T20 Indonesia Summit 2022
Plenary Session 3: Rethinking Social Well-Being in Digital Society

NUSA DUA, BALI, 06 SEPTEMBER 2022. Digital technologies are all around us. They offer new opportunities, transforming how we work, interact, govern, and communicate. However, these opportunities are not necessarily equally accessible, and people lacking the infrastructure as well as digital literacy and skills are at risk of being left behind by these emerging developments, unable to utilize the promised opportunities. Moreover, digital technologies have also brought new risks into the equation, and people may be vulnerable to giving up their data and privacy to giant technology corporations that seemingly dominate the brought. With the increasing shift from economic efficiency to social well-being, the T20’s third plenary session on “Rethinking Social Well-Being in Digital Society” discussed how governments can ensure that the governance of the digital landscape will safeguard people’s interests, promote their welfare, and provide social protection to the vulnerable.

The plenary session is chaired by Vivi Alatas, Chief Executive Officer for Asakreativita. The session’s keynote speech was presented by Paul Twomey, Initiative Director at The New Institute. The plenary session’s panelists are Dennis Snower, President of the Global Solutions Initiative; Wing Thye Woo, Vice-President for Asia at the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN); Asep Suryahadi, Senior Research Fellow at the Social Monitoring and Early Response Unit (SMERU) Research Institute; and Devi Aryani, Executive Director of Indonesia Services Dialogue.

Twomey’s keynote speech explained how the lack of regulation in domain of internet content and apps are the main source of power inequality between internet users and app or platform owners, and he explains how giving users control over their data will allow them not only to protect themselves but also collaborate more freely, expanding the benefits of the digital revolution. Snower echoes this message, describing the current interaction between internet users and
platforms as akin to serfdom and stating that increasing the ability of people to work with digital technologies will only make this exploitation more rampant if regulation remains absent. Woo further elaborated the issue of digital inequality beyond the internet by describing the inequality of digital infrastructure, broadband service availability, digital literacy or capabilities, and English language mastery to maneuver the digital landscape. Asep, however, reminded everyone that social factors such as lack of education or certification, household attitudes or support, general poverty, and so on are also behind not only digital inequality but also the vulnerabilities of the workforce which have been present long before the digital transformation gained ground. Finally, Devi described how the digital transformation provides real opportunities for the economy, especially MSMEs and businesses in the informal sector, and she stated that a collaboration between the private sector, the government, and the education system will be key to not only addressing the risks of the digital transformation but also extending its benefits to create more winners in the digital society.

To see the full coverage of the summit, please watch our recorded live stream on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/c/T20Indonesia