



General Assembly 21 October 2021

Speech by Chairwoman Anna Maria Tarantola

Dear Friends

it is a great joy to meet you all again today, after two terrible years in which the pandemic has prevented us from meeting in person. A thought to all those affected by the pandemic.

As you know the General Assembly is an integral part of our Annual Convention which this year chose the theme: "*Solidarity, Cooperation and Responsibility: the antidotes to fight injustices, inequalities and exclusions*". We took inspiration from the lessons learned from the pandemic, from the many messages of the Holy Father, from the latest encyclical, *Fratelli tutti*, and in particular from Pope Francis' recommendation in his letter of thanks for the extraordinary donation we made to him. In the letter the Pope states that "This emergency can be defeated first of all with the antibodies of solidarity, cooperation and responsibility. I therefore count on the support of this Foundation to promote the formation of people capable of fighting the epidemic of selfishness through the contagion of fraternal love."

Solidarity, cooperation and responsibility are not abstract terms, but principles that must concretely guide action and that have proven to be fundamental in fighting the pandemic.

We have therefore asked national and local groups to work throughout the year on these or closely- related themes. At the Roundtable we will listen to the groups' reports.

As of October 1, we have a new Secretary General. Mr. Tiliacos finished his second term of office at the end of September, we thus decided to proceed- as communicated by email on July 2nd 2021, with the usual turnover procedure and appoint a new Secretary General.

I would like to formally thank Mr. Tiliacos, for the work done in favor of the Foundation. I am pleased to inform you that we have request the Secretariat of State to confer Mr. Eutimio Tiliacos the honor of Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great. A warm welcome to Mr. Borgia, new Secretary General.

I would like to particularly thank the staff of the Secretariat General, Mrs. Paola D'Onofrio and Mrs. Giulia Mibelli, for their precious help.

I have already had the opportunity to inform you of what we have accomplished or initiated during 2020/2021. I will therefore limit myself to a brief reminder of the main initiatives:

- Kick-off of the first joint research project under *the Alliance Team for Research in Integral Ecology (ATRIE)* with SACRU, on the theme "*More Women Leadership for a Better World: Care as a Driver for our Common Home.*" It was joined by 11 professors from different disciplines from 10 universities. The work is expected to be ready by late spring 2022.
- Launch of the "One to many" project with a special active involvement of some Italian groups, like those of Rome, Milan, Trento and Bologna. "One to many" has a double meaning: the message of the SDC that Centesimus disseminates to many and the testimony of an actor of economic-social-political world of what can be done concretely to achieve a new model to disseminate from one witness to many.
- Strengthening the youth group. In order to reach out to young people, we have launched a project "Youth for Integral Ecology: Sustainability, ESG and New Models of Leadership", a series of talks with Italian representatives; 150 young people attended. We are considering to extend the project to other countries.
- The publication of the Foundation's brochure to be used in the search for possible sponsors; some copies are available in the main Hall.
- Reviewing the relationship with mass media to give greater visibility to our initiatives.
- Remodeling the two courses in DSC, respectively for lay and religious people, with translation into English and French
- Establishment of two scholarships to support studies/research by young people on the identification and concrete implementation of new models of socio-economic development inspired by the SDC,
- The extraordinary fund-raising activity that enabled us to make a donation to the Holy Father of 100,000 euros in several instalments
- Collecting a total of 38,000 euros from sponsors (over 40,000.00 euros received from Banca Intesa, which decided to join again as founding member, after the merger of several founding banks of *Centesimus*).

Last year I stated that our goal for the coming years would be twofold:

1. To work for a new model of inclusive and sustainable development by providing a concrete contribution to solving the major challenges of the digital and the post-pandemic age. I would say that we are keeping our promise by focusing our activity on the changes needed in business, education and governance models and by emphasizing how these changes can only be driven by the values of solidarity, cooperation and sense of responsibility. This applies also to the digital world, which must be thoroughly guided by ethics.
2. to contribute to the formation of young people by involving them in initiatives aimed at providing not only the skills and knowledge required by the new digital world but rather the values that make them not only "economic men" but creative and relational persons. This was our primary goal in the talks with young people launched, on an experimental basis, in Italian.

As you can see, we are gradually implementing the Recommendations contained in the Report drafted by the 2030 Commission. It is challenging but we are rather confident. Some copies of the Report are available in the Hall. The Report is also on the website.

We are strengthening the internationalization process. We are currently present in 12 countries with 28 national or local groups. I would like to particularly welcome our friends from the East African group, connected by video due to the pandemic, that was set up as part of the "Centesimus with Africa" project, as well as the groups from Monaco, Canada and Australia. Welcome into our family.

I must frankly observe that the activity of the groups is not homogeneous; we have very active groups that have made themselves well-known, are networked with their territory and have close contacts with dioceses and other organizations. Others are not very active or perhaps do not know how to report their activities. If this is the case, I kindly invite them to inform the General Secretariat of what they are doing and what they plan to do.

As I have already pointed out on other occasions, the action of the groups within their territories is fundamental to the success of the Foundation; the groups, working always in close connection with the Vatican office of the Foundation, are the operational arm of the Foundation itself, and through their activities and the behavior of their members bear witness to and disseminate the SDC, thus fulfilling our statutory mission.

The Foundation must also **be inclusive**, capable of involving a wide range of actors in its projects through forms of **subsidiarity, collaboration and partnership**, opening itself up as much as possible. This is what we are doing at the center (ATRIE is an example) but it is an approach that must be implemented above all at the local level. In order to spread the SDC, we must implement "**capacity building**" actions, i.e., mobilizing, activating and strengthening our resources, skills and knowledge, and those of the territory where we operate, to achieve our mission and the wellbeing of the whole community. It is about **enhancing the chain of our responsibilities by promoting and emphasizing the intrinsic link between the two dimensions: person and community**. I thus invite you all to revamp your activities to meet and talk with the territory. Please, do feel free to contact our Secretary General, Mr. Alberto Borgia, and myself if you need any help.

On several occasions, the Holy Father has invited everyone to work, in their respective roles, so that after the Pandemic we do not go back to the past but take this opportunity to start a **regeneration process** through the construction of a new world, a development model that is fairer, more just, more supportive and more sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms.

The Foundation must make its contribution. We are already contributing with our studies that take shape in the work of groups as well as in international and national conferences, in courses on the DSC, in scholarships, in the International Prize for Economy and Society as well as in publishing the activities carried out.

But above all, we can and must make our contribution through the way we conduct our daily work in our respective spheres of activity: as entrepreneurs, professionals, bankers, academics and politicians, we can **bear witness** to how the SDC can be lived in practice, how our own well-being can be reconciled with that of the entire community and with respect for the environment.

Last year, I asked the companies and banks represented in the Foundation to communicate whether they had adopted business models inspired by integral ecology, or at least by the ESG criteria, or had become Benefit Corporations, or had adopted production processes inspired by the circular economy.

I also asked them to indicate if they had activated, and how, inclusive and transformative leadership models suitable for the realization of the new model of development indicated by the Holy Father. Managers play a fundamental role in driving transformation and change inside and outside the company.

Finally, I had asked our academics if they had oriented or strengthened their studies in the light of the SDC, by addressing the broad issues related to the transformation of the technocratic paradigm towards a solidarity-based, inclusive and sustainable model, including the complex implications of this strategic shift in terms of impact, especially time, cost, management, organization and evaluation of the benefits produced for the community and the environment.

Unfortunately, no reports have come in, perhaps due to timidity or lack of time. This is a pity because I am convinced that the Holy Father would have greatly appreciated if our enterprises, our professionals and our academics had led the way in the process of transformation from a model of value creation only for shareholders to one that is more evolved and inclusive, open to others, to the community and to the territory. Moving from a single objective, profit, to a multiple objective, maximizing both profit and positive socio-environmental impact, is possible, as many studies show. We must embrace this theme and implement this transformation as much as possible.

I hope that this year the Convention will be a fruitful opportunity for common reflection, in-depth analysis, formulation of proposals and indications both on what has already been done - the issues we have been working on have proved to be particularly relevant in the terrible context of the pandemic - as well as for future activities.

I am very sorry that due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic I had to stop my visits to the groups, as soon as the situation will be normalized, I will resume them. However, we can contact each other by phone or via zoom.

Among the new initiatives under consideration, I would like to mention the launch of a call for those I name "donors of time and skills", i.e. members who volunteer to carry out some particular activities to lighten the workload of the Secretariat General and to reduce the use of external consultants. All foundations have members who volunteer their expertise free of charge to solve particular problems.

As to the activities carried out and the economic results achieved in 2020 by the Foundation as a whole, I refer to the financial statements as at 31.12.2020, approved by the Board of Directors on 24.3.2020 and published on our website. Please read it, if you have not already done so, as it provides useful information. This year we have also drafted the Mission Report to brief you not only on the economic and financial results but also on the action taken to implement our statutory goals (art. 3 of the current statute). If you have any suggestions on the content and format of the Mission Report, please let us know by mid-December 2021. Please also send us, through the Coordinators, ideas and suggestions on the next activities to be launched.

I am well aware of the difficulties, including economic ones, caused by the pandemic. Nonetheless, I would like to make a warm request to those who have not yet paid the membership fee (**32% of the members**), to please do so. Your contribution is a concrete way to support the Foundation's activities and an important signal of sharing our mission.

In the post-pandemic reconstruction phase that we are going through, the main contribution is undoubtedly to provide ideas and stimulate a fair debate, involve people, set an example on how to work for a sustainable and inclusive world. However, financial support is also useful because it allows the Foundation to be economically sustainable.

I now give the floor to the Secretary General, who will report on the economic and financial results.

The floor goes then to Prof. Marseguerra, Coordinator of the Scientific Committee, who will present the works of the CAPPF Chapters. Round table will follow with questions and answers on the work accomplished. I would like to thank Prof. Cristina Finocchi Mahne, member of our Scientific Committee, who accepted the challenging task of reading and grasping the main aspects of **11** papers.

I thank the Groups for the work done with great commitment and passion. I thank everyone with deep affection.

Special thanks to H.E. Monsignor Celli and H.E. Monsignor Galantino who honoured us with their presence.

Alberto Borgia has now the floor.