

# Update on UNDP's Socio-economic Response

## Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030

25 January 2021 - Briefing Note #2

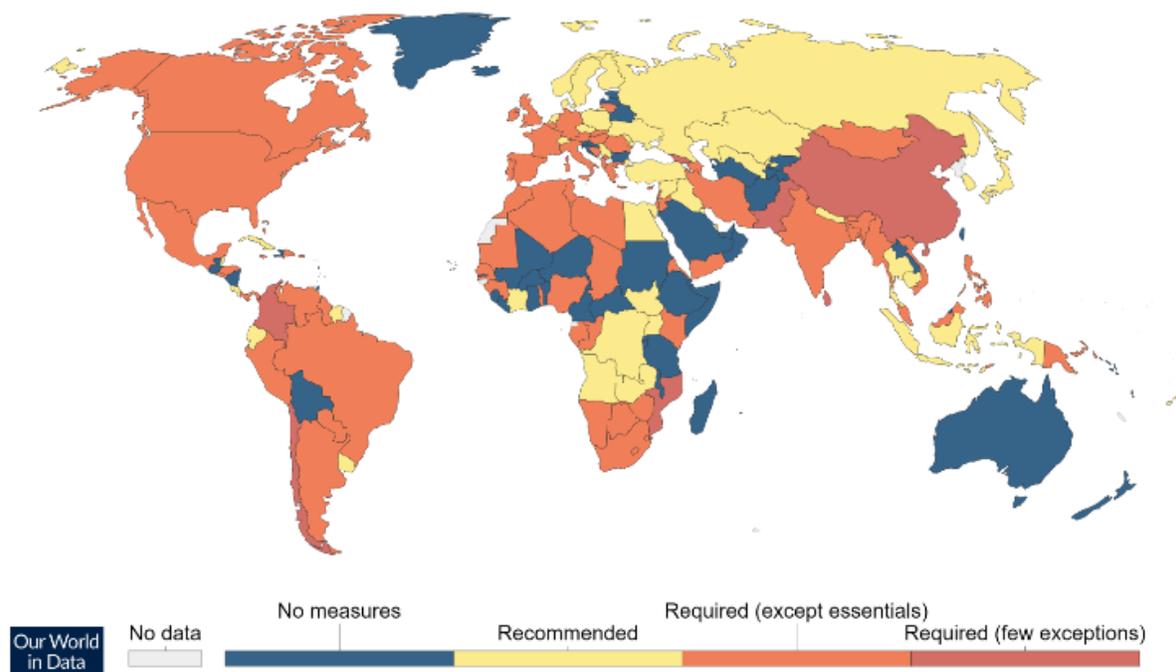


*The Executive Board, during its Annual Session held in June 2020, welcomed UNDP's "commitment to help programme countries respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and [...] UNDP's technical lead on the socio-economic response and recovery efforts under the United Nations Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, under the leadership of the resident coordinators and working in collaboration with stakeholders and other development partners". Furthermore, the Executive Board requested (Decision 2020/4) that "UNDP provide an update on its work and on the impact of the pandemic on operations and programmatic activities, beginning from the second regular session 2020". This is the second briefing note to the Executive Board to provide such an update<sup>1</sup>.*

### COVID-19 Impact on Countries

1. The global epidemiological curve has not flattened – and is currently reaching the highest daily rates of new cases and deaths since March of 2020. The health, social and economic impact of COVID-19 across countries continues to evolve with more than 97 million confirmed cases and over 2 million deaths globally (as of 25 January). Two out of three COVID-19 deaths happened in developing countries, the second wave of confirmed cases continuing to drive the number of deaths in Europe and the USA upwards and the emergence of COVID variants is presenting new challenges.

#### Stay-at-home requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jan 24, 2021



Source: Hale, Webster, Petherick, Phillips, and Kira (2020). Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker – Last updated 24 January, 20:00 (London time)

Note: There may be sub-national or regional differences in restrictions. The policy categories shown may not apply at all sub-national levels. A country is coded as having these restrictions if at least some sub-national regions have implemented them.

OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

2. As of late January, many countries are still putting in place containment, social distancing and stay-at-home measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus --with continued direct impacts on the livelihoods of millions of people, in particular the poorest and most vulnerable (see map above). This is mostly prominent in countries with workforces comprised largely of informal workers, where countries lack capacity to economically balance the effects of containment, and the vulnerable and marginalized communities bear the brunt of the economic and health losses.

3. The time horizon for Covid-19 response and recovery is expected to extend across three years: in the short run, the Covid-19 response period runs through the end of 2021, as vaccinations and therapeutics allow a more robust reopening of economies and societies. However inequitable access to these methods between and within countries present a danger to reopening and building resilient societies. According to WHO (as of 18 January 2021), more than 39 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have now been administered in at least 49 higher-income countries, but just 25 doses have been given in one lowest-income country. In the longer run, partial recovery pathways, W- or L-shaped shaped rebounds will stretch a further 3 years into 2024. This horizon reflects the lapse of time needed to return to 2019 levels of income per capita, trade flows, tourism, remittances and commodity prices.

## UNDP Socio-economic Technical Lead Role for the COVID-19 Response

4. The United Nations has mobilized the full capacity of the UN System through its 131 country teams serving 162 countries and territories, to support national authorities in developing public health preparedness and socio-economic response plans to COVID-19. As of April 2020, the UN's support has been delivered through five pillars of action<sup>2</sup> contained in the UN global framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19. The socio-economic response complements the UN health response, led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the humanitarian response led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The UN Secretary-General has entrusted UNDP with the technical lead for the socio-economic response to COVID-19 at the country level, supporting the UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) by leveraging the wider system to develop and implement the socio-economic response.

5. **To date, UNDP, in collaboration with the broader UN system, has supported the preparation of 144 socio-economic impact assessments (SEIAs) in 97 countries and five regions<sup>3</sup>, often jointly with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs)<sup>4</sup>, European Union, and other partners, including rapid and in-depth assessments of affected economic sectors and population groups, as the situation continues to evolve<sup>5</sup>.**

6. The picture emerging from the SEIAs is one of rapidly deteriorating fiscal space needed to avoid a humanitarian crisis and a protracted economic crisis in the most vulnerable countries. Governments in developing countries have repurposed vast amounts of fiscal resources, averaging about 4% of GDP for MICs and 2% for LDCs – yet fiscal gaps remain. Issues of debt, domestic resource mobilization, expenditure switching, and increased levels of international financial assistance urgently need to be prioritized to avoid this, and to lay the foundation for building forward better. These were also some of the main action points highlighted under the High-level meeting on “Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond” held in September 2020.

7. **Impact assessments show that the three most covered issues (protection of vulnerable groups, jobs/livelihoods and fiscal space/debt issues) are likely to continue to play out in 2021.**

By mid-2021 we expect a new wave of SEIAs to illuminate the depth of COVID-19 impact as well as the mitigating effects of policy responses. The wealth of primary UNDP data will be a unique asset to scope pathways out of the crisis and is expected to ignite a new conversation on our programmatic and operational positioning for future iterations of the offer. A focus on leaving no one behind (LNOB), vulnerabilities, exclusions, discrimination and the effects of pre-existing inequalities stand out as a strong unifying theme.

8. **Impact assessments also show that governance/rule of law/justice/social cohesion issues and the need for a strong gender empowerment agenda are being flagged as the toll of the crisis sets in:** governance, social cohesion, rule of law and human rights challenges are escalating around the world – with social protests in all five regions of the world; a surge in gender-based violence related to containment policies: with an increasing risk of depression, aggression and episodes of violent behavior; the health and socio-economic impacts on marginalized communities show glaring inequalities. The pandemic is exacerbating pre-existing racial and ethnic exclusions, hurting marginalized groups the most. The next wave of SEIAs (in 2021) are expected to deliver deeper analytical dives on all of these issues.

9. **A mammoth effort has also been undertaken by UN Country Teams to raise the number and quality of UN Socio-economic Response Plans (SERPs), steered by the UNRC and technical lead support by UNDP.** Back in July, only 32 out of 131 SERPs had been developed. Currently, over 90% of UNCTs have a plan in place (a total of 119 plans covering 137 countries)<sup>6</sup>. UN SERPs reflect a comprehensive and a coordinated approach by the UNCTs working with IFIs, bilateral donors, private sector and civil society actors to provide a joint response framework aligned with government plans and priorities. It is estimated that about 56% of SERPs received some input from the World Bank, 32% from the IMF.

10. **Within the COVID-19 response and recovery, UNDP must capitalize on its recognized areas of strength based on its technical and programmatic expertise – by governments, UNCTs, and partners – to meet the needs of countries. Further investments must be made to ensure these areas are forward-looking.** Across a majority of SERPs (119 plans) at the UNCT level, UNDP often leads 3 out of the 5 pillars of the UN global framework for the immediate socio-economic response at the country level<sup>7</sup>. These include pillar 3 on the economic response and recovery, including work on jobs and livelihoods and MSMEs recovery; pillar 4 on macroeconomic response, in collaboration with IFIs and Regional Economic Commissions; and pillar 5 on social cohesion and community resilience. Under pillar 1 on health, led by WHO, UNDP continues to play a critical role in the procurement of PPE and other essential health supplies (including COVID-19 test kits).

11. **Funding/financing of UN socio-economic plans will be at the epicentre of COVID-19 recovery efforts in 2021.** The average funding gap of the costed SERPs amounts to \$48mn; totaling \$12.39bn. The significant funding gaps identified in these SERPs clearly pose significant constraints to the ability to deliver the envisioned results. In various COVID-19 socio-economic response plans, a clear linkage with the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) process is articulated as a tool to understand the national financing for development landscape. Understanding how to finance the COVID-19 recovery will be critical as countries grapple with further contraction of fiscal space and inflows of external resources, mounting liquidity pressures which may jeopardize short-term response as well as long-term recovery.

12. With the approval of 62 proposals on SDG financing by the Joint SDG Fund in June, UNDP is involved in the roll-out of the INFF at country level, working together with 15 UN Agencies, the UN Resident Coordinator's Offices (RCOs) and UNCTs to align support for the COVID-19 recovery. Preliminary reporting suggests 41 out of 58 INFFs<sup>8</sup> have established a link between their INFF

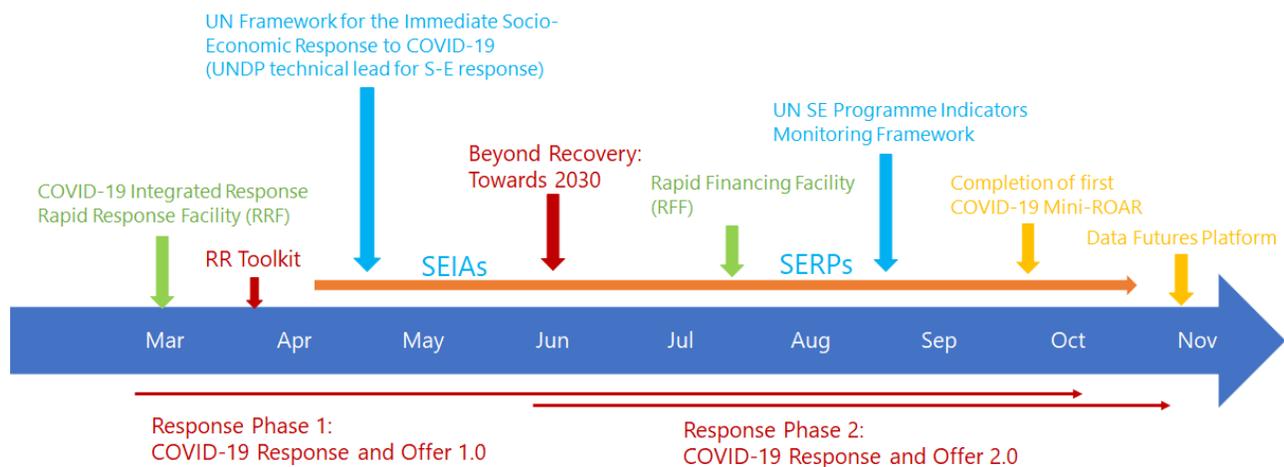
programming with the COVID-19 recovery. Examples include –linking socio-economic impact assessments with development finance assessments and other finance diagnostics; working to establish financing strategies for socio-economic recovery plans and or medium-term development plans post COVID-19. Moving forward, more needs to be done. Advocating and supporting governments to align their finance with green, equitable and resilient recovery strategies requires a joint UN effort.

13. The socio-economic response plans enabled an emergency development response to COVID-19 to supplement the existing UNDAFs or Cooperation Frameworks. Now that countries are combining actions towards the COVID-19 response and recovery, UNDP COs and the broader UNCTs will need to think longer term. The socio-economic impact assessments and the socio-economic response plans are useful building blocks for a new generation of common country analysis (CCAs) and cooperation frameworks (UN sustainable development cooperation frameworks), including for the 40 or so UN country teams that will be preparing new cooperation frameworks in 2021. For the remaining, the socio-economic response plans will need to be integrated into the existing programmes, through adjustments to Joint Work Plans, as required on a country-by-country basis.

### UNDP’s COVID-19 Response

14. UNDP responded swiftly to the COVID-19 crisis, through multiple channels, starting with Offer 1.0 focused on preparedness, response and recovery. It followed with a technical lead role for the UN socio-economic response, and developed an Offer 2.0 focused on social protection, governance, digital disruption and green recovery services. UNDP’s operational efforts were channeled through the RRF and RFF funds, partnerships with UN agencies and IFIs, thought leadership and communications.

15. An abridged illustration of UNDP’s COVID-19 Response is provided below. The infographic aggregates milestones for UNDP’s policy and programmatic offer (Red); key UNDP’s operational and financing mechanisms created to rapidly support countries (Green)<sup>9</sup>; and data and monitoring systems (Yellow). UNDP’s efforts are anchored in the broader UN Framework for the immediate Socio-Economic Response (Blue).

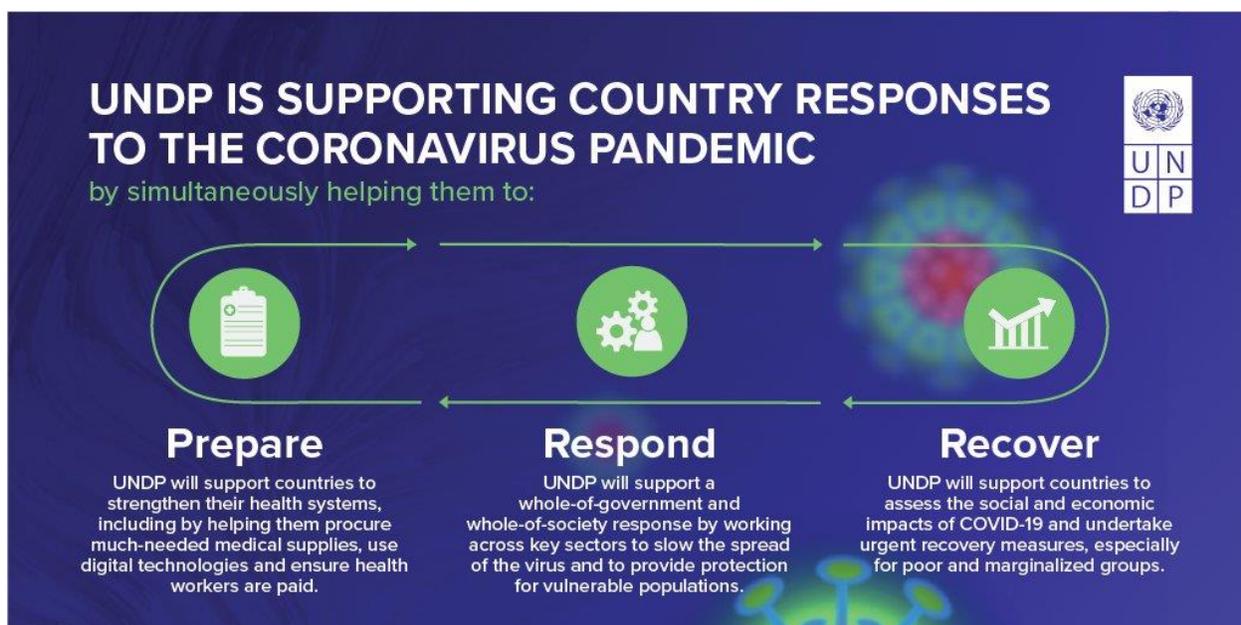


16. UNDP’s Global COVID-19 Programme Offer 1.0 provided many firsts for the organization. It was the first truly global rapid response for UNDP. Operating under uncertainty, it was the first time to working fully digitally, with a mega structure of 154 Country Offices and 17,000 staff connected globally

and moving to teleworking. Offer 1.0, with a gender-responsive approach, incorporated: (i) health systems strengthening to respond to COVID-19; (ii) inclusive and multi-sectoral crisis management and responses; and (iii) addressing the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19.

17. The next phase of UNDP's programmatic offer (Offer 2.0) was designed to help decision-makers make choices and manage complexity during uncertainty in four integrated areas: governance and agency, including rule of law, protection of human rights, and supporting government's business continuity amid the crisis; protecting people including through social protection, restoring livelihoods, and investing in SMEs; investments in a sustainable recovery by potentializing a green economy; and leveraging digital disruption. These four integrated areas were identified through the emerging demands from countries and against seven tipping points that set a pathway beyond recovery<sup>10</sup>.

18. Responses to COVID-19 are taking place at varying speeds, and multiple levels of scale across programme countries. Below is a snapshot of the emerging pathways, trends, as well as responses across countries supported by UNDP, in collaboration with the broader UN system and external partners. The sequencing of policy responses followed by different countries are not uniform, but three major pathways along with the need to prepare, respond, and recover.



19. A number of no-regret actions in the COVID-19 response have emerged. They are multifaceted and interlocked, and include: i) targeted technical activities necessary for translating ideas into action (task forces, planning); ii) immediate direct support to fill gaps in resources (procurement of supplies, technology distribution); iii) large-scale for medium-to-long term infrastructure changes (reskilling labor, moving institutions online, monitoring systems); iv) awareness building, safety advice, and combating misinformation; v) institutional transitions to digital environments and online work; vi) repurposing of existing infrastructure to facilitate large-scale distribution and monitoring; and vii) recovery planning focused on anticipated medium to long-term issues.

### COVID-19 Response: Policy Thinking Guiding an Approach Beyond Recovery

20. As the COVID-19 pandemic hit countries globally, UNDP estimated that **global human development, as the combined measure of the world's education, health and living standards,**

**was on course to decline for the first time in 30 years.** COVID-19 has triggered massive disruptions in economies, jobs and livelihoods, social well-being and social contracts. Economic shocks have affected countries before health shocks, through macroeconomic transmission channels, and the negative socio-economic impacts are expected to persist after the health crisis for years to come<sup>11</sup>.

21. UNDP's technical paper on "**Temporary Basic Income: Protecting Poor and Vulnerable People in Developing Countries**", provided estimates of a minimum guaranteed income above the poverty line, for vulnerable people in 132 developing countries. As the socio-economic impact of the crisis deepened, many countries topped-up or expanded existing social assistance or cash transfer programmes to reach vulnerable populations – informal workers, self-employed workers, domestic and unpaid care work, as well as migrant and internally displaced populations. Moving forward, the looming debt crisis is already severely limiting the capacity of countries to roll out TBIs and other social protection schemes.

22. UNDP continues to advocate for a Temporary Basic Income to mitigate the immediate negative socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, and Universal Health Coverage to build resilience of societies and reduce the burden of health-related expenses. Even before the pandemic, [100 million people](#) were pushed into extreme poverty every year because of healthcare out-of-pocket expenditures. UNDP's Temporary Basic Income [simulator](#) shows how much it would cost to lift the vulnerable out of poverty in 132 countries. A smart combination of integrated policy solutions – be it TBI, UHC and removal of fossil fuel subsidies – may deliver greater results to accelerate progress on the SDGs.

23. The choices countries make during the COVID-19 response will frame their recovery pathway. The pivotal decisions that countries across the globe are now taking must be underpinned by reliable data --by a clear picture of how COVID-19 is rapidly changing the development landscape around the world and on options available. UNDP launched a new [COVID-19 Data Futures Platform](#) – an open access and interactive platform that pulls data from the UN, non-profits, academia, private sector partners, development partners and countries around the world. The platform is a collection of data, analysis, visualizations, insights, and interactive tools that support strategic decision-making. It enables simulations for users to visualize the impacts of various socio-economic policies and interventions across the globe.

24. During the pandemic, women have lost more jobs, shouldered a greater share of unpaid work, and suffered a surge in domestic violence. UNDP and UN Women's [COVID-19 Global Gender Tracker](#) shows that some countries are including gender as part of their pandemic response efforts, including to tackle gender-based violence (GBV). But so far, according to the Tracker, the global response is largely blind to women and girls' needs and very few countries have designed their public policy response packages to be gender-sensitive.

25. COVID-19 has led to a stark SDG regress across the goals. Progress toward the SDGs will be shaped by interactions between many global systems, COVID-19, and the special efforts that national societies and the global community are making to address the pandemic and (re)set themselves on accelerated sustainable development pathways. UNDP and Pardee Center (University of Denver) have simulated the pathway scenarios of the pandemic's impact on the SDGs. This includes a 'high damage' scenario, where economic recovery is delayed, further impairing the ability of governments to invest on the SDGs. Under this scenario, COVID-19 is likely to push an additional 207 million people into extreme poverty by 2030 and increase the female poverty headcount by an additional 102 million compared to that baseline. This could push the number of people living in extreme poverty to over 1 billion by 2030. The study also includes an SDG Push Scenario to illustrate the types of investments

necessary to accelerate progress by 2030 – including increased governance efficiency, behavioral changes (production and consumption), and big investments (digitalization and green recovery).

26. As we build back from the pandemic, in its 30th anniversary year, **UNDP's 2020 Human Development Report focuses on Human Development and the Anthropocene** notes that no country in the world has yet achieved very high human development without putting immense strain on the planet. It includes a new experimental index on human progress that takes into account countries' carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint. With the Planetary-Pressures Adjusted HDI a new global picture emerges. More than 50 countries drop out of the very high human development group, reflecting their dependence on fossil fuels and material footprint. Despite these adjustments, countries like Costa Rica, Moldova, and Panama move upwards by at least 30 places, recognizing that lighter pressure on the planet is possible.

27. The relevance of financing for development within the COVID-19 recovery agenda cannot be understated. UNDP has been actively involved in **UN's Financing for Development processes**. UNDP facilitated the discussion group on "Recovering Better for Sustainability", which provided over 270 policy recommendations. In 2021, UNDP will be leading the work under the cluster on "Aligning budgets and finance with the SDGs, INFFs, NDCs and climate finance".

28. Overall, UNDP's thought leadership and knowledge production to inform our COVID-19 response and recovery is guided by its integrator role at the country level, to assist the UN Resident Coordinators and the UNCTs, to facilitate more integrated analyses, planning and implementation to deliver a multidimensional approach to the SDGs<sup>12</sup>.

## UNDP's 2.0 Offer – Snapshot of UNDP's COVID-19 Response on the Ground

29. The COVID-19 crisis is pushing governments to rethink development problems, ways of working and use of existing resources, and to come up with innovative and scalable solutions to help fight the spread of virus. Across regions, the COVID-19 pandemic has proved as an opportunity to accelerate systems transformation toward more inclusive, accountable and sustainable models, leveraging innovation and digitalization.

### Impact assessments

30. In **Lesotho**, UNDP found that COVID-19 increased the number of vulnerable households by nearly 50% due to loss of employment and income. As part of the [National Response](#), UNDP is supporting Lesotho to meet emerging needs, including linking local producers with e-commerce markets.

31. UNDP is providing the Government of **Afghanistan** with socioeconomic impact assessments of the pandemic and working together with all partners on an integrated post-pandemic recovery programme to minimize the severity of the pandemic on the citizens<sup>13</sup>.

32. COVID-19 has created new challenges for **Iran's** 3 million Women-Headed Households. UNDP is helping the Government to assess the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on these vulnerable households and facilitate the exchange of best practices from other countries<sup>14</sup>.

33. UNDP helped design a situation room to support the Government of **Bolivia**, staffed with technical experts from UNRCO, PAHO, OCHA, WFP and UNDP. The situation room supports joint decision-making and intersectoral actions aimed at containing COVID-19 and mitigating its impact by

making available data and strategic information (e.g., on health systems, economic systems, social aspects), establishing a multisectoral team, integrating and analysing sectoral data for scenario modelling and generating daily information products for the Inter-Ministerial Committee.

34. UNDP, with UN Women and FAO, led a socio-economic assessment of pandemic impact on businesses and households in **Ukraine**. The report presents findings of two surveys, which reached 974 owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and 1,022 households in the city of Kyiv<sup>15</sup>.

35. In response to the current situation around the excess amount of medical waste and the urgent need for its proper disposal, UNDP **Kyrgyzstan** is involved in assessing and improving this system and conducting a rapid study of the environmental impact of waste generated from COVID-19. In addition, more than 600 employees of 42 medical institutions will receive training in medical waste management<sup>16</sup>.

36. UNDP SDG impact finalized 5 COVID-19 Rapid Assessment to complement the analysis under the SDG Investor Maps in **Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Ghana**.

37. Lastly, but not least, UNDP developed the [Integrated Digital Assessments Initiative](#) (IDA) to assess the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable Households and MSMEs through rapid, reliable and end-to-end digital data driven solutions. Leveraging innovative open-sourced technologies, [IDA](#) established a mechanism that fully-remotely has supported over 40 COs in conducting digital SEIAs with primary data collection often focused on vulnerable groups. The initiative has also built capacity across 65 countries for digital assessments consolidating UNDP's role as an integrator in Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. UNDP digital SEIAs allowed for ground-breaking exercises, such as the first digital needs assessments on indigenous communities in Suriname.

### Protecting people and strengthening health systems

38. UNDP is supporting **Honduras** in launching a “single voucher” social protection programme aimed at supporting the most vulnerable population affected by COVID-19. It's a one-time subsidy of \$82 delivered through an electronic voucher that can be exchanged for food, medicine, or medical supplies and will benefit up to 260,000 people over three months<sup>17</sup>.

39. UNDP, with support from DFID, and the **Bangladesh** Government, is rolling out US\$1.5 million in emergency support for 50,000 poor urban families. Around 1200 community workers, with full personal protection, are working on the ground to promote coronavirus prevention awareness, and distribution of hygiene packages that include soap and hand sanitizer, among poor urban households. The project has started installation of 2,500 hand washing facilities in poor settlements and is working to sensitize and build capacities of health officials and volunteers in 20 cities.

40. The **Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC), has launched a new COVID-19 testing centre thanks to support from UNDP and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)<sup>18</sup>. UNDP helped the Ministry of Health, Public Hygiene, and Universal Access to Health Care in **Togo** to open mobile clinics to screen remote populations. These mobile clinics are equipped with laboratory compartments for the care and services of isolated rural communities<sup>19</sup>.

41. Containing the potentially rapid spread of COVID-19 is an urgent priority. Scaling up health programmes, helping governments buy the health products and ensuring strong supply chains must be done in a way that builds national capacity and innovates while also using existing systems where possible. UNDP, with funding from the Global Fund, has been supporting the Ministry of Health in **Burundi** since 2017<sup>20</sup>. This understanding of the country context is imperative as the health landscape is constantly evolving.

42. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, a pilot mobile healthcare service implemented by UNDP is increasing access to health and social care services for vulnerable families living in isolation in rural **Albania**, due to the on-going lack of infrastructure and healthcare services, as well as to improve the health index at municipal level<sup>21</sup>. In **Niger**, UNDP handed over equipment to fight the COVID-19 pandemic to the Ministry of Public Health as a second wave of the disease hits several countries<sup>22</sup>.

43. Since March 2020, UNDP has worked alongside the Government of **Iraq** and the international community on combatting coronavirus. Measures under the response package include increasing the testing capacity of laboratories, providing personal protective equipment to healthcare workers, establishing isolation wards, and undertaking assessments to establish post-COVID-19 recovery strategies. Focusing on the most vulnerable communities in Iraq, activities will be rolled out in 13 facilities selected by local authorities in the underserved areas of Anbar, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Dohuk, Babil, Basra, Karbala, Najaf, Misan, Ninewa and Salah Al-Din<sup>23</sup>.

44. In **Sao Tome and Principe**, a team of psychologists working with UNDP and the Ministry of Health, has launched an initiative—“SOS Saúde Mental COVID-19”—aimed at mitigating the emotional and psychological impact of the pandemic on people known or believed to have contracted the virus, health workers, and other frontline workers and their families<sup>24</sup>.

45. In **India**, UNDP and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) launched a psycho-social counselling helpline, “iCALL.” This helpline will provide vulnerable population accessible, affordable counselling services through telephonic, email, and chat-based facilities to individuals in distress across 13 states.

46. An estimated 27% of Syrians live with from some form of disability. For many, the pandemic lockdowns further exacerbated exclusion. For instance, the country recorded low number of students with disabilities applying for high school exams. To fight exclusion, UNDP in Syria is running a crowdfunding campaign “[Un-silence my world](#)” to support persons with disabilities, including by facilitating stable internet connectivity. UNDP also supported **Syria**’s first [online psychosocial support platform](#). In the two months since its August 2020 launch, more than 2,500 women and young girls grappling with stress caused by COVID-19 were served.

47. In **Georgia**, UNDP is assisting the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) to establish an e-learning platform. The platform provides doctors, nurses and administrative staff with an opportunity to attend training courses and certificate programmes, exchange experiences and receive practical advice from NCDC experts. This initiative covers 37 medical institutions and the NCDC’s 60 regional centers. The e-learning platform aims to deliver health emergency response training to 4,000 medical workers to reach at risk populations including people living with HIV.

#### [Economic response and recovery, including inclusive and green initiatives](#)

48. COVID-19 has impacted women disproportionately. The gender gap is expected to get worse if adequate financing is not channeled to the most pressing priorities for women and girls, and gains made over decades in reducing gender inequalities are feared to be lost due to the pandemic. UNDP and UNCDF are adapting the Inclusive and Equitable Local Development (IELD) program’s financing tools including the Women’s Economic Empowerment Index (WEEI) as important mechanisms for evidence-based gender responsive economic recovery process. The WEEI tool was used in **Bangladesh** to provide recovery funds through the Credit Guarantee Scheme unit of Bangladesh Bank to support women SMEs affected by COVID-19. The Government of Bangladesh has expanded the UNCDF supported credit guarantee scheme with its own funds of \$2.35 million in order to enable further

disbursements of the country's broader stimulus package (\$2 billion) aimed to revamp the local economy.

49. In **Yemen**, UNDP with the World Bank and its national partners — the Social Fund for Development and the Public Works Project — has made women's empowerment and protection central to its projects<sup>25</sup>. Nearly 800 of these projects generated work and much-needed cash for over 63,000 women. These opportunities enabled them to not only contribute to their communities, they also provided much needed income for water, food, shelter, health and education. Yemen, March 2020.

50. In **Cambodia**, Tree Planting Initiative rolls out as part of COVID-19 Response Package that UNDP is supporting to provide cash for work to support rural communities. The cash for work programme is engaging over 1,600 rural households in the provinces of Pursat and Siem Reap to plant local trees, establish nurseries, and participate in other conservation activities across Cambodia. It comes at a time when tens of thousands of Cambodians have lost their jobs in the wake of the pandemic<sup>26</sup>. **Paraguay's** Ministry of Environment has teamed-up with UNDP to [green the capital city of Asunción](#). UNDP is also working to [advance green cities](#) in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

51. With national partners, UNDP is helping almost 1000 people in **Pakistan** to meet their immediate needs during the COVID-19 crisis through cash for work<sup>27</sup>. In **Nepal**, a livelihoods recovery project launched by UNDP in partnership with local government is helping the vulnerable communities in Nepal to get short-term job opportunities during the pandemic, directly benefitting over 5,000 women and men<sup>28</sup>. In the **Philippines**, UNDP's DOST-Philippines GRIND program — Grassroots Innovation for Inclusive Development — is helping citizens manage and adapt to the new realities of surviving and thriving under COVID-19.

52. UNDP and the **Ghana** Statistical Service (GSS) released the Ghana COVID-19 Local Economies Tracker Results, which highlights the challenges of vulnerable communities to inform policy and non-governmental organization's interventions in helping communities recover from the pandemic<sup>29</sup>. A second COVID-19 Business Tracker by UNDP and the World Bank shows that although businesses are recovering, revenues still fall short.

53. UNCDF is supporting 10 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to boost green employment and enterprise opportunities for women, youth and returning migrants. The GrEEN initiative<sup>30</sup> is financing interventions to support communities to respond to the pandemic. It has piloted two crowdfunding solutions to support entrepreneurs and MSMEs in Ashanti and Western regions in **Ghana** with a source of financing to scale up recovery innovations.

54. In **Nigeria**, UNDP, Japan, and the European Union (EU), in partnership with Lagos State and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, & Social Development, have launched a cash transfer project targeting the poor and vulnerable in Lagos state. Funded by Japan and the European Union with \$7.7 million, the project will benefit an estimated 9,600 families and 2,500 small and medium-sized businesses<sup>31</sup>.

55. In **Mali**, UNDP partners with the Tony Elumelu Foundation to train, coach, and finance 10,000 young Malian entrepreneurs over three years to support economic recovery and offer new opportunities to small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal economy<sup>32</sup>.

56. UNDP is helping expand livelihoods, support refugees, host communities, border security, and COVID-19 response in **Uganda** — the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. The initiative focuses on gender-responsive livelihood opportunities and helping the country's 1.4 million refugees and their host communities to sustainably manage environmental resources<sup>33</sup>.

57. COVID-19 and government-imposed measure to curb it have slashed jobs globally—with informal workers and those in the restaurant, tourism, construction, and transport businesses especially at risk. In **Belarus**, UNDP -- with EU support, as part of its EU4Business Initiative -- is helping newly unemployed people find new careers in eco-farming.

58. Many UNDP Accelerator Labs have responded to the precipitous drops in job numbers and income through measures that support small businesses — the lifeblood of most economies. For example, the **Argentina**<sup>34</sup> team is piloting several solutions to sustain financially vulnerable people and SMEs during the lockdown, including a #PayInAdvance platform that allows people to pay for services they will receive after the lockdown, supporting cashflows in small business and informal enterprises in the meantime. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**<sup>35</sup>, the Lab team saw an opportunity to create a Groupon-style deal campaign to support SMEs and surveyed 1,000 people to evaluate and refine the concept.

59. UNDP and 16 other United Nations agencies, plus six international financial institutions (IFIs), are working together in **Uzbekistan** to address COVID-19's devastating impacts on the Central Asian republic—creating jobs, re-skilling migrant workers, delivering medical and protective gear and providing vital information and expertise to Uzbekistan's 33 million people<sup>36</sup>.

60. The COVID-19 Private Sector Global Facility was launched in partnership with UN Global Compact, and International Chamber of Commerce's (ICC) and three private sector partners - DHL, Microsoft, and Pricewaterhousecoopers (PwC) with a target of supporting 100,000 SMEs. Throughout the pandemic, the Connecting Business Initiative (CBI) has been assisting business networks with over 50,000 member companies across the globe in COVID-19 response, including a COVID-19 guidance for the private sector, in four continents including in **Côte D'Ivoire, Madagascar, Philippines, Haiti, Sri Lanka, Mexico, and Turkey**.

#### Leveraging digitalization for a rapid response

61. To date, more than 80 of UNDP's country offices have launched over 250 digital responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. These responses include not only digital solutions, but also technology guidance and infrastructure and capacity building.

62. In **India**, UNDP, together with WHO, UNICEF and others is supporting the Government's rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. UNDP helped to develop the eVIN vaccine supply chain and temperature monitoring system for 28,500 vaccine storage centres across all states and trained 50,000 health care staff in its use.

63. In the **Seychelles**, UNDP is working with the Department of Health to roll out a digital surveillance and mapping mechanism for contact tracing and containment. The programme is designed to reach at risk communities, including the elderly, young people, people living with HIV and people with underlying health conditions.

64. In **Rwanda**, the UNDP Accelerator Lab worked with the Ministry of ICT and Innovation to acquire 'anti-epidemic robots' to support the work of medical personnel in the testing, data collection and servicing of COVID-19 patients. **Equatorial Guinea** is using anti-pandemic robots to assist nurses and doctors in treating COVID-19 patients. UNDP supported the acquisition of the robots and helped train young entrepreneurs in their management and maintenance<sup>37</sup>.

65. UNDP **Serbia** has organized 15 airlifts bringing 720 tons of urgently needed medical and protective supplies to the country, and developed new digital solutions to create a network of over 7,000 volunteers who helped the elderly and others in need<sup>38</sup>.

66. UNDP launched a partnership with the [PanaBIOS Consortium](#) to support the safe re-opening of Africa to travel and trade in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the alliances fostered by the partnerships, the network will enable the use of tools such as digital testing certificates and vaccination e-certificates, backed by machine learning and blockchain systems, to increase the capacity of governments to screen inbound travelers quickly, securely, efficiently<sup>39</sup>.

67. UNDP is supporting the implementation of **Botswana's** [SmartBots](#) strategic initiative to transform the public sector using 4IR technologies. SmartBots is focusing on connecting the country internally to digital infrastructure, building a knowledge-based workforce to compete globally, and catalyze digitization and innovation.

68. A significant proportion of **Libya's** population do not have access to good quality healthcare, most especially those who live in rural areas. With support from the Government of Japan, UNDP has launched Libya's largest-ever telemedicine initiative. During the pilot phase, 300 doctors are now connected with 7,000 patients offering virtual consultations and e-prescriptions – critical services during COVID-19<sup>40</sup>.

69. In **Azerbaijan**, UNDP supported the Ministry of ICT to develop '[Evdegal](#)' the country's first-ever [one-stop shop portal for all e services](#), from healthcare to food delivery, including free advertising space for companies. The platform has inspired many companies to go digital and we are now upgrading to offer free courses and webinars on how to switch businesses from analogue to digital. [And the platform has just been exported to the Maldives!](#)

70. As COVID-19 has dramatically accelerated digital transformation, UNDP in **Belarus** has released an accessible tool, "Practical guidelines for Small and Medium Enterprises on using digital solutions." It aims to help entrepreneurs who do not have sufficient knowledge and experience in digitalization to improve and optimize business performance with digital solutions<sup>41</sup>.

71. Remittances have shrunk by about 20% or more globally due to the pandemic. They represent one of the main sources of foreign reserves in countries like Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati, Fiji and Tuvalu. The UNCDF-UNDP Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP) engaged with **Fiji** Vodafone to enable the company to offer fee-free remittances services through its M-PAiSA platform for a period of two months to mitigate the expected reduction in remittance flows. UNCDF is also supporting the **Tonga** Development Bank to reduce the cost for Tongans in New Zealand and Australia to send money home using the Ave Pa'anga Pau solution.

72. In **Kazakhstan**, UNDP has designed two training modules to upgrade digital, telecommuting and other critical skills for Civil Servants in crisis setting. **1000 specialists, and middle managers** of the state bodies on national and sub-national levels, **including 342 civil servants with special needs**, are taking part in the training<sup>42</sup>.

73. UNDP **Uganda**, in partnership with Jumia, the leading e-commerce company, has launched an online platform – to enable small and medium enterprises to connect with consumers to sustain livelihoods in view of restrictions on movement. **Over 1,210 vendors (targeting 3,000) in the seven markets have been trained and connected** to sell their assorted produce online<sup>43</sup>. UNCDF together with Sida, partnered with SafeBoda, the main ride-hailing company in Kampala, **Uganda**, to help the company switch to an e-commerce business model and ensure the delivery of essential goods and services to the local population during the crisis. The project is helping 18,000 boda-boda drivers keep

their jobs, 800 vendors to continue generate revenues during the lockdown and allows an average of 50,000 customers to be reached daily with food and goods delivery.

### Strengthening governance institutions, and participation

74. In **Sierra Leone**, UNDP works with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and 22 local councils to consolidate commitments around their district-level. COVID-19 Action Plans to contain the virus, using bylaws to enforce compliance<sup>44</sup>.

75. In **Guinea**, UNDP helps build capacity among journalists and territorial administrators to engage in awareness-raising activities for prevention of COVID-19<sup>45</sup>.

76. In response to efforts to maintain stability in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic and the severe impact on people's livelihoods, UNCDF has deployed its Emergency Response E-Grant Mechanism to inject funding into local government systems. In **Mozambique**, close to \$1 million was provided as part of the national strategy for peace and reconciliation.

77. Demand for free legal aid services among vulnerable communities has grown tremendously during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP has now helped open six free legal aid centres across **Albania** to deliver legal assistance through digital tools, telecommunication, and social<sup>46</sup>. In **Bangladesh**, UNDP is supporting the Supreme Court to established virtual courts for the bail applications of the High Court Division. Support also included training over 1,000 Judges, lawyers, courts officials, contributing to prison population reduction by 12% in three months.

## Supporting programme countries to build 'forward' better

### Rapid Allocation of Programmatic Resources

78. During 2020, UNDP re-programmed and mobilized over USD 982 million in support of the COVID-19 response. Through its first Rapid Financing Facility and subsequently the Rapid Recovery Fund, COVID-19 response efforts were supported in over 140 countries, thereby helping to avert severe socio-economic impacts of the pandemic<sup>47</sup>.

79. The map below shows the size of budget allocated for COVID-19 response across countries.



80. UNDP systematically tags all COVID-19 response using the COVID-10 Project Marker. The detailed information and latest data on UNDP's COVID-19 response work is publicly accessible through the [UNDP's transparency portal](#).

81. The COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility (RRF) was launched in March 2020 with a view to enabling UNDP country offices to prepare, respond and recover in the first six months, with funding from existing resources and capitalized at US\$30 million. Between March and May 2020, the resources were allocated through a fast-track review and endorsement process, with approval communicated to country offices within 2-3 days. An average of \$272,000 was allocated to 110 country offices for immediate action. The RRF delivered results in line with UNDP's COVID-19 Programme Offer 1.0.

82. Another important Fund established (in June 2020) to support the implementation of Offer 1.0 is the Japan Supplementary Budget COVID-19 Fund, which allocated US\$64 million targeting 29 countries<sup>48</sup>.

83. The COVID-19 Rapid Financing Facility (RFF), announced on 22 July, was set up to catalyze UNDP's "[COVID 2.0](#)" [Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030 offer](#), through high-quality, high-impact country initiatives. These initiatives aimed to strengthen programme countries' COVID-19 socioeconomic response capacities, working in clear alignment with the UN System's response under the coordination of the UN Resident Coordinator. The Facility aims to support country offices to deliver catalytic "Beyond Recovery" projects that facilitate national recovery efforts in line with the UNDP COVID-19 2.0 programme priorities. The RFF complements funds already provided from the RRF, the Japan Supplementary Budget and other funding sources.

84. An important inter-agency Fund mechanism is the United Nations Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund under the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)<sup>49</sup>, established in April 2020 by the UN Secretary-General. It aims to help support low- and middle-income programme countries to respond to the pandemic and its impacts, including an unprecedented socio-economic shock. The Fund's assistance targets those most vulnerable to economic hardship and social disruption. The Fund complements the WHO's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and the UN OCHA's Consolidated Global Humanitarian Appeal for Covid-19.

85. UNDP is actively supporting governments on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, securing and supplying live-saving PPE, diagnostics and hospital equipment valued at over \$213 million to 140 countries globally. UNDP's procurement activities take place in close coordination with the broader UN system and are integral to an overall UN coordinated response, providing technical and procurement resources to joint initiatives and have successfully established several joint LTAs. In addition to the initial support to the pandemic, UNDP is supporting several larger projects to strengthen health systems and pandemic preparedness, such as 70 m USD health procurement support project in Iran, 45m EUR project in Algeria, 32 m USD health procurement and capacity building project in Turkmenistan, 16m USD project in Belarus, and Kosovo.

86. UNDP's Corporate Procurement Tracking Platform (CVD19) has been operational since 21 May 2020. Requests for COVID-19 procurements are uploaded through the ATLAS Finance eRequisition module. The new procedures leverage UNDP's existing global procurement architecture (ATLAS) and provides full visibility on the status of requests through the daily updated COVID-19 Procurement Dashboard.

## UNCDF: Supporting Programme Delivery

87. UNCDF was able to quickly pivot, re-align, and re-direct activities and funding to support the Least Developed Countries to respond to the health emergency and to manage the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

88. UNCDF's Local Development Finance practice prepared a '[Guidance Note for Immediate COVID-19 Response for Local Government Finance](#)', which has become a blueprint for how to channel and manage finances for rapid local government responses to the crisis, including through Operational Expenditure Block Grants. Based on this guidance, which was highlighted in the UN Framework for Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, UNCDF supported dozens of local governments to take action and quickly accept and deploy emergency funding for COVID-19 response and recovery, in [Bangladesh](#), [Lao PDR](#), [Senegal](#), [Somalia](#), and [Uganda](#) among others. UNCDF's new [Plug and Play e-investment platform](#) also forms part of its integrated response to the effects of the pandemic, providing a rapid lifeline to channel funds to SMEs and local governments.

89. Through its Inclusive Digital Economies practice, UNCDF recognized the important role of digital solutions in tackling the crisis and [supported innovations](#) in areas such as digital payments, e-commerce, education and contact tracing apps in more than 20 countries. UNCDF also provided [support for migrants](#) to gain improved access to affordable remittances through digital solutions and played a key supporting role in a [Member State-led "Call to Action"](#) to improve migrants' access to remittances during COVID-19. In December 2020 UNCDF signed an agreement with EU DEVCO for a new \$17m effort to leverage digital finance to increase resilience of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries as a COVID-19 response.

90. Finally, UNCDF strengthened its capacity to deploy rapid grants and concessional loans to small and micro enterprises most at risk, including to enable them to adjust their business models to survive the crisis. As part of its investment portfolio, UNCDF offered relief and support to its existing clients and also provided targeted support for SMEs to stabilize local economies and accelerate recovery. UNCDF also [launched a one-of-a-kind survey](#) to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on SMEs in all LDCs, together with the International Chamber of Commerce and a range of other partners, which helps provide important insights for future support to the sector<sup>50</sup>.

## United Nations Volunteers: Supporting Programme Delivery

91. As one of UNDP's system-wide assets, the UNV programme is working across the UN system to support quick scaling of COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts and help address the sudden disruptions to regular programme delivery. UNV's offer focuses on the deployment of national UN Volunteers, due to international travel restrictions, and enabling international UN Volunteers to start their assignments remotely.

92. Due to the immediate UN Volunteer capacity solutions offered to UN partners, almost 600 UN Volunteers were requested – 90% of which were national UN Volunteers – in the first two months since the pandemic. As of 31 December 2020, a total of 1,107 UN Volunteers have supported the UN's system-wide response to COVID-19, of which 85% are national UN Volunteers and 54% are female. In addition, with the introduction of flexible options for telecommuting and remote working, 2,300 UN Volunteers telecommuted throughout 2020 to prevent disruptions in regular programme delivery, of whom 75% were international volunteers and 90% were from the Global South.

93. UNV has also allocated US\$ 2 million from its Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) to fund deployment of some 140 national UN Volunteers to support the COVID-19 response in areas such as coordination, information management, and public health, with focus on interagency initiatives.

94. UNV's Online Volunteering service is supporting UN system and civil society partners globally to access over 600,000 registered online volunteers to remotely support the translation of COVID-19 guidance materials, develop project proposals to support COVID-19 response, raise awareness about COVID-19 prevention measures, and work with big data and AI to identify emerging COVID-19 locations. Over 1,700 Online Volunteers have supported the COVID-19 response through the UNV Online Volunteering Service.

## The Road Beyond Recovery

### A snapshot of lessons learned with the roll-out of the COVID-19 Response

Below are insights of some of the lessons learned throughout the COVID-19 response journey in 2020, which are likely to inform the next iteration of UNDP's Strategic Plan.

95. **A first lesson from the shift from Offer 1.0 to 2.0 was that early rapid actions were facilitated by the availability of flexible and predictable core resources.** Core resources were critical to UNDP's COVID-19 response in 2020. Of the over \$982 million re-programmed and mobilized in support of UNDP's COVID-19 response in 2020, \$103 million was in the form of core resources. This was driven by a strong and much needed procurement response – followed up by a programmatic response in 2.0. The focus on social protection, governance, digital disruption and green recovery signaled UNDP positioning on areas both deemed critical to the response, but also future-oriented to bridge the 12 to 18-month horizon set out in horizon scanning and foresight planning. The foundation and learning from offers 1.0 and 2.0 can contribute to the implementation of integrated solutions in 2021.

96. **Conversely, a second set of lessons is emerging on the long-term implications of these after-effects on fragile and crisis-affected contexts, which are reversing countries' paths out of poverty and contributing to destabilization.** The multidimensional impacts of the pandemic—such as the escalation of challenges in governance, social cohesion, rule of law, gender and human rights—will be met with compound risks over the coming three-year horizon stemming from emerging crises (on debt, social unrest, political electoral cycles and pandemic hotspots). The demand side of UNDP Country Offices will mean that UNDP solutions must integrate multidimensional risk analysis into our way of working, future-proofing our development interventions to build resilient societies and durable development. UNDP's upcoming Fragility Framework will underpin these efforts.

97. **A third lesson is that we recognize that the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and is hurting marginalized groups the most. Therefore, over the coming years the centrality of the LNOB agenda must be resolute.** More than ever, our efforts and investments must prioritise the needs of those most left behind and address pre-existing and intersecting vulnerabilities and inequalities across societies, especially in fragile and crisis-affected situations; and build resilience to future crises and whole-of-society challenges. The 2030 Agenda and UNDP's mission to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities and exclusion cannot be achieved without increasing its focus on crisis and fragile contexts in the aftermath of COVID-19 and the multiple intersecting threats and risks that

occur in these contexts. Considering the compound risks that loom on the horizon, UNDP will need to invest in and actively collaborate across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus with its partners, notably international and regional financial institutions. These issues should be included in relevant impact assessments and tackled in relevant response plans.

98. **A fourth lesson is that digital and data tools have come to the forefront with the 2.0 offer.** They have become part of the organization's new DNA and will require more upgrading/more usage. The COVID-19 response is building a growing ecosystem of tools that accomplish a vast array of functions, from analyzing impact and response data (Crisis Risk Dashboard and digital solutions database), guiding consultations (SparkBlue), providing simulation and predictive analytical work (using machine learning and data.undp.org), and strengthening cross-country dashboards on vulnerability and sustainability metrics at the HDRO office. New digital technology and new data are also emerging from country and regional work on the response and are likely to be a turning point for how we report development processes and outcomes as we move forward. Nevertheless, more will need to be done to strengthen the digital capacities and data literacy of UNDP's next generation of practitioners at country level and our offer to countries to lead to digital transformation. The data and analysis produced should not only be disaggregated to reflect different aspects of inequality but designed to capture the drivers of these inequalities to inform practical responses that operationalize the LNOB principle.

99. **A fifth lesson is that a long-run COVID-19 response will require solutions at scale – commensurate to the challenges of the SDG regress and build forward better agendas.** Our COVID-19 response has been strong on the tactical (nimble, country- and demand-driven) side of the spectrum but will increasingly need to get stronger on strategic issues (linked to SDG trajectories and pathways for acceleration, climate change trajectories, fiscal space and debt issues). This tension is in-built to our work as a development agency that tailors responses and keeps a close eye out for government demand on the ground. The strategic elements of our response hence often play out in messaging, thought leadership and communications, rather than only through portfolios of projects and programmes themselves. In the big picture, this tactical/strategic tension is part of what becoming a learning organizing is all about – adapting to context, but also influencing macro trends through our action and global policy advocacy.

100. **A sixth lesson is that no country can finance the SDGs nor the COVID-19 recovery by taking action in one area of financing alone.** UNDP, having a long track record of working in public finance and private sector development, and more recently in unlocking private capital for the SDGs, is uniquely positioned to advance financing for the SDGs. UNDP has seen a growing demand from partners to scale up its work around public finance, as well as private sector engagement development, and finance issues. To develop a robust approach to financing the SDGs, it will require significant transformations within the global financial system and within entities that own, manage or regulate financial flows and transactions. Fundamentally related to effective governance, financing the SDGs requires changes in the ways the public and private actors interact with each other across the economic, social and environmental spheres.

101. **A seventh lesson is that our technical lead role depends on a strong-interagency and IFI partnerships.** Within this context, UNDP's integrator role has demonstrated value to countries in supporting the design and implementation of integrated solutions. UNDP has strongly committed to leveraging its close partnerships with UN sister agencies for a joined-up socio-economic response, pooling assets and expertise at country level. UNDP has reinforced this at global level with a number of UN partnership frameworks (e.g. with UNICEF, UN-Habitat, UNEP, FAO, and ILO) which are intended to provide further strategic direction and impetus for stepped-up collaborations in response to COVID-19 and beyond<sup>51</sup>.

## Foresight and Trends for 2021

**102. The Covid-19 shock impacted over pre-existing conditions and different policy responses in each region, reinforcing the importance of going beyond income in measuring vulnerability.**

While the impact of the pandemic has been felt across all countries, country context matters as the intensity of the impact depends on the diverse coping ability of countries, their societies and economies<sup>52</sup>. There is no one-size-fits-all solutions that can respond to the challenges at hand. While the initial effect of disparate projections highlights a sense of fragmentation, the longer-term effects are adaptative to each region and country typology contexts to provide a better moving forward. SIDS, commodity-dependent MICS and LICs, each have a different set of solutions to consider. In 2021, UNDP is joining with our UN partners to call for a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index that reflects environmental and socio-economic vulnerabilities – for SIDS and all countries; that would enable policymakers, creditors and investors to better understand and address structural constraints, including through concessional finance access, and help safeguard the 2030 Agenda and the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway progress.

**103. The implementation of the COVID-19 response provides the empirical illustration that the UN and UNDP can indeed do development in emergency mode. Nevertheless --given the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic-- responses cannot be linear from crisis to recovery, but circular in nature with a continuous iteration between crisis and recovery.** Back in April 2020, the UN and many countries estimated that the response period for the pandemic would last about 18 months<sup>53</sup>. The recovery path from COVID-19 is likely to see societies and economies opening and contracting with waves of the pandemic depending on the success of vaccination and therapeutics roll-out. In this undulating new world of co-existing with COVID-19, countries and societies will need to deeply invest in new capabilities and capacities in order to adapt, anticipate change, manage risks and implement solutions to build a better normal. We must learn to integrate multidimensional crisis analysis, including risks and vulnerability, DRR and health pandemic preparedness, into our way of working, future-proofing our development interventions to build resilient societies and development that is durable.

**104. The COVID-19 crisis revealed the unsustainability of pre-pandemic development trends; the foreseeable future will be defined by the SDG regress that is playing out.** Observed trends feed on pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities across societies, which must be addressed if countries are to build a more resilient future from the perspective of sustainable and people-centred development. This has implications for the future. The Leaving no-one Behind (LNOB) framing will be a critical component of UNDP's building back forward positioning in the future. Structural systemic inequalities will need to be tackled head-on if we are to build more resilient societies and transition to a net-zero carbon economic model.

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP has issued a UNDS Reform Info Note, which contains further information specifically on UNDP's role within the broader UNDS response and that is complementarity to the information provided here.

<sup>2</sup> The 5 pillars of action include: health, protecting people, economic response and recovery, macroeconomic response, and social cohesion.

<sup>3</sup> Number updated on 14 January 2020.

<sup>4</sup> In most cases with the World Bank and the IMF.

<sup>5</sup> Many of these SEIAs also leverage new digital technologies such as mobile phones data, to accommodate social distancing requirements.

<sup>6</sup> Number updated on 14 January 2020.

<sup>7</sup> The 5 pillars of action include: health, protecting people, economic response and recovery, macroeconomic response, and social cohesion.

<sup>8</sup> A total of 62 countries have been awarded resources through the Join SDG Fund to prepare an INFF. UNDP is leading 58 out of 62.

<sup>9</sup> Additional resources were swiftly reprogrammed by Country Offices and Units, upon donors' agreement.

<sup>10</sup> This section is informed by UNDP's COVID-19 2.0 Offer – [Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030](#).

<sup>11</sup> See – UNDP (2020), [COVID-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery](#).

<sup>12</sup> For a complete list of knowledge resources, please visit [UNDP's Library](#) page.

<sup>13</sup> [UNDP and MoPH Join Forces in the Battle Against COVID-19 in Afghanistan](#)

<sup>14</sup> [In extraordinary times: supporting the economic empowerment of women headed households in Iran | UNDP in Iran](#)

<sup>15</sup> [COVID-19 in Ukraine: Impact on Households and Businesses \(undp.org\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Why medical waste management is a priority now](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Honduras launches innovative transfer program in response to COVID-19 \(undp.org\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> [La RDC dotée d'un 2ème centre de diagnostic Covid-19 fruit de la collaboration PNUD-KOICA | Le PNUD en République démocratique du Congo \(undp.org\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Des cliniques mobiles pour le dépistage des populations reculées | Le PNUD au Togo \(undp.org\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> When health crises collide—tackling malaria, COVID-19 and Ebola in Burundi.

<sup>21</sup> [Mobile healthcare and social protection services for the remotest rural areas | by UNDP albania | Medium](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Lutte contre la pandémie de la COVID-19 : PNUD Niger offre du matériel au Ministère de la Santé | Le PNUD au Niger \(undp.org\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> Read more at: COVID-19 in Karbala: The faces of the frontline response.

<sup>24</sup> [SOS Mental Health in Sao Tome and Principe](#)

<sup>25</sup> Providing hope and support for Yemeni women as conflict drags on.

<sup>26</sup> [Cash for work: Nature Conservation Activities Launched as a COVID-19 Response](#)

<sup>27</sup> [UNDP in Pakistan enabling a pathway to recovery by UNDP in Pakistan - Stories by UNDP Pakistan - Exposure](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Healing the COVID pain. Ashwin Rasaili, 29 who used to work as... | by UNDP Nepal | Dec, 2020 | Medium](#)

<sup>29</sup> [COVID-19 had economic and social effects on localities, but non-state actors complement mitigating efforts, reveals Local Economies Tracker | UNDP in Ghana](#)

<sup>30</sup> “Boosting Green Employment and Enterprise Opportunities – (GrEEen)”

<sup>31</sup> [COVID-19 Response: EU, Government of Japan, UNDP, Humanitarian Affairs Ministry and Kano State Government launch new unconditional Cash Transfer Project to support 9,600 families and 2,500 SMEs | UNDP in Nigeria](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Lancement du Programme d'entrepreneuriat pour les jeunes "TEF-PNUD Mali 2020" | Le PNUD au Mali \(undp.org\)](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Japan contributes US\\$ 4.1 million to support efforts towards refugees and host communities, border security, COVID-19 response in Uganda | UNDP in Uganda](#)

<sup>34</sup> See more on [innovations from the COVID-19 response in Argentina](#).

<sup>35</sup> [Fasten your seatbelts! We are ready to accelerate development in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

<sup>36</sup> [In Uzbekistan, UN agencies, banks, governments work to rebuild after pandemic | UNDP](#)

<sup>37</sup> [Launch of Robots in Equatorial Guinea](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Reinventing the workplace under COVID-19 and beyond | UNDP in Serbia](#)

<sup>39</sup> [UNDP launches partnership to restore international travel and economic life with technology | UNDP in Africa](#)

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<sup>40</sup> [UNDP, Japan, the startup Speetar, and the Ministry of Health launch the first Telemedicine initiative in Libya | UNDP in the Arab States](#)

<sup>41</sup> [UNDP developed practical guidelines for digitalization of business | UNDP in Belarus](#)

<sup>42</sup> [Training civil servants in Kazakhstan](#)

<sup>43</sup> [UNDP partners with Jumia to link informal vendors to e-commerce](#)

<sup>44</sup> [By-Laws & COVID-19; Local Government Ministry and 22 Local Councils Consolidate Commitments on National Response | UNDP in Sierra Leone](#)

<sup>45</sup> [Le PNUD encourage l'implication des journalistes et des administrateurs territoriaux dans les activités de sensibilisation pour la prévention de la COVID-19 à travers le respect des gestes barrières. | Le PNUD en Guinée \(undp.org\)](#)

<sup>46</sup> [A new Free Legal Aid centre to serve the most vulnerable in Pogradec | UNDP in Albania](#)

<sup>47</sup> UNDP systematically tags all COVID-19 response using the COVID-19 Project Marker. The quality of data relies on the quality of COVID-19 Project Marker tagging done by the country offices. Detailed information and latest data on UNDP's COVID-19 response work is publicly accessible through the [UNDP's transparency portal](#).

<sup>48</sup> Japan considers the spread of COVID-19 as a human security crisis, posing a threat to the lives and dignity of people across the globe. The three pillars Offer 1.0 – strengthening health, crisis management and socio-economic response – dovetailed to Japan's aim, possessing both protection and empowerment of the most vulnerable. Japan's funding to UNDP is expected to tackle human security concerns through 29 COs with technical support from Global Policy Network (GPN) and the Digital Office of Executive Office.

<sup>49</sup> The Fund, under the MPTFO, contributes to financing the three objectives of the UN Secretary General's Call for Solidarity, a plea for global action to stop the Covid-19 pandemic and the suffering it has caused: (1) Tackle the health emergency; (2) Focus on the social impact, and the economic response and recovery; and (3) Help countries recover better. In particular, the Fund supports countries to implement the UN frameworks for the immediate socio-economic response to Covid-19 which focus on shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need (Source: [Trust Fund Factsheet – UN Covid-19 Response & Recovery Fund](#)).

<sup>50</sup> The [results](#) show that 88% of businesses have substantially reduced their operations, leading to sharp declines in revenues and job losses. A majority of companies expressed urgent need for capital to remain in business. These disruptions have affected female-led businesses and business sectors such as textile, craft, and tourism, disproportionately. The extended duration of these conditions will likely have devastating impacts on employment and poverty in the LDCs.

<sup>51</sup> For example: (i) UNDP and UNICEF are joining forces in support of the socio-economic response with a longer-term view under a new Expanded Collaboration Framework for COVID-19; (ii) UNDP and UNEP have agreed to a series of strategic deliverables in response to COVID-19 across three linked thematic areas: Climate Promise; Nature Promise; and Green Economy Promise; (iii) UNDP and UN-Habitat have signed a Collaborative Agreement prioritizing five areas of action (national urban policies, climate action, financing, urban resilience and smart cities) for the next two years to support national, local and regional governments with their recovery; (iv) UNDP and FAO have identified joint workstreams designed to help countries respond and recover from the pandemic and respond to the dual Nature-Climate crises, eradicate poverty, and strengthen sustainable food and commodity systems; and (v) UNDP and ILO have developed a new Framework for Action, designed to give strategic direction to the growing partnership within the context of the current crisis and to chart pathways for a sustainable and inclusive recovery.

<sup>52</sup> In fragile/crisis context, COVID 19 has served to intensify existing structural problems, deepening crises.

<sup>53</sup> This is time horizon of the UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to the pandemic adopted in April 2020.