DOHA FORUM
منتدى الدوحة

COPING WITH NEW AND OLD CRISES

Global and Regional Cooperation in an Age of Epidemic Uncertainty

DOHA FORUM REPORT 2020

Report produced in partnership with

STIMSON

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Research and Production Team

Richard Ponzio, Cristina Petcu, Joris Larik, Reem Al-Mansoori, Banou Arjomand, Paula Torrez, Maheera Siddique, and the Doha Forum Team.

Editorial Support: William Durch. Design: Lita Ledesma.

Foreword

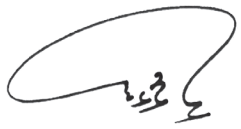
We are honored to introduce this *Doha Forum Report* on the theme *Coping with New and Old Crises: Global and Regional Cooperation in an Age of Epidemic Uncertainty*. It considers the COVID-19 crisis in its totality—both the present humanitarian and political challenges and the longer-term social, economic, and environmental implications. Regrettably, the pandemic has also further jeopardized progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its agreed targets for expanding livelihood opportunities, empowering women, expanding literacy, and increasing longevity.

This report's analysis and ideas aim to spur greater, and more open, discussion and debate on the role that global governance institutions and novel, public-private partnerships can have in seeking a recovery from the pandemic that is broad-based and durable, equitable, and green. It stresses the importance of updating our aging system of global governance, so that it may play a more effective role in that recovery, as well as dealing with the threat of runaway climate change. During the pandemic, the climate crisis continues to unfold and to accelerate.

We welcome the growth of public-private partnerships over the past two decades, especially in areas of ongoing concern to the United Nations. Such partnerships can spur innovation through new technologies and by promoting decent job and wealth creation opportunities. Harnessing the ideas, capabilities, and action networks of governments, the private sector, civil society, and global and regional organizations offer the world's best hope for charting a course out of the current crisis toward a more just, stable, and hopeful future.

If COVID-19 recovery really is intended to "build back better," then it must reach the largest number of people possible, including the most vulnerable, and be sustainable. The international community must build upon the momentum generated by the adoption, in September 2020 by 193 countries, of a far-reaching set of commitments on multilateral principles and the future of the United Nations. The UN75 Declaration and the mandated follow-on implementation report, to be released in 2021 by Secretary-General António Guterres, represent a unique opportunity to revitalize the world body for "the future we want and United Nations we need."

We wish to express our appreciation to the Doha Forum and Stimson Center Research and Production Team for preparing this report and the participants of upcoming Doha Forum dialogues for further enriching the ideas and analysis found in the pages that follow. On the long road to recovery ahead, we must avoid a return to short-sighted conventional practices and embrace a "new normal" that—*building on enhanced global cooperation and solidarity engendered by the new crisis*—also enables humanity to grapple more effectively with older, long-standing crises, including climate change, rising political violence, and inequality.



H.E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, State of Qatar

H.E. Gro Harlem Brundtland
Co-Chair, Global Preparedness Monitoring Board, Member of The Elders, and former Director-General of the World Health Organization

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ACT	Access to COVID-19 Tools
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CEPI	Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations
COPs	Conferences of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
COVID-19	Disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)
COVAX	Vaccines pillar of the ACT-Accelerator
DSSI	Debt Service Suspension Initiative
ECLAC	(United Nations) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
G20	Group of Twenty
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRC	(United Nations) Human Rights Council
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFC	International Finance Corporation (part of the World Bank Group)
IHR	International Health Regulations
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Daesh)
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JCFA	Joint Collaboration Framework Agreement
MERS	Middle East Respiratory Syndrome
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACT	Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing in Africa
PHEIC	Public Health Emergency of International Concern
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SII	Serum Institute of India
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive Summary: A Roadmap for Global Recovery & Institutional Revitalization

"The pandemic has illustrated beyond dispute the gaps in our multilateral system. As countries go in different directions, the virus goes in every direction … We urgently need multilateral institutions that can act decisively, based on global consent, for the global good."

—UN Secretary-General António Guterres (Briefing to the Security Council on Global Governance Post-COVID-19, September 24, 2020)

COVID-19 is one of the greatest challenges to confront the United Nations since its founding in 1945. Over the past year, the pandemic has posed a clear test of international cooperation. However, the international response to the crisis has often proven fragmented, delayed, ad hoc, and under-resourced. Emblematic of this reality is the UN General Assembly's high-level special session in response to COVID-19, planned for December 3–4, a full ten months after the World Health Organization declared "a public health emergency of international concern."

To grasp the magnitude of the leadership deficit facing the multilateral system, one need only survey the startling human tragedy and socioeconomic devastation left in the wake of the pandemic: over 1.3 million deaths and 50 million confirmed infections (as of early November) and a projected 4.4 percent contraction in global GDP in 2020. Millions of jobs were lost overnight but only slowly, partially, and episodically restored. Moreover, this crisis occurs alongside existing and emerging ones, including runaway climate change, rising political violence, menacing cyber-attacks, and growing inequality within and between countries.

Successfully meeting these challenges requires **not only an effective roadmap for modernizing our global governance system** (building on the UN75 Declaration, adopted on September 21, 2020, by world leaders), **but one that charts a durable and broad-based recovery** from the pandemic and meets the climate crisis head on. In this spirit, the 2020 Doha Forum Report investigates the following questions:

- In which ways did national, regional, and international mechanisms falter and allow the rapid global spread of the coronavirus to happen?
- To what extent are international responses commensurate with the level of the COVID-19 crisis and its acute socioeconomic, environmental, and political dimensions?
- How can global and regional organizations pull together in a more decisive and unified way in response to future pandemics and other global crises?
- Does the pandemic reinforce or temper other global challenges, such the refugee and climate crises, international terrorism, and exclusionary forms of nationalism?

How effectively the international community grapples with these questions may determine the fate, stability, and health—measured holistically beyond simple GDP growth to include literacy, life expectancy, inclusive governance, among other variables—of countries and their citizens for generations to come.

Even after some early successes in suppressing the spread of the disease, several countries are experiencing new waves of infections. Four times as many infections were registered worldwide in October 2020 than in April, a powerful reminder of the vulnerabilities of today's hyperconnected world. The coronavirus also siphons off considerable attention and resources, hindering hard-won peacebuilding gains and

A proposed World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance should be convened in September 2023

putting populations in conflict-affected and fragile countries at greater risk. Furthermore, measures taken to fight the pandemic, even when effective in their immediate purpose, can put pressure on basic human rights and the rule of law.

Early on, the pandemic revealed failures and shortcomings in national and global responses, but also many instances of solidarity and cooperation. The World Health Organization (WHO), as the world's apex global health body, came under fire from powerful actors, while many countries, at least initially, succumbed to unilateral impulses, closing borders and hoarding medical equipment. At the same time, public and private actors pulled together for joint fundraising drives and other initiatives, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and its vaccines pillar COVAX, run by the vaccine alliance Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and the WHO.

In the search for innovative tools to overcome the pandemic and emerge stronger in the face of future health crises and other global challenges, public-private partnerships loom large. Having become an increasingly popular governance instrument in recent times, their numbers have increased fourfold since 2000. In particular, they are well equipped to support a medium-term recovery program by: i) promoting decent job and wealth creation opportunities; ii) expanding digital connectivity for better collective problem-solving; and iii) exploiting the virtues of "networked governance" to implement novel solutions in novel ways. In promoting job and wealth creation, for example, the World Bank's International Financial Corporation has expanded its Joint Collaboration Framework Agreement to boost the availability of private sector resources for COVID-19 response. These partnerships do fall short in some key areas, such as enforceable accountability for members' actions, and are vulnerable to "forum shopping" behavior and opportunistic desertion or scaling-back of commitments. But, on balance, public-private partnerships represent a welcome addition, bringing new kinds of leadership, technical ingenuity, and financial resources to bear in global problem-solving.

Beyond the immediate health crisis, the pandemic has triggered an intense, multi-dimensional, global economic shock, throwing both advanced and developing economies into recession. The virus has further jeopardized progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, undermining steps to eliminate poverty, gender inequalities, and illiteracy. The United Nations, Bretton Woods institutions, Group of Twenty (G20), and regional organizations have mobilized resources and response plans intended to partly absorb the impact of the catastrophe. But a lack of coordination and effective medium-term (2–3 year) planning hindered the international community's ability to manage the situation. Global and regional recovery efforts remain inadequately funded too. For instance, between April and early November 2020, only 24 percent of the UN's public appeal has been met for its U.S. $10.3 billion global humanitarian response plan and only 6 percent (U.S. $58 million) has been raised for an initial U.S. $1 billion COVID-19 Response and Recovery Trust Fund, even as donor countries pumped trillions of stimulus spending into their own economies.

A three-year (2021–23) global green recovery effort and complementary sequence of steps to renovate and upgrade our global and regional governance institutions have become imperative. Together, they represent a robust vision and strategy for building back better and greener. The recovery effort should address itself to four critical dimensions of global-national-local

interaction: i) public health, human rights, and social protection; ii) economies that are robust, efficient, fair, and opportunity-building, both for entrepreneurs and for youth; iii) economic recovery that doubles as effective climate action; and iv) greater and more inclusive digital connectivity, worldwide.

On institutional revitalization, the report highlights one recommendation from recent, more detailed studies for each of the main pillars of UN global engagement. For the peace and security pillar, a much-enhanced UN post-conflict Civilian Response Capacity would facilitate rapid deployment of civilian specialist skills in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts worldwide. For the sustainable development pillar, better alignment of UN and G20 priorities and summitry ("G20+") could accelerate recovery from COVID-19. For the human rights pillar, stronger working ties between the UN Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court, and the UN Security Council could reinforce the effectiveness of each.

Culminating three years of work in the service of global pandemic recovery and revitalization of global institutions, a proposed World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance should be convened in September 2023, at the start of "UNGA High-Level Week" in New York.

The UN75 Declaration mandates the Secretary-General, in 2021, to recommend ways to advance its twelve commitments across the United Nations agenda with an eye to "current and future challenges." This creates the possibility for Member States, the UN Secretariat, and non-governmental partners to also rally behind an ambitious global institutional revitalization effort—akin to how the 2000 Millennium Declaration laid the groundwork for the ambitious 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

A unified global recovery and institutional revitalization roadmap represents a vision and identifies key elements of a strategy for building back better and greener, in a manner that closes the leadership deficit in multilateral institutions and leverages global and regional cooperation for the benefit of all nations and peoples. Major milestones on the **Road to a 2023 World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance** could include:

- Two G20 Summits, in April and September 2021, that could generate political momentum for the 2023 World Summit, while promoting recovery plans that coordinate macroeconomic, social, and environmental policies and programs across countries and regions.
- The World Summit's Preparatory Committees could be organized, in 2022 and early 2023, around the five thematic pillars of: i) peace and security and humanitarian action; ii) sustainable development and COVID-19 recovery; iii) human rights, the rule of law, and inclusive governance; and iv) climate crisis abatement; as well as, v) overarching topics to promote integrated, system-wide reforms.
- The 2023 World Summit would seek to upgrade and equip the global governance system to address major issues facing the international community, and to usher in a new compact with citizens to enhance and rebuild confidence in their multilateral institutions.

With the recent news on the expected arrival of one or more effective vaccines, the road to recovery must avoid a return to the "old normal" of unsustainable practices as it relates to confronting a far greater challenge than the coronavirus: climate change. Achieving early wins in either the global recovery or institutional revitalization track will build confidence among political leaders and the general public alike, creating a virtuous cycle that improves the political conditions for pursuing more ambitious, complex, and costly goals, including a renewed global governance architecture for promoting a vision of justice and security for all.

I. Introduction: The World will Never Be the Same

"I believe that the coronavirus, as it occupies every moment and mind, is dismantling this facade that we built up for ourselves, and forcing us to come back to our senses. Maybe it is a beginning."

—H.E. Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development[1]

Over the past year, the coronavirus pandemic has taken over 1.3 million lives (see figure 1) and infected many millions more, while throwing into sharp relief many issues that have long hindered the current system of global governance. The world we know is changing in ways we could have not predicted a year ago. At the same time, the political, economic, social, and technological trends observed in 2019 (see the *2019 Doha Forum Report*[2]) have evolved, but have not disappeared, in light of COVID-19. The pandemic has raised new doubts about the efficacy of public institutions, weakened international efforts to safeguard basic human rights, increased geopolitical tensions, hampered conflict resolution efforts, and brought a dramatic disruption to the economic progress achieved since the 2008–9 global financial crisis. Global poverty is expected to rise for the first time in over twenty years, pushing an additional 71 million people into extreme poverty.[3]

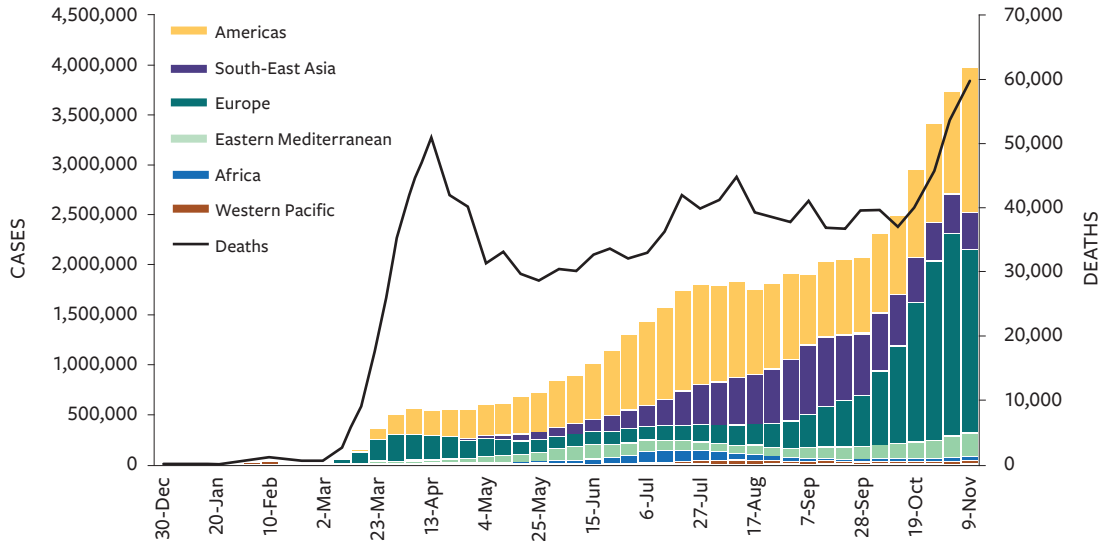
The coronavirus has catalyzed twin, interwoven economic and social crises, laying bare and widening socioeconomic gaps in societies. The pandemic is particularly harmful to vulnerable parts of the world's population, including "people living in poverty situations, older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and indigenous peoples."[4] It will continue to worsen inequality and discrimination, and heighten social exclusion and unemployment, if governments and multilateral organizations fail to prioritize aiding the most vulnerable and addressing pervasive inequality within and between countries.[5]

At the same time, the pandemic is creating opportunities to innovate—not only in the way we respond in the short-term to the crisis, but for shaping a prosperous and sustainable post-COVID-19 future. The technology sector has an ever-expanding presence in and influence over people's lives, from teleworking and digital payments to telehealth and robotics.[6] Moreover, multiple technological innovations are helping battle the virus directly. Perhaps most promising is the prospect of vaccines that are effective in preventing COVID-19, as announced in November, 2020, by Pfizer, BioNTech, and Moderna.[7] In addition, Dawex, a French based international online data exchange, created the COVID-19 Data Exchange Initiative, which is a free platform for companies and organizations that "need to exchange non-personal data for studies about the coronavirus and limiting its economic harm."[8]

75 years on: Is global governance prepared to cope with both new and old crises?

2020 has been a year of astounding disruption, with a dramatic loss in human life and with the world economy experiencing a severe downturn and only limited moves towards recovery. It has also been a year of unprecedented adaptation and solidarity. The pandemic's devastating effects have started to shift the way we think about our economy, technology, and one another. Against this extraordinary backdrop, the United Nations celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary under the banner "The future we want, the UN we need." Far from being a moment of celebration, the anniversary was an opportunity to engage in dialogue, reflect on the performance of the world body, discuss the relevance of multilateralism and its foundational principles, and to explore new ideas for enhanced global cooperation.

Figure 1: COVID-19 cases reported weekly by WHO region, and global deaths (as of November 15, 2020)



Source: *World Health Organization, COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update* (2020).

Despite having to navigate several rounds of negotiations online, world leaders adopted, on September 21, 2020, the UN75 Declaration (A/RES/75/1), which presents twelve distinct commitments for global action, including the need to "build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic."[9] At its core, the Declaration emphasizes the need for nations to work together, alongside civil society and youth, to address transnational challenges. The call for international cooperation was also underscored by 87 percent of the more than one million respondents to the Secretary-General's UN75 Global Conversation, who believe that the "COVID-19 crisis has made international cooperation even more urgent."[10]

Adopting a consensus declaration that acknowledged the intense demands of the current global health crisis and its knock-on socio-economic and environmental effects required, for the time being, a more modest approach toward facing longer-standing global threats, such as: the climate and refugee crises, violent conflicts, cyber-attacks, and deepening inequality.[11] Nevertheless, while a vaccine may only become available for wide distribution in 2021 and as the world transitions from crisis response to recovery, the present inflection point must be leveraged in efforts to build more equal, inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable societies. This will require global plans that not only set the international community back on track to achieve the goals of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement, but also to promote global governance innovation to better serve all humanity.

During the first year of the pandemic, the world witnessed a remarkable mobilization of local, regional, and global actors, but together, they have not yet worked in a sufficiently well-coordinated and coherent manner.[12] Prevailing fragmentation, under-resourcing, persistent delays, and adhocism among global and regional institutions has only heightened during the first months of the response.

Still, the development and implementation of the UN System Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 and the adoption of two related UN General Assembly resolutions (A/RES/74/306 and A/RES/74/307), as well as the UN75 Declaration, suggest broad-based political support for environmentally-sensitive recovery

> *The world that emerges post-pandemic is likely to be markedly different than the pre-COVID-19 era.*

plans essential to building more inclusive and just societies.[13] In this vein, on December 3 and 4, 2020, the UN General Assembly will hold a special session at the heads of state and government level in response to COVID-19, intended to catalyze collective action to address the global pandemic and its impacts.[14] President of the General Assembly, H.E. Volkan Bozkir, called this "a historic moment, and a test, for multilateralism."[15] In working together through revitalized multilateral institutions and new kinds of multi-stakeholder partnerships, the world that emerges post-pandemic is likely to be markedly different than the pre-COVID-19 era.

Fundamental questions and structure of this report

This report aims to place COVID-19 in the wider context of global uncertainty, tensions, and crises, and the varied, concurrent approaches to tackling them. It considers the pandemic both as the leading global challenge of our time and as a case study for reflecting on the need for effective responses to other global challenges. Therefore, it explores four fundamental questions:

First, it investigates how the coronavirus could spread so rapidly around the globe, despite experience in dealing with previous pandemics and having specialized institutions, such as the World Health Organization, in place. In which ways did national, regional, and international mechanisms falter and allow this to happen?

Second, the report delves into the political, economic, and social responses by governments and international organizations to mitigate the immediate effects of the crisis and plan for medium-term recovery, shedding light on what "building back better" actually entails. To which extent have these responses been commensurate with the level of the crisis, and how effective can we expect them to be?

Third, the report considers what the performance of global bodies, such as the United Nations, G20, World Bank, World Health Organization, and International Monetary Fund, as well as regional and sub-regional organizations, reveals about the need to reform and strengthen them. How can they pull together in a more decisive, complementary, and coherent fashion in the future to respond to both pandemics and other global crises?

Fourth and finally, the report explores the intersections between the coronavirus and pre-existing and emerging global challenges, ranging from violent conflict to human rights violations and climate change. In which ways does the pandemic reinforce these other global challenges, and in which ways does it temper them?

To address these questions, section II explores the world's immediate response to the spread of COVID-19, outlines its relationship with other global challenges, and develops a number of early insights regarding global governance. Section III investigates the economic, social, and environmental effects of the pandemic and the national, regional, and global efforts to mitigate them and prepare the ground for recovery. Section IV focuses on public-private partnerships as instruments for boosting a durable and just economic recovery from the pandemic, and as a way for enhancing global governance more generally. Lastly, section V presents a roadmap for global recovery and institutional revitalization, as a way for the international community to leave the coronavirus pandemic and its effects behind and emerge stronger in the face of other long-standing and emerging challenges.

II. The World's Response to COVID-19: Early Insights for Global Governance

"We must continue, to strengthen the efforts of UN agencies, including the World Health Organization, to combat this pandemic. We must be prepared to have tough, honest conversations about where the multilateral system is failing, or where it is not adapting fast enough, to the ever-evolving challenges we face."

—Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly[16]

In just nine months, the disease spread across the globe, infecting more than fifty million people and claiming more than 1.3 million lives.[17] Even after early successes in suppressing the spread of the disease, several countries are experiencing new waves of infections. The UN Secretary-General has described the coronavirus pandemic as "the most challenging crisis we have faced since the Second World War," requiring "a stronger and more effective response that is only possible in solidarity if everybody comes together and if we forget political games and understand that it is humankind that is at stake."[18]

In the words of the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit Statement of March 2020, the pandemic also serves as "a powerful reminder of our interconnectedness and vulnerabilities."[19] Contemplating the unprecedented events of these past months as they unfolded (see box 1) and how state and non-state actors responded to them reveals the various connections between the pandemic and other global challenges in today's hyperconnected world. But more than that, these actions and omissions illustrate both the glaring shortcomings as well as the potential of multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation in the twenty-first century.

The pandemic and its intersection with other global challenges

The coronavirus pandemic does not exist in isolation of other global challenges. In some cases, the pandemic diverts attention and resources, thereby exacerbating ongoing crises. In other cases, it is governments' responses that, while fighting back the spread of the virus, produce adverse effects, such as compromising individual freedoms and democracy.

The pandemic has quickly shifted attention and resources away from other pressing concerns, including the fight against terrorist organizations, armed conflicts around the world, and international peace and security more generally (see box 2). For instance, ISIS is exploiting the pandemic by increasing and intensifying, since March 2020, its attacks in Iraq and Syria.[20] The UN Secretary-General's call for a "global ceasefire" due to the pandemic was heeded by few, while the Security Council (UNSC) only managed to pass a resolution after weeks of stalemate.[21]

Moreover, the pandemic is "deepening existing inequalities" (see further section III).[22] This concerns increased exposure to the virus, such as in crowded and unsanitary environments including shantytowns and favelas,[23] or simply for anyone whose profession cannot be exercised from a comfortable "home office." Much needed medical supplies and other aid often do not reach the poorest and marginalized members of society.

As noted by Clare Bambra and other scholars, "COVID-19 has laid bare our longstanding social, economic and political inequalities."[24] As an example, they note that in "Chicago (in the period ending April 17, 2020), 59.2 percent of COVID-19 deaths were among black residents and the COVID-19 mortality rate for black Chicagoans was 34.8 per 100,000 population compared to 8.2 per 100,000 population among

Box 1: Timeline of the spread and response to the coronavirus pandemic

- **DECEMBER 2019:** First outbreak registered in Wuhan Province, China
- **JANUARY 30, 2020:** WHO declares a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)
- **FEBRUARY 11, 2020**: WHO announces that the name of the disease caused by the novel coronavirus will be "COVID-19"
- **MARCH 11, 2020:** WHO declares the coronavirus a pandemic
- **MARCH 24, 2020:** Due to the pandemic, the Tokyo Olympics are postponed to 2021, a historical first
- **MARCH 27, 2020:** President Trump signs U.S. $2 trillion stimulus package into law
- **APRIL 2, 2020:** Threshold of one million infections passed
- **APRIL 3, 2020:** Approximately half of humanity is under some form of lockdown
- **APRIL 14, 2020:** President Trump blocks U.S. $400 million in funding for the WHO
- **JULY 21, 2020:** EU agrees on €750 billion (U.S. $857 billion) stimulus package
- **SEPTEMBER 20, 2020:** More than 30 million confirmed infections in 188 countries with close to one million deaths
- **NOVEMBER 2020:** More than fifty million cases of infections reported worldwide

Sources: World Health Organization, *WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard* (2020); New York Times, *A Timeline of the Coronavirus Pandemic* (2020); Business Insider, *A comprehensive timeline of the new coronavirus pandemic* (2020); Euronews, *Coronavirus: Half of humanity now on lockdown* (2020); Al Jazeera, *Coronavirus: Which countries have confirmed cases?* (2020).

white residents."[25] Moreover, lower-paid workers in sectors such as food, cleaning, and delivery will often experience increased exposure to the virus as they "are much more likely to be designated as key workers and thereby are still required to go to work and rely on public transport for doing so."[26]

Regarding the fight against climate change and environmental degradation, there have been suggestions to postpone or reduce ongoing and envisaged efforts. Such retrenchments include the "European Green Deal" and investment in green technologies by diverting resources towards fighting the pandemic.[27] Moreover, in the United States, a rollback on car emissions rules that were a central piece of U.S. efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has been announced.[28] In Brazil, the federal environmental agency is cutting back on its enforcement duties, which includes protecting the Amazon from accelerating deforestation that could lead to the release of massive amounts of greenhouse gases stored in one of the world's most important carbon sinks.[29] At the same time, whether the pandemic and the changes it forced upon working and traveling habits will have the positive effect of leading to more sustainable practices remain to be seen (see section III).

Responses to the pandemic can also encroach on other values already under attack. For some years, Freedom House had been finding democracy around the world to be in decline, including in some of the world's most established democracies,[30] and with authoritarianism on the rise globally,[31] human rights were already under pressure around the world. When the governments of more than seventy countries declared states of emergency in the face of the pandemic, they curtailed individual and collective freedoms, such as free movement and the right of assembly.[32] Mass surveillance and tracking can infringe on the right to privacy.[33] Postponing elections due to the coronavirus,[34] even if genuinely based on public health concerns, puts pressure on standards of democratic governance. It is particularly worrisome when such restrictions and states of emergency do not have time limits or include the relevant safeguards and judicial scrutiny (see box 3).

Box 2: UN Secretary-General outlines eight ways COVID-19 could undermine global peace & security

1. Erosion of trust in public institutions.
2. Economic impacts could create "major stressors" in fragile societies and less developed countries.
3. Electoral processes could be affected, sparking political tensions and undermining legitimacy.
4. Actors might use the pandemic as an incentive to promote division and incite escalation of violence.
5. Terrorist groups could strike as governments turn their attention towards managing the health crisis.
6. Bioterrorist attacks by non-state groups that can take advantage of the limited level of preparedness to address pandemics.
7. Hindered conflict resolution efforts and stalled peace processes.
8. Worsened human rights challenges and growing manifestations of authoritarianism.

Sources: United Nations, *Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council on the COVID-19 Pandemic* (2020).

How the virus spread so far, so fast

Within three months of its emergence in Wuhan, China, COVID-19 had spread to about fifty-eight countries.[35] Uncertainties at the onset of the pandemic about the nature of the virus, its contagiousness, and its transmissibility in the absence of symptoms contributed to COVID-19 spreading globally in a short amount of time.

Subsequent modelling indicated that, before travel restrictions were enacted, 86 percent of infections in China went unreported, most of them "not severely" symptomatic. Failure to appreciate the extent of undocumented cases may have reduced initial estimates of the infectious nature of COVID-19, but these cases were eventually tied to nearly 80 percent of subsequent COVID-19 infections in China.[36] The incubation period of the virus also varies with the amount of the initial exposure—which affects how long and how intensely an infected person can spread the virus—beginning two or three days *before* the onset of symptoms.[37]

In a study published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a person with a mild case of COVID-19 is not likely to be infectious more than nine days after the start of their symptoms. People with more serious cases will remain infectious for longer periods, and a substantial percentage of persons exposed to the virus may be able to infect others yet never exhibit symptoms.[38] These "stealth" characteristics help the spread of COVID-19. Its average reproduction number (designated as "R0" or "R naught") has been estimated at 2.5.[39] This means that a person infected with COVID-19 will, on average, infect 2.5 people, though this will vary according to local conditions and measures (in particular, appropriate social distancing and use of face masks).

Travel restrictions implemented by China in January delayed epidemic progression there by just a few days, which may have had a more marked initial effect on international spread.[40] However, failure elsewhere to limit mobility and quarantine infected persons early on, contributed to rapid person-to-person spread of the virus. The absence of counter-measures, such as social distancing and face masks, heavily impacted the infection rates.[41] For example, millions of people typically commuted daily across the Greater New York area (the longest average commute in the United States), providing plenty of opportunity for the virus to spread across U.S. state lines and within communities.[42] In April 2020, face masks were made mandatory in public settings in New York City, as 70 percent of

Box 3: Human rights implications of COVID-19 responses

- Extensive restrictions on access to information and censorship, for instance, withholding information from the public, under-reporting cases, censoring articles and social media posts about the pandemic, or suspending newspaper printing.
- Crackdowns on human rights defenders and media outlets for disseminating critical information on COVID-19.
- Violations of the right to privacy as enshrined in national constitutions, case law, and international human rights instruments (governments have, for example, abused their surveillance powers and expanded their access to citizens' private data).
- Enactment of open-ended emergency legislation, without possibilities for effective oversight.
- Deployment of military forces to perform law enforcement and other tasks without adequate measures for oversight by civilian authority and without respect for human rights law.
- Imposition and enforcement of restrictions on movement in ways that were not humane, reasonable or fair (for example, imposing heavy fines—or even imprisonment) on people leaving their homes to find food for their families.

Sources: CIVICUS, *Civic Freedoms and The Covid-19* (2020); Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights Dimensions of COVID-19* (2020); and OHCHR, *International Day of Democracy conference* (2020).

the death rate there was linked to COVID-19.[43] Meanwhile, many countries around the world have made face masks mandatory, at least in settings such as public transport or in shops.

Even after some early successes in suppressing the spread of the disease, several countries have been experiencing new waves of infections. For instance, compared to April 2020, more than four times as many infections worldwide were reported, in October 2020, by the WHO.[44] These different waves and an epicentre of the pandemic that keeps shifting from continent-to-continent underline that there is no quick fix to the pandemic or that any region of the world can isolate itself from it on its own.

According to commentators, the pandemic caused a series of national reflexes for unilateral action rather than multilateral cooperation. "More than a century on from 1918, we have proved little better at combatting a global pandemic than our great grand-grandparents were,"[45] wrote Gideon Rose, editor of *Foreign Affairs* magazine. Many countries, "including the world's most powerful, have turned inward, adopting travel bans, implementing export controls, hoarding or obscuring information, and marginalizing the [WHO] and other multilateral institutions."[46] The response to the pandemic has also revealed a trend towards direct competition or "vaccine nationalism."[47] During the summer, for example, "the United States bought up virtually all the supplies of remdesivir, one of the first drugs [then thought] to work against COVID-19, leaving none for … most of the rest of the world for three months."[48] Moreover, Germany, Russia, and the Czech Republic all banned exports of personal protective equipment, while India limited the export of certain medicines, including popular painkillers such as paracetamol.[49]

Regarding the relevant multilateral framework, criticisms of the WHO's responses to the coronavirus abound, but are often also heavily contested. Harsh attacks have been spearheaded by the United States government, which decided to block financial contributions and, subsequently, notified its intention to withdraw from the organization altogether (see box 4).[50] While some criticisms clearly belong to the realm of conspiracy theories and others may be primarily politically motivated, the remainder may lead to useful insights for the future. Overall, the events leading up to the pandemic have revealed a serious weakness in the multilateral effort to contain the spread the virus.

Other international bodies have been the object of criticism as well. Among these is the Security Council, with regards to its hesitation to adopt a resolution calling for a global ceasefire, alongside the limited impact of that resolution once it was finally adopted.[51] In addition, the G20 was not only criticized for its slow response to the

Box 4: The World Health Organization in the spotlight

Although the Trump administration has put the WHO under fire, this was not the first time the UN agency faced backlash during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the main criticisms of the WHO revolve around its slow pace in declaring the pandemic a public health emergency and China's growing influence over the agency.

During the early days of the pandemic outbreak (March 2020), the WHO made a statement that there was no need for healthy individuals to wear masks. The statement was changed two months later and led to public confusion, as individuals rushed to buy and stock masks. Another incident for potentially misleading communication by the WHO was its call not to close borders with China, claiming that the virus could be controlled. This statement was changed subsequently to describe the virus as "far from over."

In the early stages of the pandemic, moreover, experts from think tanks and government officials argued that the WHO, while having the authority and capability to question China about its approach to contain the virus, supported Chinese claims on the virus without stating that they could be inaccurate. The U.S. was not the only country to come out and criticize the WHO; Japan's deputy prime minister at one point referred to the WHO as the "China Health Organization." Additionally, in mid-April, around one million people signed a petition asking Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO's Director General, to resign.

The Trump Administration accused the WHO and China of working together to cover up information during the initial weeks of the outbreak. However, in early June, the Associated Press released audio recordings of the WHO attempting to get more information from China. Because of the limitations on the WHO set by Member States, it is hard to envisage the agency carrying out the actions it was accused of by the Trump Administration. The recordings released by the Associated Press display the genuine attempts the WHO made in trying to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

President Trump's disappointment with the WHO led to his decision to freeze funding to the agency, which can be considered dangerous in the midst of a global pandemic. In the WHO's defense, it asserts that it maintained up-to-date information from the beginning of the pandemic and drew on experiences from past pandemics, such as SARS and MERS, to create its COVID-19 guidelines. As Lawrence Gostin, Director of Georgetown University's O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, sums up the situation: "the international community has the World Health Organization it deserves, because it's never provided the funding and political support needed for WHO to have a bold voice."

Sources: Washington Post, *Trump's critique of WHO may be a diversion, but it resonates beyond the White House* (2020); Time Magazine, *"We Don't Blindly Accept Data." Top WHO Official Defends the Group's Response to COVID-19* (2020); Associated Press, *China delayed releasing coronavirus info, frustrating WHO* (2020); Foreign Affairs, *When the System Fails: COVID-19 and the Costs of Global Dysfunction* (2020); Anadolu Agency, *WHO criticized for 'contradictory' COVID-19 statements* (2020).

pandemic, but also the lack of specific national and global commitments in their joint statement after the G20 Summit (see section III).[52]

As asserted by Francis Fukuyama, tackling the pandemic in practice shows the value of professionalism and expertise, while "demagoguery and incompetence are readily exposed."[53] While this may be true, the current crisis follows on the heels of years of anti-science and anti-expert discourse, which will not be undone in a few months. This could be observed in several places, such as Berlin and Michigan, where protests were held questioning the dangers of the pandemic and the usefulness of vaccines,[54] or where social distancing was disregarded during the summer months, for instance at beaches and in densely populated cities.

How the international community came together

While the rapid spread of the pandemic revealed a number of glaring shortcomings at the national and global levels, it has also brought about instances of cooperation across borders and different parts of society. According to the scholar Sophie Harman, while "COVID-19 exposes the fault lines in global health politics, it also demonstrates some of the positive gains made in global health security, including a subtle shift away from dependence on the UNSC and WHO" and towards "a more dispersed and inclusive form of global health security."[55] Though their ultimate success is yet to be established, such instances do provide us with some early insights for effective multilateral and multi-stakeholder collaboration, which will be valuable practices on which to build in the face of future pandemics and other global challenges.

Regarding immediate medical and humanitarian supply provision, by May 2020, the WHO supplied more than 1.5 million testing kits to 126 countries and coordinated the shipment of personal protective equipment to seventy-five countries.[56] In the logistical efforts to combat the pandemic, the private sector has also played a crucial role (see box 5). In addition, high-end fashion brands switched their production to

Box 5: Logistical support in responding to the pandemic—The role of non-state actors

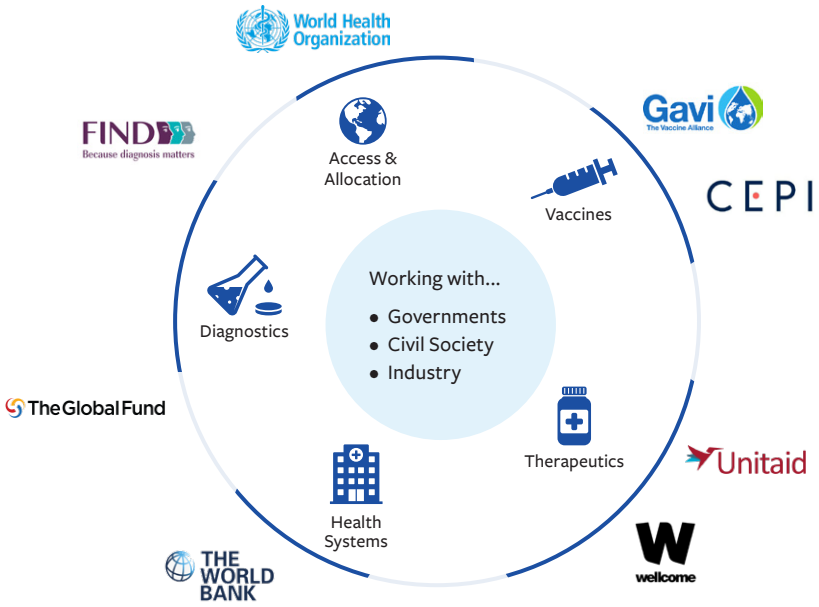
COVID-19 has caused enormous disruptions across the globe, not sparing the international economy's highly globalized supply chain mechanisms. Due to near-overnight changes in supply and demand, alongside unpredictable global lockdowns, there has been an acute need to develop alternative routes and means of transportation, especially to deliver humanitarian aid, which is dependent on supply chains and their resilience. Navigating the logistical difficulties caused by COVID-19 to deliver humanitarian aid and keep supply chains intact has been largely undertaken by the private sector and various other non-state actors.

Amazon is one such actor, partnering with the UK Government to deliver home testing kits to essential workers by leveraging its logistical networks. Within one week in April 2020, Amazon also deployed its logistics teams to distribute nearly 700,000 masks in eight countries in the EU. In addition, the American Logistics Aid Network, with its partners, launched a new COVID-19 Intelligence Center to provide trucking companies with the latest information on travel risks and closures from local to national levels.

As a global example, Agility's COVID-19 tracker provides real-time information on the capacities, volumes, and equipment availability for air freight, ocean freight, and road freight, along with crucial updates on government restrictions, port mandates, and other closures that could impact the delivery of goods. Qatar Airways Cargo, one of the world's largest airlines and cargo operators, is also on the front lines, having flown, in February, 300 tons of medical supplies to Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou free of charge in support of coronavirus relief efforts. Similarly, American Airlines has allocated U.S. $460,000 to support COVID-19 relief work in Latin America, as well as cargo-only flights that provide Personal Protective Equipment amongst other sanitation items to affected communities. As these examples show, non-state actors are leveraging their existing logistical capacities and partnering with other organizations to provide humanitarian aid and preserve vital supply chains in a truly unprecedented international crisis.

Sources: Gartner, *Supply chain leaders must mitigate instant disruption and plan for future incidents* (2020); Amazon, *How Amazon is using its logistics network to support the UK Government* (2020); World Economic Forum, *How are companies responding to the coronavirus crisis?* (2020); World Economic Forum, *The vital role played by logistics during humanitarian crises* (2020); Agility, *Agility Global Shipping Updates: COVID-19* (2020); Qatar Airways, *Qatar Airways Is Taking Firm Steps to Respond to COVID-19* (2020); Qatar Airways, *Cargo Convoy Departs to China Carrying Medical Supplies Donated by Qatar Airways for Coronavirus Relief* (2020); American Logistics Aid Network, *What's The Latest And How Can You Help With Relief Efforts?* (2020); American Airlines, *American Airlines Partners with UNICEF to Provide Relief for COVID-19 Efforts in Latin America.* (2020).

Figure 2: The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator



Source: World Health Organization, *The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator* (2020).

manufacture face masks,[57] while musicians around the world live-streamed concerts and operas for free for moral support.[58] Local communities and small businesses have also shifted their production focus to contribute to meeting the demands for face masks. For example, Sew Loved, a nonprofit based in the U.S. State of Indiana, has produced thousands of washable face masks through their network of home-based crafters,[59] while Kitui County Textile Center, in Kitui, Kenya, was transformed into an all-out effort to make 30,000 surgical masks a day.[60] Similarly Zaghir, a shoe factory owner from the Palestinian city of Hebron, now produces thousands of masks a day[61]—to name only a few examples.

To combat the virus, the World Health Organization's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for 2019-nCoV (COVID-19), adopted on February 3, 2020, outlined response strategies, partner coordination, risk communication, and operation at the national, regional, and global levels.[62] With little known about COVID-19, the WHO continued to adapt new plans and strategies in an attempt to guide public health officials as well as political leaders. In March, the WHO launched its COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund to help fund the activities outlined in its initial response plan. The Fund aims to raise money to procure and distribute essential supplies, like masks and protective wear, as well as accelerate efforts to develop vaccines and treatments.[63] The Solidarity Fund has succeeded in raising, by November 2020, roughly U.S. $237 million.[64]

World leaders, scientists, humanitarians, and the business community started a large-scale collaboration called the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, in April 2020, in an effort to create new tools and medicines to diagnose and treat COVID-19 in a way that ensures equitable distribution.[65] The ACT-Accelerator works in the areas of diagnostics, treatment, vaccines, and health system strengthening (see figure 2).[66]

COVAX is the vaccines pillar of the ACT-Accelerator and was launched by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI), Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance), and the WHO. It aims to provide a global COVID-19 vaccine access facility. It is "designed to guarantee rapid, fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for every country in the world, rich and poor, to make rapid progress towards slowing the

> *"Numerous countries that have signed their own bilateral deals with vaccine makers have declined to participate or to use the COVAX facility."*

pandemic."[67] Countries can invest in promising vaccine candidates and access the portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility, created by GAVI to manufacture a safe vaccine once it is approved.[68] Those countries unable to participate in the COVAX Facility can do so through Gavi's COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) mechanism, which aims to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines regardless of income level.[69] Once approved, COVID-19 vaccines will be distributed following the allocation framework developed by the WHO.[70] However, "numerous countries that have signed their own bilateral deals with vaccine makers have declined to participate or to use the facility to secure their own vaccines, including China, Russia, and the United States."[71]

In the quest for the necessary financial resources, a fundraising conference organized by the European Union, in May 2020, collected pledges from governments and philanthropists amounting to U.S. $8 billion for the development of a vaccine.[72] Part of this money will be donated to CEPI and the WHO for "the procurement, stockpiling and distribution of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics."[73] A subsequent fundraising summit—in which forty governments took part and included a globally televised and streamed concert—raised U.S. $6.9 billion in June 2020.[74] Furthermore, China pledged to provide U.S. $2 billion over the next two years to help other countries respond to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, with a focus on developing countries.[75]

The G20, though with some delay, has become active in addressing the pandemic as well. In April 2020, the members of the group "agreed to suspend debt payments owed to them by some of the world's poorest countries."[76] In addition, its members and invited countries have pledged more than U.S. $21 billion in support of funding in the area of global health.[77]

First insights for preventing the virus' return and tackling other global challenges

Though the pandemic is still raging on, shortcomings as well as inspiring collaborative initiatives can be observed. Both contain some initial insights for overcoming COVID-19 and tackling global challenges more generally:

1. The coronavirus pandemic is a "problem without a passport"[78] *par excellence*, the solution of which lies beyond the capacity of any single country or even group of countries. As noted by the global governance scholar Amitav Acharya, "a major lesson of the crisis will be the need for more rather than less global cooperation."[79] Yet "vaccine nationalism" also has been trending, even though it is "contrary to every country's economic, strategic, and health interests."[80]
2. Cooperation needs to go beyond the intergovernmental to be effective. Already now, according to Sophie Harman, "COVID-19 has exposed the ability of [..] a diffuse and inclusive model of health security to adapt to and withstand global politics during a pandemic."[81] Only through such truly multilateral *and multi-stakeholder* cooperation, facilitated by international institutions, can this global

crisis be tackled. If the international community fails to come together to tackle this challenge, it is hard to imagine how it could ever be successful in addressing the even more daunting threat of climate change.

3. In a hyperconnected world, different challenges and responses are often interdependent. Some are mutually reinforcing, such as the coronavirus exacerbating social injustices. In other cases, effective responses to one crisis can have adverse effects in other areas, such as the effect of lockdowns on individual freedom and democracy. Therefore, any joint multilateral and multi-stakeholder response needs not only consider its effectiveness in tackling a single crisis, but also its wider impacts.

4. Responses to the pandemic, as well as addressing other global challenges, need a sound scientific basis. The crisis has revealed a need for a reappreciation of science and expertise, which in many parts of the world was put in question. As an indispensable ingredient of good global governance, scientific thinking and expertise need to be nourished and protected.

5. With limited resources and capacities, as well as limited memories and the short-term thinking common in politics, there is a real danger that overcoming the coronavirus pandemic will be followed by a rush to the "old normal," including environmentally unsustainable practices and a disregard for international institutions and scientific evidence. This strong urge must be resisted by government, business, civil society, and other leaders. Rather, an unequivocal case for strategic change has become a practical and moral imperative, in order to justify the near-term costs and amplify the eventual benefits from such a (often difficult) transition.

6. Last, but not least, in terms of mentality and world outlook, a "lingering sense of 'coming together'"[82] needs to be felt, and not only at the national level. The various setbacks and incidents of turning inward notwithstanding, the global struggle against the coronavirus may have sown the seeds of a tangible sense of purpose and de facto solidarity across borders, as well as a growing track record of concrete achievements to overcome the pandemic as "We, the Peoples of the United Nations."

III. Responding to COVID-19 Beyond the Emergency Phase: High Cost and Uneven Impact

"We cannot continue thinking of agriculture, the environment, health, poverty and hunger in isolation. World problems are interconnected, and the solutions are intertwined."

—Gilbert F. Houngbo, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development[83]

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating human, social, and economic consequences worldwide, triggering an intense, multi-dimensional global shock. The disruptions caused to global supply chains and financial markets, compounded by job losses, forced advanced economies, emerging markets, and developing economies alike into recession. While the pandemic affected all population segments and economic sectors, its repercussions have disproportionally impacted the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations. It exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities within and between countries, a reality captured by the wide differences in scale of response, nationally and regionally. This section assesses the pandemic's economic, financial, social, and environmental/climate-related toll worldwide and then critiques the international community's limited present capacity and inclination to plan for and execute a medium-term (two-to-three years) strategy for a balanced, just, and durable recovery, globally.

The financial and economic toll

Faced with a highly contagious virus that does not respect borders, countries instituted mitigation efforts such as lockdowns and travel bans to limit the spread of the virus, which seriously depressed global economic activity. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted in October 2020 that the current economic slowdown will cause a 4.4 percent contraction in global GDP in 2020,[84] a crisis earlier characterized by the World Bank as "the deepest global recession since World War II, and almost three times as steep as the 2009 global recession."[85] Drastic economic decline can be seen across world regions, with Latin America and the Caribbean facing a deep downturn, and severe setback declines also expected in regions reliant on oil exports, such as the Middle East (see box 6).

Both the economic and social impacts of the pandemic have been highly asymmetric within regions, as national levels of preparedness and responses varied. For instance, India is expected to experience a contraction of 10.3 percent of its economic output, compared to 1.7 percent, on average, in the rest of "emerging and developing Asia."[86]

The most affected countries are by far those with economies heavily reliant on global trade, commodity exports, and external financing (including remittances). Stringent border controls, travel restrictions, quarantine, production delays, and other measures to contain the virus have disrupted regional and global supply chains, while also affecting the services sector, including travel and tourism, and the retail industries.[87] Decline in trade volume is estimated to produce a 10 percent contraction in global trade in 2020.[88] Countries where travel and tourism account for a large share of their GDP were hit hardest. For example, unemployment has swelled in the Caribbean, where tourism generates up to 33 percent of GDP and 18 percent of the total employment.[89]

Decreasing commodity prices also hurt the global economy. National lockdown measures caused oil prices to slump almost 70 percent between January and mid-April.[90] The sharp fall

Box 6: Regional economic outlook projections

Economic output in 2020 is forecast to decline by:

- 8.1 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean
- 5.8 percent in Advanced Economies*
- 4.6 percent in Emerging and Developing Europe
- 4.1 percent in Middle East and Central Asia
- 3 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa
- 1.7 percent in Emerging and Developing Asia

* *United States, the Euro Area, Japan, United Kingdom, and Canada*

Source: International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook* (2020) 11.

in the demand for energy led to overproduction and destabilized national revenues in countries such as Angola, Venezuela, and Nigeria, which all rely heavily on oil exports.[91] Despite efforts by the OPEC+ group and G20 to collectively cut production by 9.7 million barrels of crude oil per day, with subsequent adjustments until the end of 2020, the International Energy Agency estimates that the market will not rebalance swiftly.[92] This, however, provided a hopeful prospect to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (see the next sub-section).

Despite a general decline in commodity prices in 2020, overall global food prices rose (for example, for sugar and vegetable oil),[93] even with "production levels and stocks for most staple foods nearing all-time highs."[94] The pandemic has put a strain on food systems which, coupled with a rise in extreme poverty, could almost double the number of people facing acute hunger to 265 million in 2020 (more than double that of 2019).[95] COVID-19 pushed many into chronic hunger, but it appears there are still sufficient resources and food overall. Extreme forms of food insecurity are, therefore, preventable.

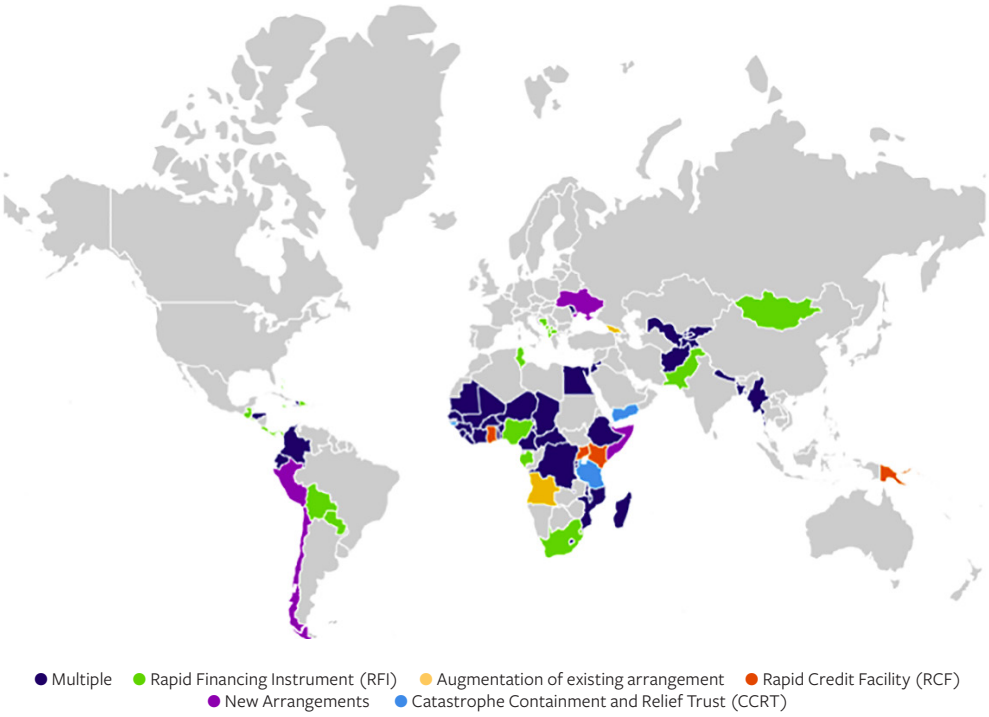
The disconnect seems to stem from factors such as poor governance, conflict, inequality, and displacement. In the Sahel region, for instance, where many of these factors apply, the populations of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger face "catastrophic levels of hunger."[96] The pandemic, thus, puts additional pressure on achieving zero hunger by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goal No. 2).[97] For providing urgent humanitarian food assistance in these and other similar situations of bad governance, war, and displacement, the World Food Programme (WFP), the largest humanitarian organization in the world, was awarded the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize.[98]

When the impact and scale of the pandemic became apparent in early March 2020, panic followed in the financial markets—and with it, a major and sudden crash in Asia, Europe, and America. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the stock market index that follows thirty of the biggest U.S. companies, registered its second largest percentage drop in history, on March 16, but rebounded in record time as optimism was restored among investors by the monetary stimulus injected in the economy.[99]

Disruptions in the financial markets have also affected cash flow, with debt financing and relief rising, and foreign investments falling, worldwide. Public borrowing is estimated to rise by 10 to 20 percentage points in both advanced and emerging market and developing economies.[100] Since March, the IMF has approved financing requests totaling U.S. $102 billion from eighty-three countries, and U.S. $488 million in debt relief services (see figure 3).[101] In the long run, this could presage acute debt distress and even a devastating debt crisis.[102]

These economic and financial disruptions have had a cascading effect at all levels of society, leaving millions of people unemployed. Initial projections from the International Labour Organization indicate a global rise in unemployment of between 5.3 million (lower end) and 24.7 million (higher end) from 2019 levels. Responsive fiscal policies helped provide social protection coverage, wage subsidies to protect jobs (for example, in Germany, Botswana, Argentina, and Malaysia), and expanded access to unemployment benefits.[103]

Figure 3: Countries receiving assistance and debt service relief



Source: International Monetary Fund, *COVID-19 Financial Assistance and Debt Service Relief* (2020).

However, the impacts of these policies differ greatly. In the U.S. close to 7 percent of the population claimed unemployment benefits in October 2020.[104] These benefits questionably exceeded the wages that they replaced for two-thirds of the eligible beneficiaries.[105] In countries where informal economies prevail, "unemployment benefits, on average, are only available to less than 2.5 percent of the population" (see box 7).[106] Arguably, most vulnerable to labor market instability are recent, young graduates who are trying to enter the labor market.[107]

The social and environmental toll

The parallel economic, social, and health crises had, unavoidably, a detrimental impact on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as they particularly affected the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable—including children, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, and refugees.[108] The latest Sustainable Development Goals progress report paints a troublesome picture. Despite advances on gender equality, a decrease in maternal mortality rates, and a growing array of national policies to support sustainable development and environmental protection, progress in other areas has been stalled or reversed.

Global poverty is expected to rise for the first time since 1998, as estimates show that 71 million people are expected to fall into extreme poverty in 2020.[109] For women and children, the consequences are alarming. Children are missing out on vaccinations and school meals, and poverty can provide a favorable environment for child labor, marriage, and trafficking.[110] The impact of long-term school closures is yet to be seen but, facing lockdowns, 463 million children globally were unable to access remote learning, revealing a wide digital divide.[111] In many cases, women are bearing the brunt of the economic and social fallout. They are facing heightened stress due to the increasing burden of unpaid domestic work as they generally take on more

Box 7: COVID-19 implications for the informal sector

- In 2020, over 2 billion workers are earning their livelihoods in the informal economy. This is 62 percent of all those working worldwide.
- Pervasive informality is associated with limited access to medical resources, as well as sanitation and hygiene facilities.
- Almost 1.6 billion informal economy workers are significantly impacted by lockdown measures and/or working in the hardest-hit sectors.
- In countries with large informal sectors, unemployment benefits, on average, are only available to less than 2.5 percent of the population.

Sources: International Labour Organization, *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges* (2020) 1; World Bank Blog, *How does informality aggravate the impact of COVID-19?* (2020); Center for Global Development, Refugees International and International Rescue Committee, *Locked Down and Left Behind: The Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees' Economic Inclusion* (2020) 14.

caregiving responsibilities, including becoming primary educators for their children. Power relations, social norms, and unequal structures have also prevented them from accessing basic services such as education and healthcare,[112] and placed them at increased risk of domestic violence and abuse.[113]

The reach and impact of the pandemic throws the deep disparities that exist within and among countries into sharper relief, highlighting a common and pervasive threat: *inequality*. Close to 40 percent of the world's countries have less than ten doctors per 10,000 people, compared to an average of 30 per 10,000 people in high-income countries.[114] The limited fiscal space available to low- and middle-income countries also undermines their ability to fund comprehensive stimulus plans and roll out emergency responses.

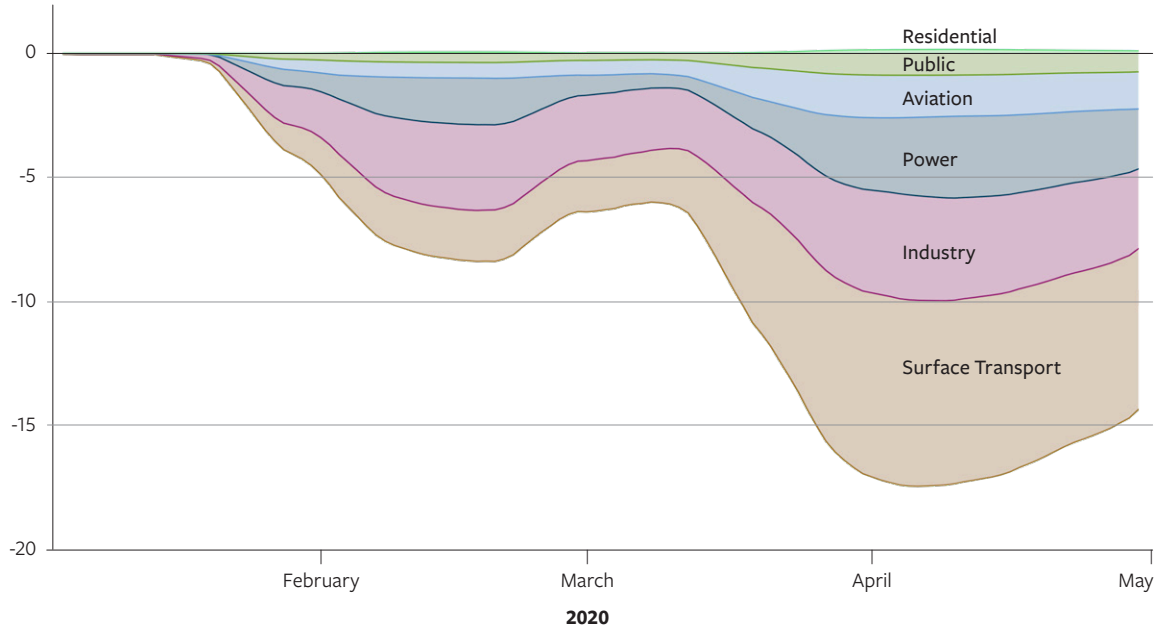
Against this daunting backdrop, in July 2020, presenting the 18th Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture, the UN Secretary-General called for a new social contract to address such rampant inequality, stressing that "while we are all floating on the same sea, it's clear that some are in superyachts while others are clinging to drifting debris."[115] The new social contract would allow all people to live in dignity. The COVID-19 crisis presents an opportunity for us all to promote recovery plans that address not just the pandemic itself, but salient pre-pandemic issues such as inequality and climate change.

One positive environmental effect of the pandemic is a decline in coal use, oil refining, steel manufacturing, and air travel, resulting in a sharp—though temporary—drop in greenhouse gas emissions (see figure 4).[116] We have seen something similar before. The 2008–09 Global Financial Crisis also caused a drop (of 1.4 percent) in global CO_2 emissions, but in 2010 emissions grew by 5.1 percent, well above the long-term average, and then returned to their pre-recession growth path, as if the crisis had not occurred.[117] Such a return to the pre-crisis trajectory may be expected in the absence of strong incentives to change, and to manage the risks and costs associated with change.

Regional responses and recovery plans

Faced with a common borderless threat, global and regional institutions mobilized to facilitate cooperation and identify comprehensive plans of action to address the unfolding human, economic, and social crises caused by the pandemic. The COVID-19 Tools ACT-Accelerator (see section II), the United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19, and the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (see table 1) are just a few of the many response plans that illustrate the type of coordinated action required to combat this global threat and ensure equitable support for both developed and developing countries alike.

Figure 4: Change in global daily fossil CO2 emissions, %



Source: Le Quéré et al., *Nature Climate Change* (2020)

At the regional level, different vulnerabilities, along with diverse regional structures, showcase the effectiveness but also limitations of regional organizations to coordinate and support national responses. The COVID-19 response in **Latin America and the Caribbean** was quick and stringent, with measures of containment and prevention enacted at the beginning of the virus's outbreak in the region.[118] However, factors such as large informal economies, poor healthcare systems, and high levels of inequality provided a propitious environment for the virus to spread, making the region the epicenter of the pandemic during May and June 2020.[119] The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (ECLAC) Executive Secretary warned about severe consequences to workers of the informal sector, who have little access to social protection systems.[120] Despite a series of short and medium term proposals from ECLAC, regional organizations have failed to unify and mobilize a regional response. Rather, most countries in the region have adopted their own measures to strengthen national social safety nets to protect vulnerable populations.[121] To fund these capacities and buffer economic downturns, twenty-five countries in the region have turned to the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, Andean Development Corporation, and the IMF for emergency funding.[122] Furthermore, the Latin-American Development Bank enabled emergency credit lines,[123] while Mercosur approved a security fund of U.S. $16 million to aid COVID-19 diagnostic capacity in the region.[124] However, the region's reliance on loans and credits may further impact members' ability to address socio-economic consequences in the long term.

In **Africa**, COVID-19 transmissions have been on the decline as a result of the early public health measures taken by governments across the region.[125] Unlike other regions, Africa did not experience a major spread of the virus.[126] The region has used the WHO's Integrated Diseases Surveillance and Response framework to identify, characterize, and respond to the potential community transmission of COVID-19.[127] This early detection response, coupled with select social and public health measures, slowed the spread of COVID-19 throughout the region.

Table 1: Multilateral response plans to COVID-19

Institutions	Plan	Focus	Timeline
World Health Organization	*Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for 2019-nCoV*	To provide support at global, regional, and national levels for all pillars of public health response, maintaining essential services and needs.	January–December 2020.
World Bank	*World Bank COVID-19 Crisis Response Approach*	Lending capacity of U.S. $160 billion to support government action and policies to respond to COVID-19 and advance a sustainable recovery.	April 2020–June 2021.
International Monetary Fund	*Catastrophic Containment and Relief Trust; Rapid Financing Instrument; Rapid Credit Facility*	Made U.S. $250 billion available for financial assistance and debt service relief.	April 2020–April 2021 (with the possibility of extension to April 2022).
United Nations	*United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19; UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund*	Rapid implementation of the UN framework for immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19 in middle and lower-income countries by mobilizing U.S. $2 billion.	April 2020–May 2022.
G20	*Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI)*	Suspension of official bilateral debt service payments to seventy-three eligible low- and lower middle-income countries.	April 2020–June 2021 (with a possible six-month extension after June).

Sources: World Health Organization, *COVID-19 preparedness and response progress report* (2020) 46; World Bank Group, *World Bank Group COVID-19 Crisis Response Approach Paper* (2020) 49; International Monetary Fund, *The IMF's Response to COVID-19* (2020); United Nations, *UN Comprehensive Response* (2020) 70; G20, *Communiqué* (2020) 1.

Ministers of the small island developing states of Africa have signed the Pooled Procurement agreement to take advantage of economies of scale and collectively coordinate the procurement of affordable medicines and health products.[128] Furthermore, the African Union and its African Centers for Disease Control have launched the Africa COVID-19 Response Fund, a public-private partnership aimed at raising up to U.S. $400 million to purchase medical supplies, support the deployment of rapid responders, and offer socio-economic support to the most vulnerable.[129] By October 2020, the Fund had mobilized U.S. $44 million.[130]

The different economic and political capacities of the countries in the **Middle East-North Africa** region are reflected in varying levels of infections and responses to COVID-19. Conflict-affected countries, such as Iraq and Libya, have weaker health systems, which limits the availability of medical services in those countries.[131] By contrast, the Gulf countries were able to implement proactive responses that quickly identified COVID-19 infections and limited the spread of the virus.[132] National stimulus packages in the Arab region amounted to U.S. $95 billion by July 2020, with the greatest contributions given by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries

Box 8: Success factors in combating COVID-19—Lessons from Asia

Following the expansion of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, Asian countries invested heavily in the public health sector, including infrastructure for data surveillance, trained personnel, decentralized and equipped laboratories, and tracking systems. Their management of the health crisis reflects how strategic crisis preparedness and long-term planning is key to building resilience to future shocks.

Leading centers for public health, such as the Korean Disease and Prevention Agency, China's Information System for Disease Control and Prevention, the Taiwanese National Health Command Centre, and Hong Kong's Centre for Health Protection, served as coordinators in data management during the crisis. In addition, a set of laws for data sharing and privacy accompanied responses taken to combat the crisis and enabled the countries to sufficiently build tracing systems.

In Taiwan, for instance, the National Health Insurance Administration and the National Immigration Agency could merge their data systems, in a rapid manner, using the established legal flexibility and political mandate. Scientists, researchers, and regulators were asked to develop a process for needed tests, treatments, and medical equipment mass-production, which could be ready for approval in a fast manner when needed. They established their strategic plans and reporting laws and regulation in the area of disease control to comply with the WHO's international health regulations. China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia succeeded in developing similar administrative capabilities.

Source: Foreign Affairs, *An Asian Pandemic Success Story: what SARS taught governments about fighting infectious disease* (2020).

to offset the increase of unemployment in the services sector, the main source of employment in the region.[133] However, with the exception of an effort to establish a food supply network, the Gulf Cooperation Council did not develop coordinated regional response against the pandemic.[134] Developing a meaningful COVID-19 response plan has also been difficult for the Arab League, given the longstanding divisions and political instability among its member countries.[135]

In **Asia**, through effective crisis management plans, governments rapidly identified areas of high infection rates and mobilized diverse actors to combat further contagion (see box 8).[136] Digital technology aided contact tracing in mainland China, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Vietnam, which limited the spread of COVID-19.[137] Furthermore, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) proposed to establish a COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund in April 2020, including a proposal to refrain from restricting the flow of medical, food, and other essential supplies.[138] The commitment to these initiatives and to multilateralism was reaffirmed a few months later by state ministers of some ASEAN countries that also shared their support for the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and Implementation Plan, to be adopted by late 2020.[139] These actions will help to mitigate the adverse social effects of COVID-19 in the region, especially among vulnerable groups, and should reduce prospects for the sort of supply chain disruptions that have been associated with lockdowns.

At the start of the pandemic, **Europe** generated some of the highest case-rates in the world, but the COVID-19 infection and mortality rates differed across the region. As there is no common EU public health policy, European Union Member States took action independently, creating their own health policy responses at their own pace.[140] The lack of uniform response in the region has affected European countries' economies and healthcare responses. Countries with stricter lockdown measures experienced greater economic setbacks, and it is estimated that southern European countries will suffer GDP losses of around 12 percent in 2020 compared

to northern countries GDP losses of around 7 percent.[141] The economic consequences will affect the region's ability to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. To address these concerns, the European Commission is negotiating a recovery package of €1.8 trillion for the years 2021–27, one of the only long-term multilateral recovery plans adopted as of the time of writing of this report.[142] The recovery package includes a new instrument, Next Generation EU, a comprehensive plan that will put the European Union on a "resilient, sustainable and fair recovery path."[143] Following BioNTech and Pfizer's promising announcement on the efficacy of their vaccine, the EU secured a deal to procure up to 300 million doses.[144]

Global responses and recovery plans

On the global stage, the United Nations has deemed the pandemic to be more than a health crisis, calling it a "human crisis."[145] Early in the pandemic, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres emphasized the need for global solidarity and an inclusive effort to "defeat the virus and build a better world."[146]

The UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, announced in April 2020, focuses on providing immediate support to low-and middle-income countries to respond to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, while safeguarding progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.[147] It complements the WHO's *Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan* and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' *Consolidated Global Humanitarian Appeal for COVID-19*. Learning from the initial months of responses, the UN released two reports on the organization's *Comprehensive Response to COVID-19,* which outlines the UN system response during the first six months of the pandemic and underscores key steps that the international community needs to take to recover better and address future shocks (see box 9).

Following its April 2020 resolution on *Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*, the United Nations General Assembly adopted, on September 11, two resolutions on a holistic COVID-19 response which call upon Member States to take an environmentally-sensitive approach to COVID-19 recovery and "to develop recovery plans that promote sustainable development and drive transformative change towards more inclusive and just societies."[148] The resolutions called for multilateral efforts, solidarity, and greater international cooperation to address the social, economic, humanitarian, and financial impacts of COVID-19.[149] With the United States and Israel voting against it (arguing against the language on sanctions proposed by Cuba and all references to the WHO), the resolution did

Box 9: The United Nations' Three-Point Response

HEALTH RESPONSE: in coordination with the WHO and their Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, emphasizing health as a global public good and the need for a "whole-of-society" response that buttressed solidarity with developing countries.

SAFEGUARDING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS: addressing human rights, humanitarian needs, and socioeconomic recovery in vulnerable communities. UN country teams have sought to address the urgent needs of unprotected groups and to provide tangible necessities, such as water and hygiene kits.

A BETTER POST-COVID WORLD: placing an emphasis on a transition to renewable energy, sustainable food systems, gender equality, and stronger social safety nets. This point is aimed at confronting fragilities that have always existed but have intensified during the global pandemic.

Source: United Nations, *Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better* (2020) 6.

not reach consensus.[150] It reflected, however, Member States' intention to develop an inclusive global response that addresses vulnerabilities and inequality, and is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and the commitments made in the UN75 Declaration.

The World Health Organization has played an important role in advancing coordinated emergency responses and recovery plans. But while considerable attention is given to its emergency responses, the WHO highlighted since the first months of the pandemic that "going back to 'normal' is not good enough," and that long-term recovery plans must have the people and the planet at their center. Released on May 27, 2020, its *Manifesto for a healthy recovery from COVID-19* calls for a "green and healthy recovery" that takes into consideration socioeconomic inequalities and addresses climate change.[151] The *Manifesto* calls for protecting the environment, investing in essential services (sanitation and clean energy in healthcare facilities), a quick healthy energy transition, sustainable food systems, and a cessation to tax money funding pollution.[152]

In response to the global economic shocks brought on by COVID-19, G20 Finance Ministers and the World Bank's Development Committee announced in April a Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). DSSI will grant debt-service suspension to the poorest countries to allow them to focus their resources on combatting the pandemic and implementing public health initiatives.[153] This debt suspension will relieve many lower income countries from having to default on their loans and suffer increasing interest rates during the global COVID-19 recession. The IMF and World Bank will monitor spending and ensure prudent borrowing, which will increase effective crisis response.[154] Likewise, credit rating agencies have clarified that suspending debt service to official bilateral creditors should not affect their ratings.[155] The G20's DSSI, meanwhile, has allowed lower income countries to focus on national management plans for the pandemic without the added burden of stressing over credit payments. Additionally, the World Bank has committed U.S. $14.8 billion for countries participating in the G20's DSSI, with U.S. $8.1 billion already disbursed to cushion the health, economic, and social shocks these countries are facing.[156] Furthermore, International Development Association countries receive resources in the form of grants, or on grant terms, rather than loans.[157] The economic initiatives developed are projected to ensure that lower income countries are able to enact COVID-19 health projects, while simultaneously withstanding the economic repercussions of the pandemic.

Pitfalls in COVID-19 global governance and recovery planning

Since the WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), countries around the world found themselves fighting three battles at once: confining the virus, searching for a vaccine, and trying to prevent their economies from collapsing. Emergency responses came in different forms of government aid, including stimulus packages and global and regional initiatives (as presented in the previous sub-sections). Their impact, however, has been uneven and lacks coordination and coherence worldwide. At the national level, the different policy responses and restrictions and their associated (and sometimes contradictory) public guidance produced equally disparate outcomes. Thus far, structures of global governance for public health lack the authority to steer countries, especially large powerful ones, in any agreed policy direction or on the basis of best practices. The UN Secretary-General continues to firmly criticize unilateral action, noting that by acting alone, and ineffectively, some countries "are creating a situation that is getting out of control."[158]

Powerful countries have exerted, at best, modest constructive leadership, contributing to a lack of multilateral cooperation in combating the virus. For instance, while the G20's debt concession for 44 countries was extended until the end of June 2021,[159] countries will need a longer time-frame to recover from the ongoing crisis that widened their budget deficits, especially if the development and distribution of a

vaccine is delayed.[160] Moreover, China, a giant player in the G20, did not consider waiving debts accumulated by participating countries in its Belt-and-Road Initiative.[161] Another pitfall in the G20 governments' leadership role is dedicating U.S. $151 billion to fossil-fuel producers and high carbon sectors (such as transportation) as part of their recovery packages.[162] Supporting the transportation sector is necessary after the strong hit to tourism and the aviation industry. However, having the G20 countries inject this large amount with only 20 percent of it conditional (committed to clean energy) does little to promote a "greener recovery" (as called for in the UN75 Declaration and endorsed in September 2020 by all world leaders) on the part of countries that generate 80 percent of global greenhouse gases emissions.[163]

The IMF and the United Nation Conference on Trade and Development have estimated U.S. $2.5 trillion as needed for emerging markets and developing countries to fight the virus and protect the most vulnerable.[164] Financial support, currently provided by the IMF and Regional Financial Arrangements, failed to cover this need, suffering from a number of shortcomings, such as slow loan approvals and distribution. As of July 2020, only U.S. $88 billion in supportive loans or currency swaps had been committed, to eighty-four developing countries with only U.S. $36 billion disbursed.[165] Moreover, the loans approved are expected to spur greater debt problems in the future, especially for those countries that are already at "high risk of debt distress."[166] These expectations have led to increasing concerns about the IMF's ability to conduct debt assessments, while the pandemic crisis is still unfolding.[167]

International leaders have questioned the UN's ability to bring countries together to defeat the coronavirus and deal with the related issues of fighting poverty and halting wars.[168] The conflicts between UN Member States, such as accusations of mishandling and politicizing the pandemic, have divided the organization deeply and obstructed forming effective partnerships to defeat the virus.[169] Calls for reform are increasing as contemporary challenges are of a different nature and more interconnected than those the UN faced at its birth.[170] As highlighted in the *Doha Forum report 2019*, the changing nature of violent conflict, global inequality, climate change, cyber-attacks, and the use of digital technology for nefarious purposes are just some of the new challenges encountered in this rapidly changing world order.[171] The undermining of global institutions, norms, and cooperation over the past years has further strained the multilateral system which, paradoxically, is key to confronting present and future transnational risks and challenges.

In its effort to highlight the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic on the most vulnerable, the UN's three-point response plan is ambitious, yet slow in implementation. By September 2020, only 24 percent (U.S. $2.48 billion out of U.S. $10.31 billion) of the required funds dedicated to global humanitarian response plan, and 6 percent dedicated to the socio-economic responses framework, have been received by countries in need.[172] As these packages are supposed to provide immediate humanitarian assistance, inefficiency in delivering the funds can hamper such initiatives from meeting their objectives on time, while the timing is essential.

Weak legal frameworks and regulations in the health sector pose another problem for sustainable partnerships. The International Health Regulations (IHR),[173] an agreement joined by 196 countries to protect, control, and prevent the spread of diseases internationally, lacks strong enforcement by the WHO, which serves as the global coordinator. After its last revision in 2005, the IHR was in need of updating. Public Health Emergencies of International Concern declarations also lack the flexibility of an intermediate level of alert. A suggestion by WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus to include a "yellow light" (as an intermediate level for preparation purposes) between "red" (PHEIC) and "green" (no PHEIC), to give Member States an option between an all-out response and none, was encountered with hesitation by the WHO's emergency committee.[174] The WHO's limited budget, rigidity in spending, and dispersed decision-making have also limited its ability to be more nimble in addressing the unfolding crisis.[175]

A number of other initiatives and established partnerships can react to crises but lack an established mechanism for durable impact. The Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing in Africa (PACT) is a program led by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the African Union, in collaboration with other stakeholders, that has been able to raise money, promote the donation of millions of testing kits, and conduct testing, but it is said to lack long-term vision.[176] African countries have a persistent weakness in their laboratory system and are in desperate need of a resilient mechanism capable of collecting and analyzing data. Moreover, these donations should target strengthening the weak productive capacity for testing kit development by supporting local scientists and innovators.[177]

The transmissivity of the virus caused other economic and social challenges in Africa too, including major losses in oil exports, and increasing distress among small business owners and informal traders.[178] Already burdened by climate change, violent conflict, poverty, and other health epidemics, Africa requires continued support to implement structural reforms that can lead to green growth and enhance its economic competitiveness. Future global recovery plans must take into consideration the continued divergence between major parts of the developed and developing world, including the need to overcome severe disparities by accelerating digitalization in all regions.[179]

Populism, coupled with disregard for science and exclusionary nationalism, geopolitical competition, and limited government capacity or competence, deprived the international community from forming efficient, collective responses to COVID-19. Promising international partnerships that support the public good should not suffer for political and market competition reasons. More inclusive and diverse partnerships should be a source of strength rather than anxiety.[180] Several countries' preference to not contribute to the COVAX Facility but instead follow nationalistic approaches to vaccine development could undermine global plans to distribute COVID-19 shots fairly. Favoring bilateral deals over multilateral

Populism, coupled with disregard for science and exclusionary nationalism, geopolitical competition, and limited government capacity or competence, deprived the international community from forming efficient, collective responses to COVID-19.

cooperation as well as "vaccine nationalism" can widen the public health gap between rich and poor nations.[181] Moreover, vaccine nationalism can rush countries towards quick trials and regulatory approvals to meet public demand, which can be very risky. Such geopolitical competition can cause interruptions in the global supply chain for vaccine components, with evidence emerging of manufacturing countries piling-up vaccine components.[182]

The knock-on human, economic, and social effects of the pandemic have been "seismic" and have spread despair, fear, and polarization.[183] They have set back global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, reversing progress on poverty, healthcare, and education, especially among vulnerable populations. Precisely at a time when the world is facing an "anti-multilateralist turn," the pandemic has revealed that a collapse of the

multilateral system is simply unacceptable, and that transnational threats require solidarity and multi-stakeholder forms of global collaboration among governments, civil society, and the private sector.[184]

At the start of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, in September 2020, the majority of world leaders voiced their strong support for multilateralism and called for an "ever more united nations."[185] The global and regional emergency responses have been essential to address the devastating effects of the pandemic, but they represent only the first phase. If the world is to recover better and greener from this crisis, a global comprehensive recovery plan will be needed to address both the consequences of the health crisis and pre-pandemic pressing challenges such as violent conflicts, climate and refugee crises, violent cyber-attacks, and inequality. Especially as we have entered the Decade of Action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, and as highlighted in the first commitment of the UN75 Declaration, we must "leave no one behind" as we emerge from this crisis.[186] As echoed by several countries during the September 2020 General Assembly high-level segment, this new vision needs to include steps toward renewing and strengthening multilateral institutions, including the United Nations.[187]

Good governance for regional and global development is challenging. Working to ensure the inclusion of good governance characteristics, including participation, transparency, responsiveness, equity, and inclusiveness, is difficult yet attainable. Effective and efficient international cooperation between governments, businesses, and civil society at all levels of governance is crucial for sustainable development and requires the formation of strong, multi-stakeholder networks committed to building resilience and safeguarding livelihoods. Inversely, the lack of global coordination between diverse state and non-state actors can undermine progress. Beyond coordination, innovative public-private partnerships, as highlighted in the next section, are demonstrating positive contributions to global problem-solving through more advanced and creative kinds of joint initiatives.

IV. Public-Private Partnerships and the Rethinking of Global Governance

"The last six months show that no one entity can tackle the biggest global issues that we have, which is what the spirit of the SDGs is all about."

—CEO & Executive Director of UN Global Compact Sanda Ojiamb (September 2020)[188]

From fighting climate change and piracy to supporting public health and internet access, "multi-stakeholder," public-private partnerships are enhancing global governance in many spheres. In this section, we briefly consider recent trends in how these initiatives are making their mark, using as examples the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Paris Climate Agreement. Then, turning to the report's central focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, we offer some reflections on how diverse public/private, state/non-state partnerships can contribute to a durable and just economic recovery over the next three years, potentially complementing the largely intergovernmental strategies detailed in previous sections. Such partnerships do face their own challenges and limitations, but they still offer policymakers and practitioners a unique set of tools and resources for assisting global collective action problem-solving.

New public-private partnerships trends in global governance

Between 2000 and 2015, multi-stakeholder partnerships—a powerful and relatively recent occurrence in global governance—increased fourfold.[189] By 2015, when Sustainable Development Goal 17 on partnerships was adopted as part of the 2030 Agenda, the contribution of public-private partnerships to strengthening transnational cooperation had been acknowledged in academic, as well as policy circles. Goal 17 "recognizes multi-stakeholder partnerships as important vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals."[190] The 2030 Agenda further calls for a "revitalized Global Partnership … [to] facilitate an intensive global engagement in support of implementation of all the Goals and targets, bringing together Governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources."[191]

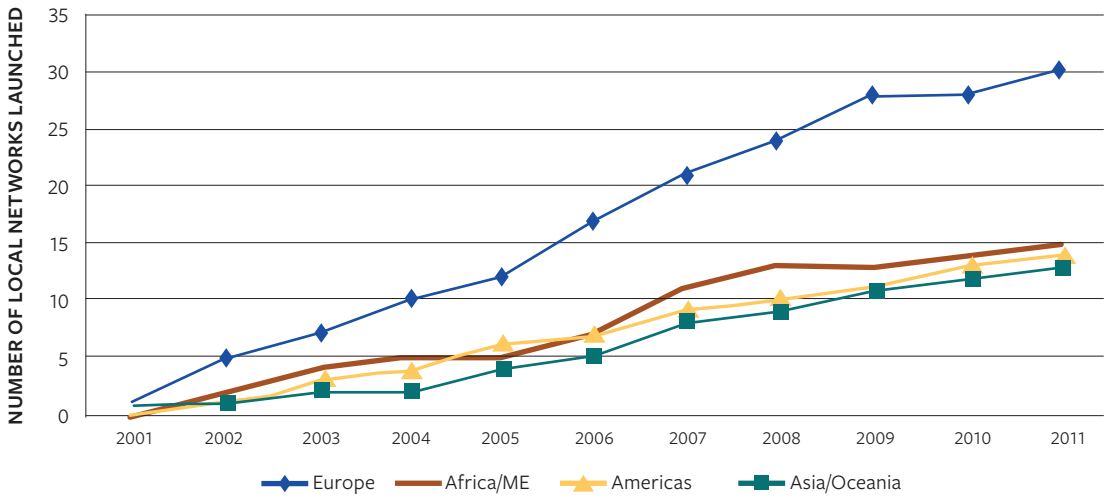
In 2010, a coalition of national and provincial public institutions, civil society, and the private sector met in Monterrey, Mexico, to pioneer a public-private partnership that would soon serve as a precursor to Goal 16 (supporting peace, justice, and strong institutions) of the 2030 Agenda. Excessive levels of criminal violence in the city had created dangerous conditions, whereby major Mexican businesses felt compelled to step in and support the local government. Through a "collection of ten large Monterrey-based companies," known as the "group of 10," the government worked "to develop a three-pillar approach that included structural reform of the security sector, as well as increased tools for transparency and government accountability."[192] Perhaps most creatively, these private sector organizations partnered with the government and local non-profit organizations to establish a new police force—the Civil Force—to tackle systemic corruption, and a web-based platform—the Center for Citizen Integration—for crowdsourced reporting on crime.[193] Together, these initiatives contributed to a dramatic decline in Monterrey's intentional homicide rate.[194] Rather than treating the city's business community as an afterthought

on matters of law or simply as a source of funds, these novel and effective approaches to collaboration between the public and private sectors demonstrated the utility of genuine, multi-stakeholder partnerships to sustaining peace—overcoming the limitations of government-only approaches.

Similarly, in December 2015, private sector and civil society groups were recognized, in the language of the Paris Climate Agreement, as instrumental to its implementation: "Parties recognize the importance of integrated, holistic and balanced non-market approaches being available to Parties to assist in the implementation of their nationally determined contributions … These approaches shall aim to: … Enhance public and private sector participation in the implementation of nationally determined contributions…".[195] This followed from the participation of 10,000+ civic and business representatives annually at the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in the years leading up to the completion of the Paris Agreement. The growing multi-stakeholder character of the COPs is further amplified by the concurrent, informal commitments to contribute to the agreement's implementation made by thousands of multinational corporations, mayors, and civil society organizations.[196]

In addition, The UNFCCC Race to Zero campaign is a coalition of businesses, investors, and cities to achieve "net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest."[197] Galvanizing actors outside of national governments, the campaign includes private investors such as Ford, PayPal, and the Charoen Pokphand Group.[198] Biogen, an American multinational biotechnology company, pledged U.S. $250 million to end the use of fossil fuels by 2040.[199] Moreover, a few of the companies investing in the Race to Zero campaign, such as Brambles and LafargeHolcim, have joined the United Nations Global Compact Business Ambition for the 1.5 Degrees initiative. The Global Compact has also had success, since 2001, facilitating collaborative problem-solving at the subnational level among business associations, companies, UN entities, and public institutions.[200] Figure 5 below shows the rapid expansion of these networks, establishing a presence in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, the Americas, and Asia/Oceania.

Figure 5: The UN Secretariat: Crafting normative space for partnerships



Source: Andonova, Liliana B., *Governance Entrepreneurs: International Organizations and the Rise of Global Public-Private Partnerships* (2017) 96.

The strengths of partnerships for aiding a durable and just recovery over the next three years (2021–23)

As detailed in earlier sections, recovery from COVID-19 will depend on contributions, over at least the next three years, by multiple global actors, including international organizations and governments at all levels, the business community, and global civil society. Among the most significant ways public-private partnerships are equipped to support a comprehensive recovery program are: i) promoting job and wealth creation opportunities; ii) expanding digital connectivity to improve collective problem-solving; and iii) practicing "networked governance" to facilitate policy implementation.

Promoting decent job and wealth creation opportunities

Restoring jobs and economic activity post-COVID will require, in large part, renewed cooperation and a focused, shared strategy between the public and private sectors. At the global level, for example, the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) has expanded the Joint Collaboration Framework Agreement (JCFA) to facilitate increased private sector resources for COVID-19 response. JCFA brings together national and regional development finance institutions—including Proparco (a French Development Agency focused on private sector development), the Commonwealth Development Corporation (a UK government-owned development finance institution), the Swiss Investment Fund for Emerging Markets, the African Development Bank, and the Africa Finance Corporation— to operate in five low-income, conflict-affected pilot countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Nepal, and Sierra Leone), pioneering innovative models that implement greater private financing for urgent socioeconomic needs. JCFA's "Upstream" program works to increase "the pipeline of bankable projects that underpin investment and sustainable private sector economic growth."[201] Upstream seeks to expand local markets by working at the project level to attract private investment.[202] The IFC has pledged U.S. $8 billion to support private companies and their employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in JCFA's client countries, and the JCFA partnership will also help existing clients in hard-hit sectors, such as tourism and manufacturing, pay their bills.[203] JCFA's COVID-19 recovery strategy has also emphasized "providing support and resources" to healthcare institutions and to small and medium enterprises, and "strengthen[ing] global supply chains.[204]

Moreover, as one further example to mitigate the pandemic's damage, the multinational consumer goods company Unilever is contributing, through the COVID Action Platform of the World Economic Forum, soap, sanitizer, bleach, and food support worth around U.S. $116 million. Unilever has also committed to working with the United Kingdom Department for International Development "to fund the development and implementation of a global hygiene campaign to help stop the spread of the coronavirus."[205] Unilever's financial and technical resources and global reach are directly supplementing efforts by multilateral and bilateral aid agencies to provide critical health and safety tools to combat the pandemic.

Expanding digital connectivity to improve collective problem-solving

Growing digital connectivity globally offers potential for cross-border, collective problem-solving in areas as disparate as fighting poverty, safeguarding human rights, peacebuilding, and climate action. "While digital technologies have been developing for many years, in the last decade their cumulative impacts have become so deep, wide-ranging and fast-changing as to herald the dawn of a new age," argued the UN Secretary-General's recent High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation,[206] noting how the cost of massive computing power has fallen and how billions of people and devices have come online, but also stressing that much remains to be done to ensure equitable online access (see box 10).[207]

Further to a High-Level Panel recommendation, a Digital Public Goods Alliance has

Box 10: Accelerating digital connectivity in the wake of COVID-19

Spearheaded recently by the International Telecommunications Union and comprising key digital infrastructure and service providers, including Facebook, Google, and Microsoft, the Partnership Dialogue for Connectivity recognizes that—as amplified by the coronavirus pandemic—lack of internet connectivity often translates into lack of effective economic, political, and social participation in the modern world. It further acknowledges that the uptake of broadband services depends not only on "supply-side" variables, such as the coverage, availability and affordability of services, but also "demand-side" elements, including digital skills (both to use and produce digital products), relevant content, and sufficient access to network devices, particularly among disenfranchised groups and in poor communities.

In support of the estimated 3.6 billion people worldwide who either cannot afford high-speed internet or lack the relevant skills to participate online effectively, the Partnership Dialogue for Connectivity, showcased at the virtual UN75 Global Governance Forum (16–18 September 2020), is committed to "building back better with broadband" by:

- Pursuing multiple initiatives to accelerate access to broadband connectivity for everyone in the post-COVID world, and where appropriate and without prejudice, to applicable legal and regulatory frameworks.
- Leveraging experiences of the partnership's members—as well as best practices developed as part of the ITU Global Symposium for Regulators—to support a repository of good practices and case studies as a set of resources for policymakers, regulators, and other stakeholders.
- Strictly adhering to the ten principles of the UN Global Compact within the context of the New (Digital) Economy.

By bringing together all major relevant stakeholders, including governments, investors, and providers of digital infrastructure and digital services, to work together in a complementary and collaborative manner to tackle the barriers to internet access and effective participation, this new partnership initiative wields tremendous potential to connect nearly one-half of the world's population that remains unconnected and disadvantaged in the modern world. Given the demonstrated role that digital technologies can play in support of a sustainable and "green" recovery program, it is also poised to help in reducing humanity's carbon impact and improving ecosystem management.

Source: Stimson Center et al., *Roadmap for the Future We Want & UN We Need* (2020) 29–31.

formed as a multi-stakeholder "go to" platform for sharing "digital public goods."[208] A complementary Global Data Access Framework pools data-sets to spur the creation of quality digital public goods.[209] Even prior to these initiatives, insights drawn from the aggregated data made public and accessible played a crucial role in containing the outbreak of the Ebola virus, in 2014–15, in West Africa.[210] Innovative public-private digital solutions, such as open-source digital data packages to accelerate case detection and open educational resources during school closures, are now aiding the COVID-19 pandemic response.[211] Other recent initiatives, such as the Partnership Dialogue for Connectivity (box 10), seek to expand broadband internet access to improve collective problem-solving in support of "building back better" post-COVID-19.

Practicing "networked governance" to facilitate policy implementation

By coordinating key policies and actions to fill gaps and foster synergies among distinct state and non-state actors to make policy

implementation more effective, public-private partnerships practice "networked governance."[212] Whether they contribute funding, expertise, legitimacy, or long-established international relationships, diverse partners from the business community, global civil society, international organizations, and governments can leverage their unique skills and pool resources in support of the broad economic, social, and environmental components of a comprehensive COVID-19 recovery strategy. When non-state actors, such as not-for-profit humanitarian organizations, or smaller (and less resource-endowed) states exploit the leverage that accompanies membership in a network, they can punch above their weight in global governance.[213] With the addition of each new member, the network can become more valuable and impactful (sometimes referred to as a "network effect").[214]

An example of networked governance that may prove crucial in soon making a COVID-19 vaccine available to everyone, especially in the poorest countries, is a new partnership between the Serum Institute of India (SII), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (whose core members include the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, and Gates Foundation). Emphasizing collaboration within the Global South, the initiative aims to make available, in 2021, 200 million doses (priced at a maximum of U.S. $3 per dose) of a future vaccine to low and middle-income countries.[215] In support of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator's vaccines pillar (COVAX), and as an integral part of the COVAX Advance Market Commitment, the partnership brings together diverse partners with the poorest nations to ensure a fair and effective response to crisis, affording access to COVID-19 vaccines equal to that of higher-income, self-financing countries.[216] By pooling scarce resources and leveraging the talents of its members, this new initiative demonstrates how one innovative approach to networked governance has the potential to provide life-saving assistance to lower-income countries that may otherwise be left behind in the race for a COVID-19 vaccine.

Limitations (gaps) in how partnerships currently function

Public-private partnerships in global governance have their fair share of limitations and are not simple and straightforward solutions to collective action problems worldwide.[217] Their often informal, voluntary, and horizontal (non-hierarchical) management structures, for instance, can hamper transnational action, as the autonomy of members can translate into a lack of enforceable accountability for members' behavior or results. Part of this dynamic may stem from an over-emphasis in management literature (and practice) on what makes a truly effective leader, at the expense of other, critical skills for "effective following" (such as increasing self-awareness, learning to delegate, and the flexibility to move adeptly between leading and following).[218]

Resistance from groups within a multi-stakeholder partnership that do not share a commitment to implement innovative solutions may also prevent goals from being achieved effectively.[219] Such friction can result from internal competition between private sector companies, civil society organizations, or states, which can also preclude norm creation or other interactive processes toward attaining a partnership's objectives. The informal nature of public-private partnerships also lends itself to "forum shopping," where the initiative's members may opportunistically desert or reduce engagement in a partnership, if it appears that something fresher and more attractive has emerged in the same policy space.

Public-private partnerships may also place even greater power and agency in the hands of private actors that already appear to be concentrating more financial power during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Union Bank of Switzerland and Price Waterhouse Coopers Switzerland estimated that, from April to July 2020, the world's billionaires grew their wealth by 27.5 percent (or an additional U.S. $2 trillion on top of the more than U.S. $8 trillion already managed by this elite group).[220] Along similar lines, Oxfam

recently reported that thirty-two of the world's most profitable companies are on course to exceed their average profits from the past four years by U.S. $109 billion in 2020, and that the world's twenty-five wealthiest billionaires increased their wealth, between mid-March and late-May, by U.S. $255 billion.[221] In the course of designing a global recovery strategy, any plans to out-source typically public sector functions to private sector partners must guard against unintended, destabilizing consequences, such as expanding further the gulf between "haves" and "have-nots," within or between nations.

Over the past three decades public-private partnerships have come a long way in contributing much-welcomed ideas, networks, and additional capabilities and resources to addressing global collective action problems. While they are far from a global governance panacea, they have many noteworthy attributes that can be brought to bear in the design and implementation of a multidimensional global recovery and institutional revitalization strategy, particularly in the areas of promoting job and wealth creation opportunities, expanding digital connectivity to improve collective problem-solving, and practicing "networked governance" to facilitate policy implementation—a subject to which we now turn to in the final section of this report.

V. Roadmap for Global Recovery and Institutional Revitalization

"We, alongside other partners, call upon world leaders to raise the ambition of the UN75 Declaration's twelve commitments. … We also advocate a World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance … to upgrade and equip the global governance system to address major issues facing the international community, and to usher in a new compact with citizens to enhance and rebuild confidence in their multilateral institutions."

—Former U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Madeleine Albright and Former Nigerian Foreign Minister Dr. Ibrahim Gambari[222]

At the height of the 2008–9 global financial crisis, the decade-old finance ministerial-level G20 nations forum was upgraded to a heads of state and government forum, beginning with summits in Washington, D.C. (November 2008), London (April 2009), and Pittsburgh (September 2009). The decisions taken and actions flowing from these summits blunted the economic emergency and helped set most nations on a path toward recovery. Facing even greater global financial, economic, and social crises in 2020, the United Nations, the G20, and other relevant global and regional bodies have, regrettably, managed only fragmented, delayed, ad hoc, and under-resourced responses, as relayed in the preceding sections of this report.

This section makes the case for—and outlines the basic contours of—a three-year (2021–23) global green recovery and institutional renewal roadmap. Each element of that strategy will be further developed in terms of prioritization, sequencing, and financing in Volume II of this report (forthcoming in September 2021). The recommended recovery effort is complemented by a suggested sequence of steps to be taken toward the renovation and upgrading of global and regional governance institutions. Together, they represent a vision and roadmap for building back better and greener, in a manner that leverages global and regional cooperation for the benefit of all nations and peoples.

Keys to a durable, green, and broad-based recovery from COVID-19

Effective recovery from COVID-19 that is sustainable, environmentally-sensitive, and viewed largely as equitable and just requires action at all levels of governance—local, national, regional, and global. It should also fully align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement, as reflected in the recently adopted UN75 Declaration.

We see four dimensions of such interaction: in public health, human rights, and social protection; in economies that are robust, efficient, fair, and opportunity-building, both for entrepreneurs and for youth; in an economic recovery that doubles as effective climate action; and in greater and more inclusive digital connectivity, worldwide.[223] For each dimension, we offer current examples of what reform or support initiatives could look like.

1. Supporting public health, basic human rights, and social protection systems

1.1 *Governments, with assistance from global and regional organizations, should expand investments and overall capacities for primary healthcare, sanitation, and public health*. High coronavirus-related mortality rates in many

countries were due, in part, to poor healthcare systems and a lack of access to water and sanitation facilities (for example, in India and Brazil, the second- and third-most infected countries after the United States). Globally, 79.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons, most suffering from weak health and water systems, are prone to rapid local transmission of COVID-19.[224] Even the European Union recognized the need to invest in greater regional health system resilience, to better tackle cross-border health threats using advanced surveillance and response systems, increased emergency reserves of health supplies and affordable medicine, and improved capacity of emergency team of experts and technical assistance. The EU is also supporting global cooperation on health challenges to reduce public health inequalities.[225]

1.2 *Governments, with global and regional support, need to protect basic human rights during the pandemic, especially for the most vulnerable, such as women and girls, individuals with disabilities, refugees and prisoners.* In addition to 130 million girls missing out on school before the pandemic,[226]an estimated additional eleven million girls will leave school, and therefore also potentially face prospects of trafficking, sexual exploitation, and violence.[227] "Women Rise for All" is a new social and economic recovery initiative designed to save lives and protect the most vulnerable from COVID-19-related economic hardships and social disruption, and it is supported by the new UN Response and Recovery Fund and women leaders worldwide.[228]

1.3 *Global institutions, regional organizations, and governments must carefully yet quickly design and implement short-to-medium-term COVID-19 response strategies that allocate resources equitably and seek to safeguard the well-being of all people.* Two notable setbacks encountered by several recovery initiatives reviewed for this study are slow approval and distribution of stimulus packages and loans, and a lack of medium-term planning for local capacity development. In response to these and other shortcomings, the UN's "Comprehensive Response to COVID-19" framework emphasizes immediate investment in people and systems to mitigate public health shocks, while striving to overcome severe access and outcome inequalities.[229] Similarly, when a vaccine or multiple vaccines are finally produced, they should be treated as global public goods, as argued by UN Secretary-General Guterres, and made available and affordable for everyone, everywhere.[230]

1.4 *Global-regional-national coordination is critical to fight famine and food insecurity, including by pre-positioning food and improving local supply chains.* Since the outbreak of the pandemic, fears of devastating famines in multiple countries have grown.[231] With 71 million more people at risk of falling in extreme poverty since the outbreak of COVID-19, the number of people suffering from acute hunger could double due, in part, to a global increase in food prices.[232] Recognizing the severity of this situation, the World Food Programme has scaled-up life-saving nutrition support to more than 9.5 million children and pregnant women, in addition to providing integrated school-based support for nutrition, clean water, and sanitation through its partnerships with UNESCO and the World Bank.[233]

2. Facilitating robust and fair economies through improved capacity development, financing for development, and resilient supply chains; and better, fairer business and life opportunities for entrepreneurs and youth

2.1 *With support from global and regional bodies and the private sector, governments in the Global South need to invest heavily in local workforce and institutional capacity-development and preserve livelihoods through robust and fair economies with better social safety nets.* Between March and June 2020, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean received

emergency fiscal support funding of nearly U.S. $22.6 billion to offset the economic and social impact of the pandemic, from international financial institutions.[234] To address this fiscal deficiency and its social implications in the region, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean offered a pandemic recovery plan for intra-regional cooperation economic growth, social inclusion, and a sustainable environment that promotes public-private partnerships, macroeconomic policy reform, unemployment insurance, and improved social protection systems with the support of international and regional financial institutions, such as the IMF and the Latin America Reserve Fund.[235]

2.2 *Use capital injections from the World Bank (International Development Association replenishment), the IMF (Special Drawing Rights), and the United Nations (COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund) to fill development financing gaps, especially in countries most affected by the pandemic.* One group of eminent economists and former statespersons argues that U.S. $150 billion is needed for health, social safety nets, and other urgent help for developing countries.[236] To cushion governments, people, and companies facing immense economic hardships, the abovementioned global institutions are well-positioned to expand liquidity in the global economy, maintain financial stability to safeguard development gains and strengthen recovery prospects, and address debt vulnerabilities for all developing countries that request support to free fiscal resources to save lives and livelihoods for billions worldwide.[237]

2.3 *Global and regional cooperation should support governments and the global business community in strengthening supply chains and enhancing the global trading system, by incorporating innovative technologies, fostering e-commerce, and ensuring the inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).*[238] Globally, due to the pandemic, a 4.4 percent contraction is expected in GDP in 2020, and a 10 percent contraction in global trade.[239] Seeking to alleviate such economic pain, the Association of South-East Asian Nations' joint statement, "Strengthening ASEAN Economic Reliance in Response to COVID-19," commits its ten member countries to enhancing supply chain connectivity, allowing businesses (especially SMEs) to continue operations by leveraging technology and digital trade, and offers a master plan for medium-term development (until 2025).[240]

2.4 *Promote close collaboration between international organizations, governments, the business community, and civil society on youth empowerment through employment and educational opportunities*: At present, persons under the age of twenty-five account for an estimated 59 percent of the population of the least developed countries,[241] and the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 22 percent (and rising) of LDCs' young people (between 15 and 24 years) are currently not in employment, education, or training.[242] Any global COVID-19 recovery strategy must take into account that the crisis will exacerbate many of the drivers of extremist violence, such as loss of economic, social, and personal opportunity loss, poor service delivery, and feelings of exclusion, loneliness, and isolation, in this population group. Global and regional interventions in this space (e.g., by the UN, League of Arab States, and African Union), especially those aimed at supporting ground-level civil society partners and innovative public-private partnerships, should seek to expand employment and educational opportunities (including through on-the-job training) and social outlets that reinforce values associated with civic responsibility and the positive contributions and potential of youth.

3. Fostering a green recovery through sustainable industry, decarbonization, and a broader knowledge base for climate action

3.1 *With support from global and regional bodies, governments should prioritize a "green" recovery as integral to national post-COVID-19*

strategies to ensure a cleaner environment, healthier citizens, and greater progress toward meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Only U.S. $1 out of every U.S. $6 of infrastructure stimulus in 2009–10 went toward climate friendly investments that sourced energy from renewables.[243] The International Renewable Energy Agency's recent report on long-term energy transformation strategy for the post-COVID recovery estimated that for every U.S. $1 million invested in renewables, twenty-five jobs will be created; compared to current plans, an accelerated energy transition could add, by 2023, 5.5 million more jobs worldwide.[244] Some of the most successful countries in controlling the pandemic, such as South Korea and New Zealand, have also privileged green development in their COVID-19 recovery strategies.[245] The European Green Deal (a €1 trillion European Investment Bank initiative that leverages public-private partnership) further places green recovery at the heart of the pandemic's economic response, underscoring an affordable, secure, and decarbonized energy sector over the medium-term, while aiming to become, by 2050, carbon-neutral.[246]

3.2 *With effective public regulatory frameworks and technical and financial support from global and regional agencies, incentivize the private sector to invest in a virtuously circular economy that reduces waste, improves environmental sustainability, and expands the local production of goods essential to humanitarian relief and longer-term recovery.* Within a few months of the pandemic's global outbreak, the World Health Organization had shipped more than 50 million units of Personal Protective Equipment across Africa and the Caribbean, due to scarce hospital stocks in those regions.[247] To develop local alternatives to such long-distance support, scientists, engineers, and designers in local laboratories and institutions, such as the Virginia Commonwealth University (with support from the State of Qatar) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have promoted a circular economy approach in some of the most vulnerable countries to locally produce low-cost masks and face-shields.[248]

3.3 *The strategic communications platforms of global and regional organizations need to increase global warming scientific literacy through direct and accessible language, while clearly establishing the links between human health and a stable global ecosystem.*[249] Without basic public comprehension of the scale of the climate crisis, it is difficult to mobilize the public pressure essential for policy change at all levels of governance. UNICEF's digital community, "Voices of Youth," for example, has taken advantage of the coronavirus lockdown to encourage youths advocating for climate action to talk to family members, share content on social media, and join online education sessions to become effective agents of change.[250] Global and regional agencies can also learn from African countries which, at the time of the Ebola crisis (2014–15), employed simple communications techniques, such as using local voices to build trust toward public health officials and increase acceptance of public health measures.[251]

4. Strengthening digital connectivity, infrastructure, and public awareness-raising

4.1 *Governments, with technical and financial assistance from global and regional organizations, must invest further in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure—in particular, through public-private partnerships—to ensure digital effectiveness and readiness, limit interruptions of essential services, and ensure the steady digitalization of most (if not all) public services.* During the recent lockdown in many countries, 463 million children, globally, were unable to access remote learning due to the wide digital connectivity gap.[252] Though with a focus much broader than remote learning, the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway

initiative, administered by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific with the support of the International Telecommunication Union, is one effort to increase the availability and affordability of broadband across the region through improved infrastructure.[253]

4.2 *Governments, alongside international organizations and the private sector, need to undertake more effective and timely digital outreach to communicate life-saving coronavirus and broader recovery information to the public.* In both rich and poor nations alike, a lack of timely information (undermined by sometimes inaccurate information) has hampered the effective channeling of critical COVID-19 guidelines and statistics to the general public. For example, the Coronavirus Information Hub, an initiative of UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, and WhatsApp, has helped governments to distribute up-to-date, verified information to health workers, educators, and local businesses and communities across Africa.[254] As noted in section III, smartphone-based digital connectivity enhanced national health systems in mainland China, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Vietnam supported robust contact tracing that limited the coronavirus' spread.[255]

4.3 *Governments, with the support of international agencies such as UNDP and the International Telecommunication Union, should offer digital-skills training in disadvantaged countries.* In Sub-Saharan Africa, where COVID-19 hit economies hard, new technologies can provide greater social and economic security. The International Finance Corporation estimated that revenue opportunity flowing from "digital capacity-building" to Sub-Saharan Africa could be U.S. $130 billion by 2030, along with the creation of 230 million jobs in the digital economy.[256]

Taken together, these four dimensions of a durable, green, and broad-based recovery represent significant elements of an effective medium-term (2021–23) response to the coronavirus pandemic. To maximize their impact, this framework for socioeconomic and environmental action should be paired with concrete measures to renew and strengthen current systems of global and regional governance, capable of harnessing effectively the ideas, capabilities, and networks of governments, the business community, and global civil society.

Major elements of global institutional revitalization

The UN75 Declaration was formally endorsed (virtually) by 193 world leaders on September 21, 2020, at the start of the UN General Assembly's 75th Session. More than a symbolic statement, the Declaration details twelve commitments for action across the UN agenda, giving special attention to "the historic opportunity to build back better and greener" from the COVID-19 pandemic.[257] This was also the first time "digital cooperation" was given primacy in a major UN declaration.

The UN75 Declaration further mandates the UN Secretary-General "to report back before the end of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges."[258] The Declaration creates the possibility for Member States, the UN Secretariat, and non-governmental partners to get behind an ambitious global institutional revitalization effort, akin to how the Millennium Declaration in 2000 laid the groundwork for the ambitious 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and its UN Peacebuilding Architecture, Human Rights Council, and Responsibility to Protect principle.[259]

Building on this project's extensive body of research and creative institutional and policy reform proposals, including advocacy of core normative principles aimed at strengthening governance and collective action across borders,[260] we offer here three suggestions addressing the United Nations three main work pillars (peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights) to directly buttress efforts, over the next three years, to deliver on a durable, green, and broad-based program of recovery from the coronavirus pandemic:

Peace and security: A new UN civilian response capacity

Rapid emergency response post-conflict—and similarly energetic efforts to prevent new or recurrent conflicts—can reduce prospects of violence and increase chances for sustainable peace.[261] But, in many instances, the international community's capacity to quickly mobilize critical technical expertise for effective early action has proven to be less than satisfactory. The COVID-19 pandemic has further tested global institutional capacity to coordinate quick and effective responses to crises.[262] In response, a **New Civilian Response Capability**—including a rapidly deployable cadre of fifty senior mediators and Special Envoys/Representatives of the Secretary-General, 500 international staff possessing technical and managerial skills, and a two-thousand-strong standby component of highly skilled and periodically trained international civil servants drawn voluntarily from across the UN system (including the World Bank and IMF)—would establish standing and reserve capacities to meet UN needs **for rapidly deployable civilian specialist skills in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts worldwide**. Such a new civilian capability, with an emphasis on gender parity, could be central to the early efficacy of future integrated UN peace operations and special political missions and support Secretary-General Guterres' repeated calls for a global ceasefire.

Sustainable development: Create a "G20+"

Reacting to the 2008–9 crisis, the Pittsburgh G20 Summit in September 2009 vowed to make the G20 the "premier forum" overseeing international economic and financial cooperation and, thereafter, established the Financial Stability Board to implement reform of international financial regulation and supervision.[263] The global economic governance system needs to be further strengthened to limit the socioeconomic dislocations produced by the current global pandemic, to generate an equitable and broad-based recovery, and to reduce, at large, the volatility of our hyperconnected global economy. Specifically, **a G20+ could accelerate socioeconomic recovery from COVID-19** through enhanced coordination by G20 members with the UN system (and its 174 Member States not represented in the G20), Bretton Woods institutions, and related bodies, supported by a new, small, full-time secretariat. Operationally, this proposal would entail holding the G20 Summit every second year at UN Headquarters, timed to coincide with the gathering of all world leaders at the start of the UN General Assembly in September in New York. While the main policy focus of the G20+ would be priority setting on critical issues for the world economy (including economic crisis response), it should also establish formal links with intergovernmental organizations for implementation and follow-through.

Human rights: Strengthen working ties among key global institutions

With the United States' decision, in June 2018, to withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), this body's credibility and ability to operate effectively has come under further strain. Similarly, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has experienced a backlash from select Western and non-Western countries since its establishment. In light of these and other difficulties, the **ICC, HRC, and the UN Security Council should strengthen their working ties**, as absent such improvements, the ICC's and HRC's authority, capabilities, and overall relevance are severely challenged. In concrete terms, this would entail, for example: i) adopting a protocol or outlining factors that could guide the Security Council when it deliberates on the referral of a situation to the ICC; ii) having the Security Council support ICC action against perpetrators, including enforcing ICC arrest warrants, through sanctions (such as freezing assets); and iii) encouraging a regular, scheduled human rights dialogue between the UN Security Council, HRC, and ICC, drawing on system-wide conflict analysis, early warning, early actions in response to large-scale human rights abuses, and improving cooperation between New York and Geneva-based institutions. With respect to the coronavirus

pandemic response, the reinforced Human Rights Council could afford attention to often neglected Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, as well as fears of a shrinking civic space at the United Nations and in certain Member States.[264]

These three recommendations are illustrative of the kinds of global governance innovations that could both raise the ambition of the UN75 Declaration and complement efforts to achieve worldwide a sustainable, environmentally sound, and equitably shared recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. To advance these inextricably linked agendas, the mandated Secretary-General's report might consider, first and foremost, calling for a UN75 Declaration follow-on intergovernmental negotiation—an idea to which we now turn.

Global recovery & institutional revitalization: A Roadmap to 2023

By harnessing the ideas, capabilities, and networks of governments, international organizations, the business community, and civil society effectively, both a greener recovery from COVID-19 and effective renewal of key global institutions become possible. While continuing to operate in parallel tracks remains an option, pursuing a more holistic, integrated strategy is beneficial in at least three practical ways:

First, to ensure smooth policy coordination: especially on matters of short to medium-term prioritization, sequencing, and budgeting, it may be necessary at times to deconflict policy goals, while steering both comprehensive efforts in the same, unified direction.

Second, to combine resources for public outreach and analysis: central to the skillful management and sustainability of both projects is a robust communications, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation campaign, where a multiplier effect can be achieved through the sharing and streamlining of common public outreach and analytical resources.

Third and most critically, global institutional revitalization can help generate further political momentum for achieving greener global recovery goals and vice-versa: Achieving "early wins" in either track builds confidence among political leaders and the general public alike, creating a virtuous cycle that can improve the political conditions for pursuing more ambitious, complex, and costly global recovery and institutional revitalization goals.

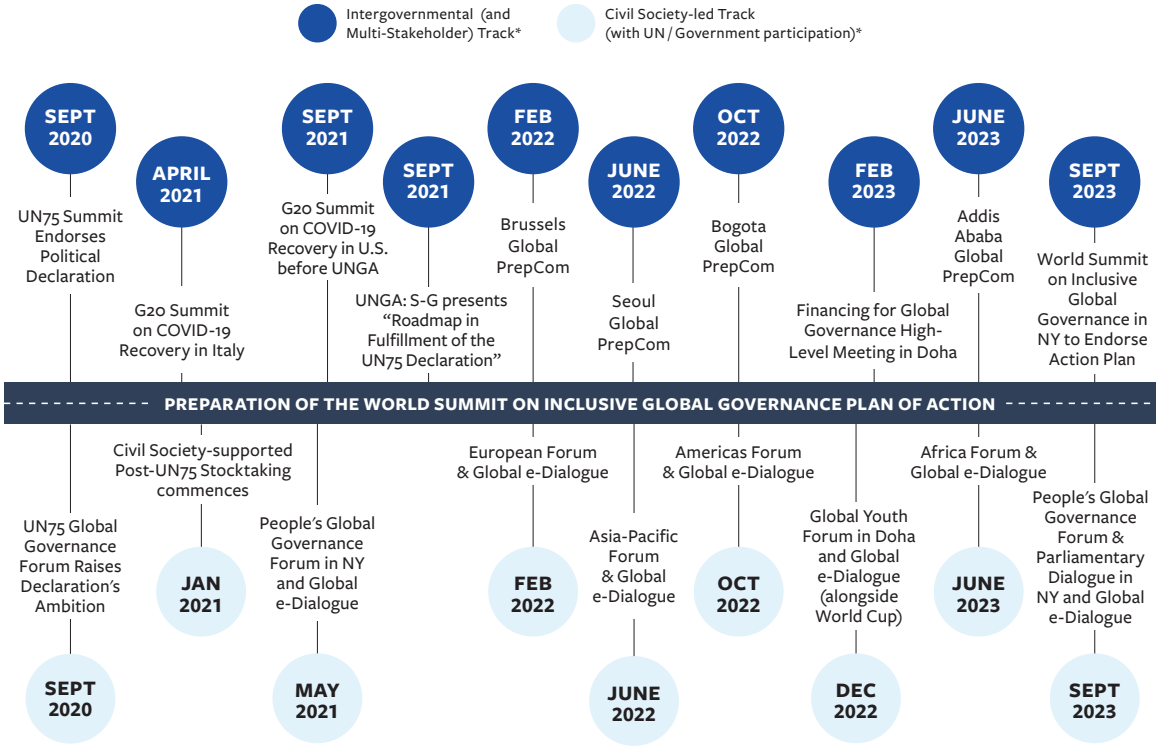
Detractors of this integrated approach will raise concerns about exhausting the scarce political capital of world leaders—and their governments' finite financial and technical resources—by not focusing solely on the most pressing coronavirus recovery challenges, such as vaccine manufacturing and distribution and jump-starting national economies. But it would be shortsighted for international policymakers to neglect, between now and 2023, such long-standing and closely inter-related global challenges as the climate action and refugee crises, violent conflicts, cyber-attacks, and deepening inequality worldwide. Capable international institutions are essential to effectively address key aspects of all of these pressing issues.

Simultaneous pursuit of recovery from COVID-19 itself, a greener post-COVID economy, and revitalized global institutions is a vision and strategy for building back better in a manner that leverages global and regional cooperation for the benefit of all nations and peoples. As detailed in Figure 6, a comprehensive roadmap for advancing this unified agenda, between 2021 and 2023, could entail a series of foundational milestones en route to a culminating World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance in September 2023, including:

- Two G20 Summits, proposed for April and September 2021, could begin to signal high-level political support for the 2023 Summit, while promoting a joined-up plan for recovery from COVID-19 that underscores coordinated macroeconomic, social, and environmental policies and programs across countries and regions.
- In the lead-up to the next UNGA High-Level Week (September 2021), release of

Figure 6: Roadmap to the 2023 Summit

(recommended)



** Only select recommended activities listed.*

the Secretary-General's mandated UN75 follow-on report, which ideally would recommend a multi-stakeholder-supported, two-year intergovernmental negotiation toward a World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance in 2023. World leaders during this UNGA High-Level Week could also formally endorse a global strategy, for 2021–23, aimed at a durable, green, and broad-based recovery from the coronavirus.

- The 2023 Summit's Preparatory Committees (PrepComs) could be organized, in 2022 and early 2023, around the four thematic baskets of, i) peace and security and humanitarian action; ii) sustainable development and COVID-19 recovery; iii) human rights, the rule of law, and inclusive governance; and (iv) climate crisis abatement (as well as a fifth, informal basket on overarching topics to promote integrated, system-wide reforms). Each basket could be led by a manageably sized Working Group, co-chaired by developing and developed country UN Permanent Representatives appointed by the President of the General Assembly. The Summit, PrepComs, and Working Groups should be supported by a UN Director-General and a well-resourced secretariat team (including secondments from the international financial institutions, World Trade Organization, and regional organizations) that report directly to the Secretary-General.
- The Working Groups would engage state and nonstate actors, including by commissioning independent research from universities and policy research institutes, encouraging bold and creative ideas from

young leaders, and participating in civil society-led forums and global e-dialogues, held in conjunction with each PrepCom rotated between different regions.

- Before the final PrepCom, a High-Level Meeting on Financing for Global Governance could be held, in February 2023, in Doha, Qatar—akin to the July 2015 Addis Ababa Financing for Development Conference that preceded the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—and give special attention to public-private financing gaps in support of a durable, green, and broad-based recovery from the coronavirus. Immediately following the final PrepCom, in July 2023 at UN Headquarters, linkages would also be encouraged with the midpoint (High-Level Political Forum) review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- To be convened in September 2023, at the start of UNGA High-Level Week in New York, the World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance would seek to upgrade and equip the global governance system to address major issues facing the international community, and to usher in a new compact with citizens to enhance and rebuild confidence in their multilateral institutions. In doing so, it would aspire to take forward the UN75 Declaration's vision and commitments and associated Secretary-General follow-through recommendations.

From November 21–22, 2020, the G20 held a virtual summit, where both emergency and longer-term socioeconomic responses to the coronavirus featured prominently, including on matters of vaccine production and distribution, debt relief, and macroeconomic policy coordination. Engaging world leaders, the UN General Assembly will convene a special session, December 3–4 2020, in response to the pandemic. While the forum is expected to lend political weight to the fundamental role of the UN system (and the World Health Organization in particular) in the comprehensive global response to COVID-19, it is noteworthy that no final joint statement is planned for what even the President of the General Assembly has called "… a belated first step."[265] It is indeed remarkable that such a significant gathering is being convened ten months after the WHO declared a public health emergency.[266]

On April 16, 2020 and June 26, 2020 (Charter Day), and then again on November 12, 2020, at the Paris Peace Forum, the sixty-six-country-members, plus the European Union, Alliance for Multilateralism lent its political support to the World Health Organization for its work on the coronavirus crisis and put forward proposals to strengthen the multilateral health architecture.[267] Similarly, on September 25, 2020, during UNGA High-Level Week in New York, the Alliance's members once again recommitted to international rules and enhanced cooperation through the United Nations System. When even more countries, especially the largest and most powerful, step up in this manner, the current international leadership gap identified by the UN Secretary-General at the outset of this report can be overcome through "multilateral institutions that can act decisively, based on global consent, for the global good."[268]

Diversity, diplomacy, and dialogue are fundamental values of the Doha Forum and need to be embraced as well by governments, if our now seventy-five-year-old world organization is to cope effectively with new crises, such as COVID-19, and old ones, including runaway climate change, rising political violence, menacing cyber-attacks, and growing inequality within and between countries. In this age of epidemic uncertainty, diversity implies not only welcoming disparate perspectives but new global actors, from within civil society and the business community, that bring unique talents and resources to problem-solving across borders. Adopting the tenets of skillful diplomacy and vigorous dialogue, a more diverse and inclusive global governance system would serve as a bulwark against violent extremism, environmental degradation, and human suffering, while spurring peoples and nations in their search, both individually and collectively, for peace, resilience, and human dignity.

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COPING WITH NEW AND OLD CRISES

Global and Regional Cooperation in an Age of Epidemic Uncertainty

DOHA FORUM REPORT 2020

"If COVID-19 recovery really is intended to 'build back better,' then it must reach the largest number of people possible, including the most vulnerable, and be sustainable." —Foreword to *Coping with New and Old Crises* (2020), Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani and Gro Harlem Brundtland

"Whether the challenge is preventing the spread of ruinous weapons, delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, or coping better with disruptive new technologies and the calamitous effects of climate change, the world needs more effective tools and approaches for collective action." —Foreword to *Reimagining Governance in a Multipolar World* (2019), Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani and Ban Ki-moon

** Only select recommended activities listed.*

As a contribution to the UN General Assembly's Heads of State and Government Special Session in Response to COVID-19 (December 3-4, 2020), the Doha Forum Report 2020 examines the leadership deficit in multilateral cooperation toward both the coronavirus pandemic and other existing and emerging global challenges, including runaway climate change, rising political violence, menacing cyber-attacks, and growing inequality within and between countries. It finds that present international efforts are too often fragmented, delayed, ad hoc, and under-resourced, while pointing to promising new public-private partnerships to spur innovation through new technologies and to promote decent job and wealth creation opportunities. The report also recommends a roadmap for a durable, green, and broad-based global recovery and institutional revitalization, culminating in a 2023 World Summit on Inclusive Global Governance. With the recent news on the expected arrival of one or more effective vaccines, the road to recovery must chart a bold new course and avoid a return to the "old normal" of unsustainable practices.

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