

Governments from around the world back social innovation as a vital response to major crises

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LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, May 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ministers and government leaders from around the world came together this week (19 May) in a show of international support for social innovation – sharing examples of how it is helping their countries to address inequality, boost climate resilience, unlock innovative financing and improve public service delivery.

Led by the [Government Council for Social Innovation \(GCSI\)](#), the event, Social Innovation: A Transformational Key in Times of Global Crisis, focused on how social innovation can provide policymakers with practical tools to respond effectively to complex societal, economic and environmental challenges. Representatives from 18 countries made clear that social innovation is one of the most powerful means available to governments wanting to solve complex challenges in a coordinated way.

New data published by GCSI at the event shows that social innovation represents an [estimated 6.7%](#) of the global economy. If every country matched the level of social innovation seen across OECD countries – a group of 38 countries working together to promote economic growth, prosperity and sustainable development – social innovation would account for an estimated USD 7.37 trillion of global GDP. This underlines the economic and social value that could be unlocked if more governments prioritised social innovation.

Sharing what social innovation means to Kosovo, H.E. Mimoza Kusari-Lila, Minister of Industry, Entrepreneurship, Trade, and Innovation, said: “No government today has enough capacity to solve complex social challenges alone. Universities, municipalities, businesses, civil societies, and citizens themselves all hold part of the solution. The question is whether institutions are structured to work with them effectively.”

A prominent theme was that today’s interconnected crises cannot be addressed through isolated reforms alone: governments need approaches that cut across silos, build trust and work with communities to deliver results amid pressures on resources and finances. The call for more inclusive and effective responses has never been more urgent; armed conflict has reached its

highest level in decades, public debt is constraining essential spending, human development progress has slowed, and official development assistance has fallen even as needs rise.

Offering a perspective from Spain, H.E. Amparo Merino, Secretary of State for Social Economy, said: “The social economy is one of our main avenues for social innovation. We are not just talking about an economic model, but a different way of organising production, based on putting people first, democratic participation, local roots and the reinvestment of profits in social objectives.”

H.E. Daren Pinard, Minister of Labour, Public Service Reform, Social Partnership, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development of Dominica, said: “Young people have a special role to play. They are often the most creative, the most adaptable, and the most willing to challenge old ways of thinking. If we give them the right support, they can become leaders in building new models of care.”

H.E. Dr. Sulaima Ishaq, Minister of State, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Welfare for Sudan said: “For Sudan, social innovation was not created in institutions or policy papers. It was born in the middle of war, fear, displacement, and survival. During this devastating conflict, ordinary women became extraordinary leaders. Women emergency response groups and grassroots volunteers risked their own lives to support survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and other vulnerable women and girls.”

A similarly urgent picture emerged from Palestine, where social innovation was framed as a practical tool for maintaining support systems in devastating humanitarian conditions. H.E. Dr Samah Hamad, Minister of Social Development, highlighted how Palestine has re-engineered its social digital infrastructure from the ground up, including launching a National Social Registry to identify vulnerable households and activating social digital wallets to help deliver support in Gaza.

Further examples highlighted the breadth of social innovation already underway. H.E. Mr Azar Bayramov, Director General of the Labour Centre of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), pointed to citizen-centred digital public services in Azerbaijan, where the DOST (Dayanıqlı vü Operativ Sosial Təminat or Sustainable and Operative Social Provision) model has brought labour, employment and social protection services closer to people through a one-stop-shop and online provision, serving nearly 900,000 citizens in 2025 with satisfaction levels above 98%.

In Timor-Leste, H.E. Verónica das Dores, Minister of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, pointed to the country’s Unified Social Registry System as a practical example of social innovation in action: “A major demonstration of the effectiveness of this registry is the Conditional Health and Nutrition Subsidy Programme for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children up to three years old who are in situations of social vulnerability.”

In Costa Rica, H.E. Roy Thompson Chacón, Minister of Labour and Social Security, explained

social innovation is at the centre of all of their activities and highlighted one example as the centralisation of housing, education and scholarship support into a single database, helping government target assistance more effectively and improve efficiency in public spending.

The event also saw some members call for a joint UN resolution on social innovation. If adopted, it would signal a shared global commitment to recognising, supporting and strengthening social innovation as a practical response to major social, economic and environmental challenges. It would go beyond the 2025 Luxembourg Declaration, adopted at the first Global Government Summit on Social Innovation, in which 55 governments committed to advancing social innovation as a driver of inclusive and sustainable development.

H.E. Mounouna Foutsou, Minister of Employment and Vocational Training of Cameroon, added: “We are convinced that a joint resolution on social innovation would be particularly valuable in fostering international cooperation, the exchange of best practices, the mobilisation of funding, and the advancement of innovative public policies capable of effectively addressing the economic and social crises confronting our countries, particularly the youth employment crisis.”

The meeting also saw the debut of an exciting new platform led by One Family Foundation and GCSI – the [Social Innovation Engine](#), bringing together thousands of examples of existing and emerging social innovations from around the world. The digital resource aims to become the definitive open-access repository for proven and promising social innovations.

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