

## **GSEF's Reflection on the "Work for a Brighter Future- Global Commission on the Future of Work" published by International Labour Organization in 2019**

### **I. Identifying the challenges and finding the corresponding solutions**

A fundamental point, that GSEF and its members strongly believe that the social and solidarity economy (SSE) contributes to the creation of an inclusive and equitable economy which serves both people and planet. We believe that prioritizing the environment and society over the generation of profit creates an economy that truly serves to foster an inclusive and equitable economy. GSEF welcomes the issue of the report, "Work for a Brighter Future-Global Commission on the Future of Work" (hereafter "the Report") issued by International Labour Organization (ILO) which identifies the challenges ahead with regards to workers' rights and proposes corresponding solutions. As the only United Nations agency that has established a SSE Academy after the Financial Crisis in 2008, ILO is a close partner of GSEF which shares a similar objective to develop a human-centred world and promote social justice. Besides investing to improve workers' condition and the respect of labour rights in the current market economy, GSEF believes that SSE as an effective mean in achieving the same objective should be recognized in the Report.

Rapid technological transformation, particularly through the development in the fields of artificial intelligence (AI) and information & communication technology (ICT), has accelerated the pace of work and, at the same time, changed the world of work which demands a higher degree of knowledge of technology of workers. The introduction of automation and robotics and the emergence of the digital economy are estimated to eliminate positions in both low and high-skilled job sectors. The significant unemployment rate will be found in vulnerable groups with less training and education such as the elderly, women and youth, and more so in developing countries. Furthermore, the growing rate of informal employment impedes the development of equal opportunity, economic security and social justice in developing countries. The wealth and opportunity will be concentrated on those who are enjoying already plenty of resources and training in developed countries.

GSEF appreciated the suggestions highlighted by ILO in the Report that investment should be increased in people's capabilities, the institutions of work and, decent and sustainable work. GSEF shared the vision that capacity building for workers like lifelong learning and employment training are needed to face changes in the job market. Governments' initiatives to strengthen the relevant policies' financial and political impact, along with the active contribution of employers will be a complement to reinvigorating the social contract.

### **II. SSE as an innovative solution to polish the Future of Work**

However, considering the multi-dimensions of the human-centered agenda in the future of work, GSEF reiterates that SSE should be included and regarded as one of the solutions in public policies to pursue a balance in human dignity, environmental sustainability and

economic growth, to mitigate the uncertainties in the transforming job market, and to strengthen the social contract. The SSE is widely recognized to be an effective model to build up an inclusive and sustainable world. ILO<sup>1</sup> and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSSSE)<sup>2</sup> currently chaired by the ILO, the European Union<sup>3</sup>, some national governments and local governments have been promoting to enhance the awareness of the SSE through direct subsidy or the reform of legal framework. Some countries have already leveraged its economical contribution to the whole economy. For example, the SSE represented 10% of France and Spain's GDP in 2014 respectively. This economic indicator, however, reflects only one of the many benefits. In contrast to the profit maximization in the market economy, SSE would also bring social cohesion, territorial development at urban, regional and rural levels, environmental protection, etc.

The strong presence of SSE in sectors that are marginalised in the market economy, provides alternatives to workers in terms of both job opportunity and quality of life. The SSE is present in sectors such as the caring economy, green economy, rural economy and urban economy, underlining its role as a vector of socioeconomic development, and not only a mere sector of the economy. The limited number of service providers in these sectors due to the low profit rate undermines their high social value. Through providing job opportunity to vulnerable groups who fail to get employed due to their gender, age, disabilities or ethnicities etc, the SSE actors in these fields foster equality, social cohesion and social inclusion. The service will unleash new potential: new job opportunity and releasing new labor force. The caring service operated by SSE actors like childcare, care for the elderly, or care for patients with critical illness can release the labour force who were forced to leave the labour market to care for another person. On the other hand, SSE actors in the green economy and rural economy are committed to pursue sustainable development. While performing economic activity, they take environmentally-friendly and socially equitable solutions into consideration<sup>4</sup>. Their service reduces environmental risk such as pollution and natural disaster which would eventually improve workers' living and working conditions.

Therefore, GSEF suggests ILO, as an organization committed to ensuring and improving labour rights and promoting social justice, to issue a strategic direction plan of SSE in the Centenary Declaration of the ILO during the 2019 ILC to address the challenges identified and recognize SSE's role in overcoming the challenges. The plan should include a budget, a work plan and an agenda for implementation. To overcome the shortcoming of the existing development mechanism, an innovative alternative is needed. Recognized by ILO<sup>5</sup>, the SSE is "a viable solution to re-balancing economic, social and environmental objectives" and "productive, profitable and sustainable enterprises, together with a strong social economy and a viable public sector, are critical to sustainable economic development and employment

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/projects/WCMS\\_546299/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/projects/WCMS_546299/lang-en/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://unsse.org/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy_en)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unece.org/sustainable-development/green-economy/what-does-green-economy-mean.html>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/projects/WCMS\\_546299/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/projects/WCMS_546299/lang-en/index.htm)

opportunities<sup>6</sup>. GSEF suggests that different constituencies of ILO could follow measures to bolster the implementation of SSE.

Governments that have already recognized the SSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishing public policies to promote SSE</li> <li>2. Providing the relevant data and statistics on SSE for social innovation</li> <li>3. Implementing public procurement in favor of the SSE</li> <li>4. Providing financial support for SSE enterprises and organizations (SSEEOs)</li> <li>5. Giving tax incentive to SSEEOs</li> </ol>
Governments that have not recognized the SSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementing public policy to regulate and recognize the SSE through reforming legal framework</li> <li>2. Inviting SSE actors to be part of the co-creation of the relevant public policies</li> </ol>
Employers/Cooperatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Considering SSE as complimentary or partner economy in tackling the challenges.</li> <li>2. Learning from SSE in performing CSR and providing a balanced economy through social protection and democratic participation.</li> <li>3. Establishing joint partnership for start-up or social entrepreneurship programmes where youth unemployment is high.</li> </ol>
Trade Union	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognizing that trade unions have been taking a significant role in SSE movement like in Quebec and Barcelona and they can be a partner in building a favorable ecosystem for SSEEOs</li> <li>2. Including unorganized workers from care economy or rural economy, in general in informal labor into the existing (both sectoral and national federations) TU organizations</li> <li>3. Working with SSEEOs for less privileged groups in labor market like women/youth/elderly by providing joint capacity building programs, or etc.</li> </ol>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_371208.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/genericdocument/wcms_371208.pdf)