

Plenary Session n°5

« Equal opportunities and territories: the conditions for a fairer economic development »



Thursday 25 October 2007

Speakers :

- M. Geert DEMUIJNCK (France-Belgium): Director of the Research Centre in Economic Ethics at the Catholic University of Lille
- Mme Françoise FONING (Cameroon): President of the World Association of Women Entrepreneurs (FCEM), African Manager of the Year in 2004.
- Mme Arije AL AMAD (Jordan): General Director of the Microfund for Women
- M. HUANG Shan (China): Managing Editor of the Caijing magazine
- M. Brian NOSEK (United States): Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Virginia, part of the « Project Implicit »

- Arnaud MULLIEZ (France): President of Auchan France and President of the Pole on the competitiveness of industries and trade
- Lucien LESAFFRE (France): Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Lesaffre group, external trade advisor for France.
- Daniel PERCHERON (France): President of the Nord Pas-de-Calais Regional Council



The conference raises the issue of the **extreme inequality in terms of rights, opportunities and conditions of life, linked to the territory where we are living.**

The place of the African continent is at the core of this issue. **Africa must be a partner of other continents, because its resources are partly unexploited.** Africa can, in some cases, bring the field and local techniques, in a join-venture logic. With organizations like the Global Bank, the UNO, the International Labour Office, we must think of means to respect more the African continent.

The Microfund for Women Initiative aiming at training women and allowing them to access to a financial fund that the banking sector doesn't offer them, goes along with the improvement of women's economic status and so, of a greater equality. As a matter of fact, 65% of the informal sector in Jordania is actually managed by women, and 85% among them have appeal to loans.

In China, **the rapid economic growth has lead to the prosperity of certain areas and to difficulties in others, mainly rural, with fatal consequences on environment and health.** Urban areas are nowadays 2,5 times richer than rural areas, with an average income distance of one for three. Fill in the gap will take much time but measures must be taken by the government, agglomerations and firms in order to manage at best the flow of rural migrant workers.

Beyond national laws and international regulations, firms have then a real role to play, and consequently a great responsibility in the reduction of inequalities.

Beside the international speakers, company managers of the Nord Pas-de-Calais made a commitment to show that "***economic responsibility and responsible economy are compatible***" (Lucien LESAFFRE).

As a matter of fact, for them, the responsible economy towards the firm's collaborators, customers or suppliers is neither a luxury nor a sacrifice, it is a factor of economic performance.

« Market economy is a game that can be played by 6... 7... 8 billion citizens, and in which, at the end, responsibility is always winning. » (Daniel PERCHERON)