

**Report on 2022 IDSSP-JASID Research Seminar/The 5<sup>th</sup> TU-RIPS Seminar on “Business During the Crises: no trade-off between human rights and business performance” held on Sept. 25, 2022**

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Abstract

2022 Innovation and Development for Solving Social Problems (IDSSP)-JASID (Japan Society for International Development) and the 5<sup>th</sup> TU-RIPS (Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University) on “Business During the Crises: no trade-off between human rights and business performance” was held on Sunday, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 through Zoom Webinar. Two speakers were invited from Sri Lanka, Dr. Rukmal Weerasinghe, Professor at the Department of Entrepreneurship of Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce and the Chairperson at the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka, and Dr. Shirantha Heenkenda, Dean at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. This seminar was co-organized by IDSSP-JASID and the Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University and Dr. Naoko Shinkai, Director at Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University, and the Chairperson of IDSSP-JASID, served as a facilitator.

2022 Innovation and Development for Solving Social Problems (IDSSP)-JASID (Japan Society for International Development) and the 5<sup>th</sup> TU-RIPS (Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University) on “Business During the Crises: no trade-off between human rights and business performance” was held on Sunday, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 through Zoom Webinar.

This seminar was co-organized by the research group on Innovation and Development for Solving Social Problems (IDSSP) of JASID, which was launched at the end of 2021, and the Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University, TU-RIPS. This year’s theme of the seminars at TU-RIPS is “Human Rights and Society” and this seminar is the third seminar of this topic. We focused on the issue of human rights and business this time, which added a different angle to the topics of previous TU-RIPS seminars on human rights and international laws, and human rights and migrants. In the research seminars and meetings, conducted by IDSSP-JASID since January 2022, we have reviewed

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common social problems in the world and how innovation and development are integrated when facing social issues and problems in different countries. This time, those two institutions cooperated to yield the platform to discuss how business innovation and human rights protection can be accomplished in the crises.

We have invited a guest speaker, Dr. Rukmal Weerasinghe, Professor at the Department of Entrepreneurship of Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce and the Chairperson at the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka and a commentator, Dr. Shirantha Heenkenda, Dean at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka, who is also a member of IDSSP-JASID.

First, welcome remarks and an administrative announcement were made by Dr. Naoko Shinkai, Director, Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University, Professor at the Department of Policy Studies, and the Chairperson of IDSSP-JASID, who served as a facilitator. Then, opening remarks were addressed by Dr. Heenkenda to congratulate the seminar opportunity and Dr. Weerasinghe was introduced.

After those introductions, Dr. Weerasinghe gave a talk on the main topic of this seminar, business innovation and development during the crises. The talk started with the recent relationship between trade balance and foreign debt repayment, foreign remittances, and the main sector to earn revenue from outside of Sri Lanka. Then, major events that influenced the Sri Lankan economy negatively, the easter attack in 2019 and COVID-19, were touched upon and the gravity of damage to the economy was explained. The hardship of business sector was demonstrated, next. It is explained that while all businesses restricted their operations due to travel bans and social distancing, they tried to pay for their employees with zero income. Before conclusion, he introduced some enterprises among them based on his studies, who tried to overcome the hardship with innovative ideas and R&D. Those enterprises started new business operations, exploring, and entering new markets and managed to earn, sometimes more than before COVID-19 outbreaks.

Next, Dr. Heenkenda delivered his presentation. His talk focused on business and human rights in Sri Lanka and its practice. First, the guiding principles on business and human rights by the United Nations were touched upon in the context of the business sector in Sri Lanka. Then, the Sri Lankan policy measures to tackle the crises in the labor market caused by COVID-19 were demonstrated. These policy measures are to retain jobs, provide unemployment insurance and social protection, maintain basic income, and to support enterprises and the self-employed. He also stressed the importance of applying policy measures in a manner to care for those who hardly hit by the crises.

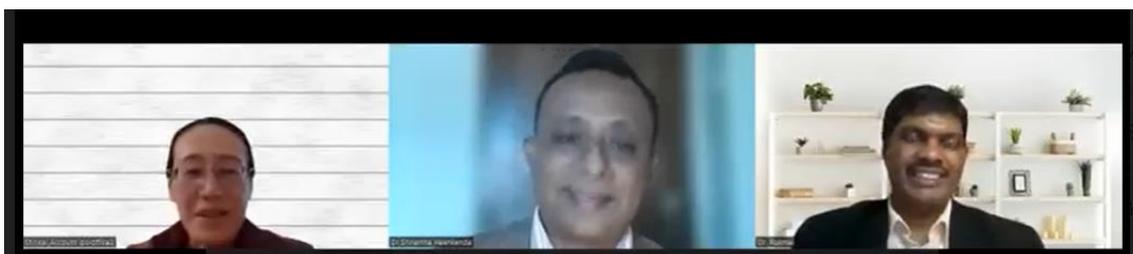
In the discussion session following two talks, two main questions were addressed by the facilitator to speakers; what is the most important thing to lead a business to grow and continue innovation during difficult times; and what is the key to ensure that there is no-trade-off between human rights and business performance.

Dr. Weerashinghe replied the first question by citing the phenomenon that entrepreneurs usually confront continuous challenges and the importance of creativity and innovation through R&D as the main strategy. Meanwhile, Dr. Heenkenda replied the second question, highlighting that every country should adhere Human Rights in business, hence strengthening the policies and the importance of information delivery in which prioritizing the development of the legal policies must also be taken into consideration.

Total number of participants were about 25 and about 70 views were made for the recording of the seminar. The recording was shared with those, who requested upon registration, for two weeks on a non-downloadable basis.

We now face various types of crises, climate change, pandemics, economic and financial crises, political crises, and others. Over that weekend of the seminar, typhoon Talas hit Japan. There are some crises which we may be able to avoid but others we cannot. To some extent, we may be able to mitigate the influence caused by those crises. Crises are painful but it is probable that they can bring innovations and better outcome, depending on how we accept and cope with them. Last but not least, deep appreciation is sent to two honorable guests from Sri Lanka, who participated in the seminar despite the difficulty, in the year that marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Japan.

A screen capture in Zoom



From left to right are Dr. N.Shinkai, Dr. S.Heenkenda, and Dr. R.Weerashinghe. Permission granted for the use in this report.