

COVID-19 and the catalysts for change

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As the COVID-19 pandemic burns a dark trail in the history of mankind, it is imperative to observe the economic, monetary and social impacts of the crisis, and to explore the policy choices ahead.

Numerous policy briefs have been developed by the United Nations, international organizations, and think tanks in 2020 for “informed, inclusive and targeted responses.” The purpose of these policy papers is to switch the flow away from imbalances and inequality, to build social protection systems, and to tackle the social crisis through “fiscal stimulus” and other strategies, notwithstanding featuring the significance of putting resources into public goods to ensure human prosperity, protection and mobilization of youth and other vulnerable groups with a gender perspective.

Among these policy briefs are those covering: food security and nutrition, people on the move, human rights, employment, urban world, social contracts, the elderly, children, women, indigenous people as well as people with disabilities.

The dominant questions today include: To what extent are the policy papers developed to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 successful in giving valuable information to help decision-makers explore effective, inclusive and sustainable responses to the pandemic? How much can these policies support leaders in exploring innovative, evidence-based, timely and strategic choices?

Reducing inequality, strengthening social protection systems, eliminating poverty, adopting social inclusion, and participatory approach in addressing the priorities of the most vulnerable groups are major challenges.

The World Economic Forum published an article as part of Pioneers of Change Summit, which considered “COVID-19 as a catalyst for grassroots change.” The article criticizes the existing approach of providing aid and proposes a very distinct method – one that allows the grassroots level to manage their circumstances and attain solutions for their challenges. It calls for “systemic change that addresses root causes rather than symptoms”.

A UN report published in 2020 entitled, “Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity”, calls for “coordinated, decisive and innovative policy action from the world’s leading economies, and maximum financial and technical support for the poorest and most vulnerable people and countries, who will be the hardest hit.”

The report perceives that the battle for realizing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals has become a worrying responsibility as developing countries are turning out to be more vulnerable against the pandemic, making it harder to mobilize budgetary and technical assistance for the least fortunate and most vulnerable individuals and countries.

Without this support, it is difficult to identify affordable policies that can harvest instant development toward many of the SDGs, knowing that prior to the pandemic progress in achieving each of the 17 SDGs has confronted numerous challenges.

A global pandemic is a period of extreme decisions. The policy choices taken now will shape the destiny of millions and characterize the fate of countries. How to spare individuals’ lives without sacrificing their resources? Where to earmark funds? How to protect the individuals who can’t protect themselves? Leaders need to explore these extreme decisions and keep the world from sliding into a hazardous hopelessness. A scope of inventive approaches is expected to meet these measures where sustainability is to be revitalized as a key development objective.

The 2020 Human Development report on “COVID-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery” demonstrates that the COVID-19 pandemic is announcing a “human development crisis.” The report reveals that human development is confronting an “unprecedented hit” since the idea was presented in 1990.

The pandemic has exacerbated the uncertain and unsettled stresses among technology, individuals and the planet, between those who are well off and the less wealthy. These strains are at this point forming another age of disparities and inequalities.

Building capabilities is the new necessity of the 21st century, as characterized in the 2019 Human Development Report. However, the policy responses can shape how those pressures are tackled and whether inequities in human development are decreased.

The 2020 report adopts a “capabilities approach” to record the seriousness of the unfolding human development crisis. To survey the crisis, it draws on the Human Development Index indicators altering the education measurement to mirror the impacts of school closure reflecting a narrowing in capacities which would be identical to deleting all the advancement in human development of the previous six years.

The report features the significance of access to new technologies on the speed of outlining the importance of upgrading capacities. It reports that with no access to internet, the decrease in human development would be 2.5 times more dire.

The report also includes policy recommendations highlighting three standards to shape the response to the crisis: using an equity lens, focusing on individuals' improved abilities, and following a multidimensional methodology since the crisis has various interconnected scopes (health, financial and social perspectives). A “systemic approach” as opposed to a sector-by-sector methodology is suggested.

If we were to present evidence for the concept that humankind react collectively to a common global challenge – we are presently surviving it. This is not the first-time humanity confronts a pandemic, yet this one has been uncommon due to its development from a health stun to an economic and social crisis. Policy frameworks for immediate response mark the exit from the crisis

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