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Economic and Technical Cooperation

Webinar SELA: Organizational resilience for SMEs in times of pandemic: Practical recommendations for business protection
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In my capacity as Permanent Secretary of SELA, I would like to warmly welcome you to this virtual meeting to address a high priority issue for the region: "Organizational resilience for SMEs in times of pandemic: Practical recommendations for business protection".

Organizational resilience is a relatively new concept that refers to the capacity and ability of enterprises to manage and overcome adverse and unfavourable scenarios that have a negative impact on their business activity, and highlight certain processes and technical tools that allow them to continue to operate and meet their objectives.

The protection and strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises has been a priority of the Permanent Secretariat and a mandate of the Latin American Council of SELA.

Since 2010, SELA has developed a line of work to promote Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in the region. Within that scope of action, it has focused on democratizing information and methodologies to develop business continuity plans and continue operations vis-à-vis disasters, so that both the private and public sectors can anticipate adverse scenarios and take preventive measures to develop the necessary planning, in order to minimize the costs and losses stemming from disasters.

In these times, we are fully aware of the devastating impact that COVID-19 is having on the Latin American and Caribbean economies and societies. Our fundamental objective with the webinars that we are conducting is to provide the best tools for SMEs and MSMEs to protect themselves in the face of the scenarios being imposed by the pandemic, as well as the best public policies that are being adopted for their control: confinement measures, the temporary closure of economic sectors, among others, which have direct consequences for SMEs that result in loss of markets, customers and consumption.

It is important to note that, according to a report recently published by the OECD, between 30% and 45% of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America had to close from January to May 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, a situation that aggravates the labour informality that the region had already been facing.

Thus, the main objectives of this webinar are as follows:

1. Exchange experiences and prospects on the organizational resilience of SMEs within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Share some practical recommendations to provide business continuity protocols, as well as experiences to help protect entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises in Latin America and the Caribbean.

To address this topic, we count on the participation of three outstanding panellists: María Elisa Padilla of Argentina, Yves Dávila from Peru and Germán Vargas of Colombia, who are specialists in the topic that we will address and to whom I thank for their enthusiastic participation.

Finally, I want to thank all the attendees who are with us today for their time and interest, and I wish you all the greatest success. We hope that the information and tools we will put at your disposal will be of the greatest possible use to your SMEs.

Thank you very much!