

Summary | 30 June 2020

2nd cycle of GSEF2021 preparatory series of webinars on 'Recovery and Development of Decent Work through SSE'

The speakers included:

- Ms. Mirai Chatterjee, Director of the Social Security Team at Self-Employed Women's Association, (SEWA)
- Ms. Poonsap Tulaphan, Director of the Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (FLEP) / HomeNet Thailand
- Ms. Lee Eunae, Director of Seed:s, South Korea
- Mr. Jürgen Schwettmann, Independent consultant, former ILO official and COOP Chief
- Mr. Gerry Higgins, Founder and Managing Director of Social Enterprise World Forum

The moderator of the session was Ms. Laurence KWARAK, Secretary-General of Global Social Economy Forum.

Ms. Mirai Chatterjee shared the impacts of COVID-19 on informal women workers. For example, 78% of their interviewees from different sectors such as agriculture, handicrafts, services and street vendors, ran out of savings by April. She then suggested that a series of actions that could be taken through solidarity and sisterhoods, and the support from the private and public sector. Next, she provided some feasible short-term and long-term initiatives. It is suggested that universal health care, child care, social protection, digitalisation and promotion of local employment are important for social changes.

Ms. Poonsap Tulaphan gave a presentation on the difficulties informal workers in Thailand faced during the Covid and mapped out the initiatives undertaken. Massage service workers and Beauticians were among the most affected, that they suffer more than 90% of income loss due to the absence of foreign tourists. Food relief, skills training and other responses were put into action. Some of the specific measures for the creation of employment for informal workers she proposed are modification in public procurement policy, more supports to and consultation with informal workers organizations and protection of labor rights.

Ms. Lee Eunae explained how the exported-oriented and chaebol-centered Seoul was hit by the Coronavirus pandemic and mentioned Korea's rapid response to the crisis. It is pointed out that trust on government and civic participation has been critical to Korea's successful pandemic response. However, Korea's social security net is still perceived to be weak. In the last part, an overall strategy was shared such as preparation for the arrival of a full-scale "zero-sum" society, measures for a post-carbon society, development of local circular economies etc.

Mr. Jürgen Schwettmann provided data on the informal economy in Africa, which 85.8 percent of the labour force in sub-Saharan Africa are within the informal economy. He gave a general

picture of the sets of measures taken by 47 African countries for example, imposing risk reduction measures, enhancing health service and social assistance, introducing economic recovery policies etc. The measures initiated by the government reflected the problems of lack of specificity and no involvement of SSE. He ended with several recommendations regarding the enhancement of the awareness on the contribution of SSE to the societies, and the development of decent work in the informal economy.

Mr. Gerry Higgins illustrated the importance of social enterprises and their challenges amid Covid-19. It is expected that impacts on social enterprises are huge. The society would bear a potential economic cost of £2.5 billion for each month that the lockdown continues. Particularly, community centres, halls and the arts/creative industry are hit the hardest among all the social enterprises sectors. Different global community initiatives were studied and strategies for policy makers were advised. He gave final advice of grabbing the opportunity for the community to reposition everything including giving priority to social enterprises and taking climate change, inequality, and deficient democracies into account.

For more information about the series of webinars and the GSEF Forum in Mexico City in 2021, please visit our website: <https://www.gsef-net.org/>