actual fact reveals a worrying evolution. The ice melts, making way for the sea which is warmer: the fish fauna is altered, the fishing possibilities change and new routes open to navigation such as the passage to the North-West. On land, new activities may commence, primarily the exploitation of underground resources. After all, the mineral resources of the subsoil are rich in materials essential to technology. Just consider the important deposits of rare earths. These are situations that could create new conflicts of interest between Arctic states and beyond: China has presented a White Paper, in which it claims to be a "Near-Arctic State" and declares its interests for the region.

Will the Arctic remain the same? What will be the effects of the ongoing change on the lives of the people living in the region? indigenous peoples live in the arctic regions, mainly Inuit, who move in territories now belonging to Ca-

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The protection of indigenous peoples, the respect and conservation of their culture are considered a value in international law today

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nada, the United States, Greenland and Russia. They have inhabited these lands since time immemorial and contact with Europeans is relatively recent. The tribe of Thule, for example, dates back to 2000 years before Christ, but only in 1818 was it approached by European explorers. The indigenous people live in symbiosis with the land and nature, a relationship that has a profound religious dimension.

The protection of indigenous peoples, the respect and conservation of their culture are now considered a value in international law, in the interest of all humanity. In this way, the assimilationist theory of the past, according to which the natives had to be educated in the dominant culture, has been overcome.

The traditional life of indigenous peoples takes place in small communities, in which each individual feels an active part. However, economic development can have a dramatic impact: working conditions in a mine or factory are incompatible with traditional habits in which hunting and fishing had always been collective activities, in contact with nature. Life in urban agglomerations close to productive activities has nothing to do with life in traditional villages.

The changes in living and working conditions are unsustainable for many indigenous people: suicides increase dramatically even among young people. For example, in Canada the suicide rate is estimated to be 10 times higher than that which is considered to be the average. There is talk of "transgenerational damage" which is also reflected in the new generations, which grow up deprived of the essential points of reference of their traditional culture.

Does it become important to understand who decides on the development of new projects? Who evaluates how to do it? What is the role of the indigenous?

With regard to international law, the specific consent of indigenous people is necessary only for measures involving their displacement from ancestral lands and relocation elsewhere. In the past, forced relocation measures were taken for example for the construction of military bases or dams.



A view of the city of Iqaluit, capital of the Canadian Territory of Nunavut

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Changes in living and working conditions are unsustainable for many indigenous people and suicides are increasing dramatically even among young people

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States have a duty to consult indigenous peoples. The United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, 2007 in fact provides for a much more favourable treatment where it is not a matter of binding norms but of a so-called soft law act.

Apart from this, the internal law in each country is regulated independently. Let us take a look at two different systems:

In Canada in 1999, the new state of Nunavut was established on a part of the North-West territories, a large autonomous region where approximately 38,000 people

live, most of them Inuit. In other states of Canada, there are agreements with the Inuit population, which give them greater autonomy, with the right to be consulted and informed in the case of new projects. Moreover, the right to exploit the resources of the subsoil belongs to the central administration and royalties are granted to the Inuit.

Greenland, on the other hand, is inhabited by about 56,000 people, mostly Inuit. The region is part of Denmark, but has had almost total autonomy since 2009, with the exception of foreign and defence policy matters only. Here, therefore, it is the Inuit authorities who have the power to decide on the exploitation of the huge mineral resources, the proceeds of which remain with the region. Many voices however, arise to denounce that even in this case the population is not really consulted in an adequate manner. Among the Inuit themselves, the debate on whether to open up to the exploitation of mineral resources or to maintain a Greenland which is more tied to tradition is very lively, also because economic independence could allow Greenland to effectively become an independent state, putting an end to its ties with Denmark. The latest political developments, with the victory of the Greens in the 2021 elections, could lead to a reduction in exploitation concessions with a view to greater protection of the environment and traditional living conditions.

Alessandra Pietrobon, University of Padua

GIANLUCA ALBERINI

The multilateral method



After examining the sustainable development goal from various perspectives, I consider it useful to focus on the ways in which this and the other sustainable development goals (referred to as SDGs) can be achieved, and in particular on the “multilateral method”. This expression generally refers to structured collaboration between states in the framework of international organizations created between them.

The main international organization today is the United Nations Organization, to which all the existing states adhere and which brings together numerous other organizations and specialized agencies under its wing for the achievement of its aims.

The rationale of multilateralism is the observation that structured collaboration between States is the best method, and in some cases the only one, for achieving ambitious goals on a global scale, such as those indicated at the San Francisco Conference which in 1945 gave life to the United Nations: Peace and security between nations, human rights and sustainable development.

For the pursuit of the first goal, Peace and security, there are various instruments, first of all the resolutions of the Security Council and the so-called United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, in which Italy actively participates, for example in Lebanon with the deployment of a contingent in UNIFIL operations, currently under the command of an Italian general.



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The United Nations was also the context in which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the various treaties and conventions on the subject, the monitoring mechanisms and the Human Rights Council were born.

In the exhibition currently on display at the “Fondazione della Campana”, dedicated to human rights in relation to Goal 8, it is possible to see just what the concrete and often dramatic implications of the failure to respect human rights are.

With reference to sustainable development, it is in this context that the 2030 Agenda was born with its ‘Goals’, for which the United Nations operate, with both coordination and concrete action through various specialized agencies.

Important advocates are also all those States which have committed themselves to this end and which periodically give an account of the work carried out. Furthermore, we must not forget the important role of businesses, civil society and individuals, in a truly wide-ranging joint effort.

It should be emphasized that the aims of the United Nations are interconnected: without Peace and security it is not possible to fully enjoy human rights; development must not neglect the rights of workers or people in general and it must respect common goods such as the environment.

With multilateralism, or with international collaboration, it is possible to continue along the path traced 76 years ago towards a better world.

Gianluca Alberini, Central Director for the United Nations and Human Rights within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.



To be continued on page 3..

On 17 July, when four experts went up to the Colle di Miravalle to take part in a Round Table on Goal 8, that which refers to labour, it became immediately clear that discussing this topic without including gender equality, sustainable development, territorial issues and the need for close international collaboration would simply be an act of speaking. The speakers preferred to choose a concrete, scientific, objective approach: data before opinions. The picture that emerged is complex for the fact that it guarantees a vision that is both historical and legal yet also economic.

If the United Nations calls on countries around the world to promote inclusive economic growth and decent work for all, we must ask ourselves, first of all if this is possible, then what we are doing and finally what the results of our actions will be. Listening to the talks by Alessandra Pietrobon, Professor at the University of Padua, by Elena Dundovich, who teaches the History of International Relations at the University of Pisa, by Gianluca Alberini, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and by Adalgiso Amendola, Full Professor of Economics at the University of Salerno, some things have become clearer, some have seemed more complicated than we thought and many ideas have mingled.

To prevent this reflection from remaining only a vague memory, in which concepts overlap, merge, or remain deformed in the memory, on the International day of Peace we have decided to publish this special issue of «La Voce di Maria Dolens», bringing together a series of summaries of the various talks. The speakers themselves will lead us along a path that must be faced with a multilateral approach (Alberini), without forgetting that the UN asks us to strive for a very ambitious goal (Amendola), focusing attention on territories that have their own specific needs (Pietrobon) and always keeping gender equality as a shared horizon, an essential starting point for a development that is truly sustainable (Dundovich).



The participants in the Round Table under the Bell together with Reggente Marco Marsilli, in the center.