

Web Conference

Regional Conference
#EconomyOfTomorrow

REFSA
Research For Social
Advancement

FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG

THE FUTURE OF WORK IN THE NEW NORMAL

12-16 October 2020 Monday-Friday 15.00 - 17.00 (GMT+8)



Session 5: The Labour Response

Hidayat Greenfield

- Workers in the food & hospitality industry is one of the most undervalued occupation. There is a disconnect of contribution of their work to the society, intrinsic values don't translate into wages
- Women and foreigners are particularly vulnerable in the food sector due to discrimination. Technological transformation does not necessarily lead to change and well-being in life,
- Automation picks up, differentiation between technical skills and soft skills
- Attitudes are judged in too subjective ways esp when there is in build bias such as patriarchy and racism e.g. in the case of Pakistan, it is said to have caused more stress among workers.
- Technology intersects with power. We need to reaffirm the rights to work as universal human rights as enshrined in UDHR. - social goals to steer technology, not the other way round, Ensure that future of work is a future of dignity

Session 5: The Labour Response

Apolinar Tolentino

- BWI Declaration addresses rights of workers left vulnerable by crisis and provides suggestions to trade unions to begin activism towards fundamental political changes, to build a future that values workers, justice, dignity, peace.
- Failure of the current economic architecture shown by the virus outbreak.
 - a. The saturation of hospitals, clinics, unable to cater to demand.
 - b. For decades in PH, migration of nurses and doctors to other countries has limited the number of skilled healthcare workers and so PH's capacity to deal with a crisis like Covid-19.
- Social security adjustments needed for new normal: need robust soc sec programs, access to affordable healthcare, paid sick leave and sickness benefits, protecting workers during unemployment, provision of income support. Calls for universal social protection systems.
- Improving protections for migrant workers an important policy goal as well.
 - a. Health and safety everyday culture needs to be practiced and implemented. Issue detailed health and safety protocols for workplaces in the post-Covid world. Free Covid testing for all workers

Session 5: The Labour Response

Anni Santiago

- Malaysian labour law curtails right to association of Trade Unions. Less than 10% of the labour force unionised. Most TUs in industry
- Challenges of TUs - companies can drag out TUs on issue of competence, can go to court. MTUC tried to no avail to register association for domestic workers, not cover by any laws, undocumented migrants (>1million), women not protected. Electronics sector also obstructed, for the first time a regional union (north, south etc).
- Social security (SOSCO) was recently extended to documented migrant workers, however, not to undocumented workers. Additionally, migrant workers in general do not receive any form of benefits from the COVID-19 stimulus packages.
- The Malaysian government has passed regulation that reduces overcrowding of housing of migrant workers. Provisions states that each migrant worker is entitled to a single bed mattress and a locked cupboard, and they must not be shared with other migrants. This provision has allowed physical distancing to be more feasible.
- The International Labour Organization has stated that stimulus packages are currently quite bureaucratic, and suggested for a rapid social protection calculator which sets minimum parameters for extension on schemes for more beneficiaries.

Session 5: The Labour Response