

## Webinar Report

# Ensuring Resilience, Accelerating Progress – Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals

Webinar Date: 10 June, 2020 – 10:00am (Republic of Korea)



## WEBINAR

### ENSURING RESILIENCE, ACCELERATING PROGRESS – EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Photo: UN/Jennifer A. Patterson



Guest Speaker:

**Mr. Moon Tae Hoon**  
Chairman,  
National Council for  
Sustainable Development,  
Republic of Korea



Guest Speaker:

**Ms. Mia Seppo**  
United Nations  
Resident Coordinator,  
Bangladesh



Guest Speaker:

**Mr. David Smith**  
Co-Author, United Nations  
Global Sustainable  
Development Report 2019  
Jamaica

## Executive Summary

The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's (UNDRR) Global Education and Training Institute (GETI) in the Republic of Korea partnered to host a Webinar on 10 June titled “Ensuring Resilience, Accelerating Progress – Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals”.

The webinar examined how national responses are reducing the impacts of COVID-19, especially socio-economic impacts, to sustain the gains realized on the 2030 Agenda. Presentations discussed the road ahead to 2030 and how current government responses can integrate disaster risk reduction measures that respond to double or triple challenges many now face as a result of climate change and COVID-19 socio-economic impacts. It showcased national responses from countries such as the Republic of Korea, Bangladesh and Small Island Developing States that aim to achieve synergies that accelerate a resilient recovery for the SDGs in the Decade of Action.

The webinar had a total of 226 participants from 49 countries, with a majority of participants from Asia-Pacific (46%) and the Latin America and Caribbean (34.5%). The webinar featured simultaneous interpretation, from English- Spanish and English-Korean.

Discussions called attention to the multiple and complex challenges countries are facing in these times of COVID-19, while assessing the impact of the pandemic on the SDGs and the need for resilient and risk-informed responses. The opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Jean D’Aragon, Officer-in-Charge of UNOSD and the webinar was moderated by Mr. Sanjaya Bhatia, Head of UNDRR GETI. The webinar then presented national cases from countries that are recovering with integrated policy measures, such as the Green New Deal policy of the Republic of Korea through panellist Mr. Moon Tae Hoon, Chairman, National Council for Sustainable Development, Republic of Korea. It highlighted the importance of developing responses that can address ‘wicked problems’ through system-wide change as called for by the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report.

As countries enter the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs, the webinar underscored the challenges and solutions for addressing climate risk and disaster recovery amid the pandemic through the perspectives offered from Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator, Bangladesh and Mr. David Smith, Co-Author, United Nations Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 / Professor, University of the West Indies, Jamaica.

The webinar attendees were requested to complete a survey immediately following the webinar to gather their feedback on the webinar’s usefulness, presentations and recommendations. The responses received were overwhelmingly positive, with some noted this was the best webinar UNDRR had organized. Participants attended from many government and academic institutions and they survey data provided many requests for future webinar topics as well, related to different aspects of the Pandemic, risk-informed governance and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**All presentations, documents and the webinar recording can be found at:**

<https://unosd.un.org/events/webinar-ensuring-resilience-accelerating-progress-%E2%80%93-examining-impact-covid-19-sustainable>

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	2
<b>I. Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>II. Webinar Audience</b> .....	7
<b>III. Overview of Statements and Presentations</b> .....	7
• Opening Statement: Mr. Jean D’Aragon, Officer-in-Charge, UN Office for Sustainable Development, UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).....	7
• Speaker 1: Mr. Moon Tae-Hoon, National Council for Sustainable Development, Republic of Korea - Lessons learned in assessing the Pandemic impacts on the SDGs and in combining SDGs and COVID-19 responses for resilient recovery and ‘Green New Deal.’ .....	9
• Speaker 2: Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator, Bangladesh – Coordinating UN Bangladesh Response to Accelerate Recovery and Achievement of the SDGS in the Decade of Action .....	11
• Speaker 3: Mr. David Smith, Co-Author, United Nations Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 and Professor, The University of the West Indies - <i>On resilience of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda in the context of the pandemic and lessons for SIDS and countries in special situations</i> .....	13
<b>IV. Summary of the Post-Webinar Evaluation</b> .....	15
Appendix 1 – List of attending participants by country.....	20
Appendix 2 – List of registered participants .... 오류! 책갈피가 정의되어 있지 않습니다.	
Appendix 3 Webinar Agenda and Format Overview .....	21

## I. Introduction

*“We need to turn the recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future.”  
– United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres*

### **Rationale and Background information:**

The year 2020 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations while the world enters an unprecedented global crisis with severe impacts across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. With ten years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda in this *Decade of Action*, the COVID-19 pandemic compels a dual focus on ensuring a resilient recovery and accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Today, more than ever, a focus must be placed on realizing synergies and investing in a recovery that will ‘build back better’. Member States must take stock of the impacts that the current global pandemic is having across the SDGs, particularly from national to local levels, and adopt disaster risk reduction strategies<sup>1</sup> that address all hazards - including biological, with integrated risk governance systems. The COVID-19 pandemic is evidence that risk is systemic. In addition, further discussion is needed to identify the differentiated impacts the pandemic is having on the most vulnerable populations by exacerbating poverty, hunger, malnutrition, inequalities, exclusion, violence, and discrimination.

Current [ministerial](#) preparations for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) reaffirm the 2030 Agenda’s role as our ‘*first line of defence against COVID-19*’. The impacts from the pandemic are fast evolving and cut across the SDGs, underscoring the need for an “*SDG-sensitive response to COVID-19 and rebuilding better to deliver on the Decade of Action*”.<sup>2</sup>

The urgency for action is now two-fold: to protect development gains and to accelerate action to achieve the SDGs by 2030.<sup>3</sup> We need to take accelerated action for SDG targets on human well-being, as well as biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, and climate change, through coherent, coordinated and risk-informed responses. Furthermore, 2020 is expected to be one of the warmest years on record, underscoring the continued challenges that climate change brings in combination with the global pandemic, the [UN Secretary-General announced six climate actions](#) to shape a more resilient recovery from COVID-19, which should guide recovery efforts.<sup>4</sup>

We should seize the opportunity to “build back better” by creating more sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies. The UN has recognized country responses that are combining the pandemic

---

<sup>1</sup> The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction global Target E, shared with SDGs 1, 11 and 13, calls to substantially increase the number of countries with disaster risk reduction strategies. The Sendai Framework was the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda and provides Member States with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster, including biological hazards such as pandemics and epidemics. [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Current preparations for the 2020 HLPF Ministerial Declaration [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26224Ministerial\\_Declaration.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26224Ministerial_Declaration.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/DCO\\_report-24-April-2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/DCO_report-24-April-2020.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Six Climate Actions to Build Back Better from the Secretary-General: First, financing in recovery should focus on jobs and businesses through clean, green transition. Second, where taxpayers’ money to rescue businesses, should achieve green jobs and sustainable growth. Third, fiscal firepower must drive a shift to green economy, empowering resilience. Fourth, public funds should invest in sustainable sectors and climate projects. Fossil fuel subsidies must end, and polluter pay principle activated. Fifth, climate risks and opportunities are integrated into financial system, public policy making and infrastructure. Sixth, this should be done by working together. <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-urges-countries-%E2%80%98build-back-better%E2%80%99>

response and recovery efforts that simultaneously address climate change like that of the Republic of Korea. These national responses are showing that combating the novel coronavirus can be coupled with an environmentally friendly, socially inclusive economic recovery.

With this background, the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) through its Global Education and Training Institute organized a webinar to engage national SDG focal points and coordinating agencies, along with national focal points of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in a dialogue on how national governments are assessing the impact of the pandemic on key SDGs.

### **Key Questions**

The webinar focused on the following key questions:

- What have the impacts been thus far from the Pandemic across the Sustainable Development Goals and how can these be mitigated through more risk-informed national responses?
- How are government responses integrating risk-reduction measures and preparedness that respond to double or triple challenges many now face as a result of climate change and COVID-19 socio-economic impacts?
- While the responses needed for recovery are urgent, how can we ensure integrating planning for resilience and a focus on risk reduction for policymakers?
- What are the lessons learned thus far in achieving synergies - where national responses combat the pandemic's impacts while also accelerating progress to still achieve the 2030 Agenda?
- How can the Sendai Framework for DRR play a role in mitigating the impacts of future Pandemics so that we can continue advancing with the 2030 Agenda?

### **Overview**

The webinar began with a short introduction by its moderator, Mr. Sanjaya Bhatia, Head, UNDRR Office for Northeast Asia (ONEA) and Global Education and Training Institute (GETI). The webinar then featured a brief opening statement by Mr. Jean D'Aragon, Officer in Charge, UN Office for Sustainable Development, UN DESA. The statement introduced the webinar and noted current trends on its impact across the Sustainable Development Goals.

The first key presentation was made by Mr. Moon Tae Hoon, Chairman, National Council for Sustainable Development, Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea has been recognized by the UN Secretary-General as a model for other countries to follow thanks to a COVID-19 response that has been successful in reducing casualties, community spread and focused on building back better. The presentation focused on "Lessons learned in assessing the Pandemic impacts on the SDGs and in combining SDGs and COVID-19 responses for resilient recovery and '*Green New Deal*.'"

The case of the Republic of Korea, was followed by a presentation by the UN Resident Coordinator from Bangladesh. Bangladesh was identified as a key country to feature in the webinar, because it typically faces challenges from annual flooding and a high degree of disaster risk. It is also a Least Development Country (LDC) and is making continued strides in advancing across Sustainable Development Goals linked to poverty reduction and human development.



However, Bangladesh is was also recently impacted by Cyclone Amphan amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, thus it is a country that must navigate a multitude of complex challenges in its Pandemic response. Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh presented on “Coordinating UN country responses to accelerate recovery and SDG progress in the Decade of Action”.

The third presentation was by Professor David Smith, who was nominated by the UN Secretary-General to serve on the panel of scientists co-authoring the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report. Prof. David Smith is also a leading academic teaching at the University of the West Indies and also involved in areas related to resilience for Small Island Developing States. He presented on the topic of “Resilience of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda in the context of the pandemic and lessons for SIDS and countries in special situations”.

The webinar lasted sixty minutes and thus allowed limited time for Questions and Answers, but the webinar platform had a running Q&A board as well where participants could pose questions to the panellists throughout the webinar.

Lastly, a survey was conducted immediately following the webinar including six questions with a quarter of participants responding to the webinar. The survey focused on collecting feedback and recommendations from participants, as well as mapping attendees. The survey respondents included representatives from national government, such as the Philippines National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), Honduras’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil’s National Water Agency, and the Indonesia Ministry of Villages, and key SDG focal point institutions in governments, as well as permanent missions, local governments, academia, and civil society.

This report summarizes the survey feedback received in its final sections. However, it is important to note that the feedback received through the webinar survey was entirely positive, as follows:

- *This was a great webinar and I really appreciated the opportunity to participate as it brought together many of the issues I am very interested in.*
- *Very good webinar. Very insightful.*
- *they all presented well and provides good details*
- *It’s a good source of learning for my research.*
- *It was excellent*
- *None. The event was insightful*
- *Excellent panellists.*
- ***Please make the session longer that the panelist could answer more questions***
- *This was well put together. Those panelist were well informed*
- *Congratulations!!*
- *Thank you very much for organizing such seminar.*
- *Well done. The webinar is informative*
- *good and effective webinar*
- ***It would be good to have a panel of discussants to comment on presentations***
- ***Thank you for facilitating an excellent webinar. Today’s session was the best UNDRR webinar I have so far participated in. The resource speakers presented their views clearly.***
- *Congratulations. Very useful*
- ***Would like to see some of the data asked for to compare regions and countries***
- *Well organized and Very timely*

- *Congratulations – very good discussion!*
- *It would be great to know more about Americas information*
- *Good job*
- *It was informative and interesting*

## II. Webinar Audience

This webinar engaged national SDG focal point institutions across UN Member States, as well as national government focal points of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The webinar was open to government representatives and non-government experts working in the areas of SDG implementation, resilience, and climate change to ensure a coherent and integrated discussion on the SDGs and the Decade of Action.

A total of 226 participants attended (133 female, 90 male, 3 non-binary) with the majority from Asia-Pacific and the Latin America and Caribbean, especially Caribbean Small Island Developing States (See chart above and Appendix 1). However, 523 registrations were received for the webinar, meaning 43 per cent of registered participants formally attended (See Appendix 2). In addition, 80 of the participants were from developed countries, while 146 were from developing countries. The following chart summarizes the regional breakdown of all 226 participants.

Region	Sum of Total	Share of Total
Africa	8	3.5%
Asia-Pacific	104	46.0%
Europe	6	2.7%
Latin America and the Caribbean	78	34.5%
North America	30	13.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## III. Overview of Statements and Presentations

Moderator: Mr. Sanjaya Bhatia, Head of UNDRR Office for Northeast Asia (ONEA) and Global Education and Training Institute (GETI)

In his introduction to the webinar, Mr Bhatia stressed that during this time of COVID-19 we are reminded more and more on how important it is for all sectors to work together and to break the silos. He underscored the importance to reducing risks, climate-related and biological risks such as pandemics so countries can achieve the objectives set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensure disaster proofing SDGs. He also referred to the timely webinar, where economies are opening up with the challenges that still exist, and returning to the “new normal”.

Opening Statement: Mr. Jean D’Aragon, Officer-in-Charge, UN Office for Sustainable Development, UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

## Introduction & Context

The statement noted that currently, the world is facing unprecedented global crisis with severe impacts across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The COVID-19 pandemic itself contains various risks that are systemic, complex, and universal, producing negative impact on the most vulnerable populations, exacerbating poverty, hunger, inequalities, violence, and discrimination. The statement also highlighted the COVID-19 pandemic has exploited and exposed the weaknesses of not achieving goals and targets on health services for all, sanitation access, financial inclusion, the digital divide, and the role that SDG 10 on inequality plays in a better future that leaves no one behind.<sup>5</sup>

## Questions, Challenges or Gaps Noted

The statement highlighted that a key challenge is now the world requires a dual focus on advancing the 2030 Agenda in the remaining ten years or 'Decade of Action' while also combatting the Pandemic "With ten years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda in this Decade of Action, the COVID-19 pandemic compels a dual focus on ensuring a resilient recovery that will simultaneously accelerate the global progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". It also noted that current UN estimates indicate that the pandemic will push 60 million into extreme poverty; lead to famine of "historic proportions" and leave some 1.6 billion people without livelihoods.<sup>6</sup> It also noted impacts will be negative on the 2030 Agenda, unless rapid response measures reach at least 10 per cent of global GDP with support directed to all countries in need, and the response focuses on build back better for more resilient economies and inclusive societies.<sup>7</sup> It also noted 2020 is expected to be one of the warmest years on record<sup>8</sup>.

## Recommendations offered or Next Steps

The statement noted that as the year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations there are a complexity of challenges, but the [UN Secretary-General announced six climate actions](#) that can shape a more resilient recovery from COVID-19.<sup>9</sup>

It highlighted the importance of international cooperation and the significance of the current ministerial declaration in preparation for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) recognizing that "the insufficient efforts to implement the Goals have exacerbated the impact of the pandemic." Therefore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must become "*our collective roadmap to respond and build back better, to help prevent future pandemics*".

## Notable Quotes

- *"The COVID-19 pandemic is evidence that risk is systemic; that it is complex, and universal"*
- *"Current UN estimates indicate that the pandemic will push 60 million into extreme poverty; lead to famine of "historic proportions" and leave some 1.6 billion people without*

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/undesavoice/more-from-undesavoice/2020/06#49488>

<sup>6</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1065002>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/hl\\_event\\_financing\\_covid19\\_general\\_introduction-5-25-20.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/hl_event_financing_covid19_general_introduction-5-25-20.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, State of the Climate: Global Climate Report for March 2020, published online April 2020, retrieved on June 1, 2020 from <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/global/202003/supplemental/page-2>.

<sup>9</sup> Six Climate Actions to Build Back Better from the Secretary-General: First, financing in recovery should focus on jobs and businesses through clean, green transition. Second, where taxpayers' money to rescue businesses, should achieve green jobs and sustainable growth. Third, fiscal firepower must drive a shift to green economy, empowering resilience. Fourth, public funds should invest in sustainable sectors and climate projects. Fossil fuel subsidies must end, and polluter pay principle activated. Fifth, climate risks and opportunities are integrated into financial system, public policy making and infrastructure. Sixth, this should be done by working together. <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-urges-countries-%E2%80%98build-back-better%E2%80%99>



*livelihoods.”*

- *“With ten years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda in this Decade of Action, the COVID-19 pandemic compels a dual focus on ensuring a resilient recovery that will simultaneously accelerate progress on the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda is designed for this, it is interlinked and interdependent, investing in one goal can yield advances across others.”*

Speaker 1: Mr. Moon Tae-Hoon, National Council for Sustainable Development, Republic of Korea - Lessons learned in assessing the Pandemic impacts on the SDGs and in combining SDGs and COVID-19 responses for resilient recovery and ‘Green New Deal.’

### Introduction & Context

The presentation highlighted the history of sustainable development in international cooperation, noting that in 1987, the United Nations proposed sustainable development as a global paradigm, a new way of development that needs of the present generation without compromising the future generations’ ability to meet their own needs [Brundtland Report]. Since then, a form of development has been on-going that needs maximum needs of the present generation quite destroying the future generations ability to meet their own needs. Mr. Moon offered that COVID-19 maybe the last chance that could transform our world into a sustainable world.

In 2015, UN adopted 17 concreted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that all nations to achieve 2030. The significance of the SDGs relates as a meaningful cause adopted by the UN, which can represent all nations in the world better than the G7 and G20. The core of UN SDGs is the end of poverty, resolution of hunger, health and well-being, quality education, and gender equality. Mr Moon noted that together with other SDGs, we can achieve what is called “development as freedom”. He then noted Korea’s experience with green growth policy goals and that there were many lessons learned.

The screenshot shows a webinar interface. At the top left are logos for UNDRR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction) and UNOSD (United Nations Office of Sustainable Development). The title of the webinar is "Webinar Ensuring Resilience, Accelerating Progress – Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals". The main slide content is titled "6. Lessons we learned – for Success of Green New Deal" and lists six bullet points. On the right side of the slide, there is a video feed of Mr. Tae Hoon Moon, a man in a suit and tie, speaking. At the bottom right of the slide, the date and time "2020-06-10 10:20:15" are displayed.

**Webinar**  
**Ensuring Resilience, Accelerating Progress – Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals**

**6. Lessons we learned – for Success of Green New Deal**

- Improve governance system of Korean New Deal to secure consistency and integration of policies. Strong political will and strengthening governance system and the role of Commission on Sustainable Development is critical.
- Develop a synergetic and cooperative relationship with all actors-people, big and small business, and central and local Government etc.
- Decentralize central government power to local government and make them move. Support local government based on performance.
- Increase food, energy, and resource self-sufficiency as much as possible with emphasis on conservation and efficient use of all resources.
- Integrated systemic approach in all policy areas. A system for regulation, incentive, participation, and cooperation that creates a virtuous cycle within each segment and among segments of policy.
- Careful policy design, communicate more closely with people, make them a part of Green New Deal

Mr. Tae Hoon Moon

2020-06-10 10:20:15

He noted that recently, the Korean government announced a New Deal Plan (2020-2025) in response to the President of the Republic of Korea's Moon Jae-in's cabinet meeting earlier this year amidst the Pandemic. He highlighted that the governance system and 'strong political will' is critical for the Green New Deal as the new policy impetus that combines a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic while also advancing economic, social and environmental goals for greater resilience.

### **Questions, Challenges or Gaps Noted**

In the past, green growth policies were indifferent to the concept sustainable development. Carbon emission was increasing, failing to achieve the GHG reduction target. This not only significantly destroyed river ecosystems but also the decrease of renewable system, since 2015, was not able to form a renewable ecosystem.

Mr. Moon noted that the lack of overall participation from a variety of stakeholders, or multi-stakeholder approach, has been a major challenge. While the green growth policies were mainly led by the central government and often big companies, there were lack of participations of the local governments and local businesses.

### **Recommendations offered or Next Steps**

The Republic of Korea's New Deal Plan consists of three pillars: i) Digital New Deal, ii) Green New Deal, and iii) Employee Safety Net. From the worldwide economic crisis of 2008, Korea has experience of promoting green growth as a strategy of economic recovery.

Mr. Moon recommends that the government must play an important role to communicate more closely with the people and include them. Moreover, an alternative model with new visions needs to formulate and life global system must represent people so that no country left behind. He concluded that COVID-19 is an opportunity to make green to be part of the new green.

He underscored that Local government needs also needs to participate in the process, engaged and coordinated with national government. Lastly, he especially noted the importance of building a functional trust between government and people.

### **Notable Quotes**

- *"Strong political will and governance system is critical."*
- *"Integrated systemic approach in all policy areas are needed. Building a virtuous cycle, such as Net-zero emission leads to increase search and development that leads to new business and startup more income, consumption. That leads to increased investment etc. This virtual cycle should be developed."*
- *"The government needs to communicate more closely with people to make them part of it. Moreover, it needs to formulate an alternative model with new visions, lifestyle...COVID-19 is an opportunity ...to be part of the new green."*

Speaker 2: Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator, Bangladesh – Coordinating UN Bangladesh Response to Accelerate Recovery and Achievement of the SDGs in the Decade of Action

### Introduction & Context

In January, Bangladesh was poised to be one the biggest least developed countries in population size to graduate from its Least Development Country (LDC) status. This was thanks to recent advances on GDP growth, poverty reduction, and improvements in the SDG targets and indicators related to health and education.

Bangladesh showed major achievements on the Millennium Development Goals and is currently on the right track to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through lowering maternal and child mortality and increases in life expectancy, higher education and school enrollments, and gender equality.



However, approximately 22 million people are currently suffering from poverty. Also, the nation is experiencing high exposure and risks to natural hazards, with increasing vulnerability to exposure from these due to climate change. With climate change the country expects increasing intensity and frequency of disasters. Currently, the health system has been challenged by COVID-19 with negative economic with structural vulnerability.

In the country's recent Cyclone Amphan response, the government approved the standard orders of disasters with implementation, displaying a model response including Inter-ministerial mechanism for cooperation and communication that also cascaded down to the community level.

Against COVID-19, despite Bangladesh's systematic weakness in its health system, the nation has focused on scaling up testing capacity from 500 tests to 1300 tests per day, training and preparing health systems, setting up protocols, logistics, and procurement. Currently, the

country's government has put great efforts on multi-stakeholder risk communication and community engagement, and continues to work with the health sector and looking at other country's prevention measures.

### **Questions, Challenges or Gaps Noted**

Ms. Seppo shared the four existing complex challenges existing in Bangladesh: 1) A COVID-19 health emergency, 2) Refugee crisis as a result of Bangladesh housing Rohingya refugees from neighboring Myanmar, 3) A COVID-19 Recovery crisis and 4) the socio-economic impact from COVID-19.

The Pandemic has not only created a global economic crisis for developing countries but also caused Bangladesh to experience economic contractions, with reduced exports and household spending. A key challenge is also the countries vulnerability to climate change, as well as social problems. Despite the improving social programs, there are no actual programs that target those who were already unemployed prior to the Pandemic, pushing these citizens into even greater poverty. This has exacerbated inequality and gaps in social protection schemes. Also, the impact where Bangladesh is most vulnerable to natural hazards overlaps with the areas at this stage of the pandemic with high COVID-19 infection rates.

### **Recommendations offered or Next Steps**

Ms. Seppo offered recommendations on how Bangladesh can respond against COVID-19 through integrated responses that aim to effects impact across all challenges at once. Ms Seppo underscored the importance of expanding social protection programmes and include better data to strengthen targeting and leave no one behind. She noted that the gaps in current social protection programmes exacerbate extreme poverty and inequality currently.

A key recommendation was made to also strengthen the recovery efforts' inclusion of women and their participation in design and targeting from social protection programmes from the very beginning. She noted that women are disproportionately affected by the Pandemic given their role in the informal sector and as health workers.

### **Notable Quotes**

- *"The expansion of social protection offers an opportunity to include targeting but also offers an opportunity to build on the digital platform that Bangladesh has in place."*
- *"Bangladesh has also early on put the strong focus on the fact that gender impact of this crisis runs very deep, from increased level of domestic violence that you see around the world to the fact that the majority working in the informal sector, formal employment, and the majority of health workers being women, it is very important that the recovery includes strong participation of women in the very beginning."*
- *"The impact where Bangladesh is most vulnerable to natural hazards overlaps with the areas at this stage of the pandemic high COVID-19 infection rate."*

Speaker 3: Mr. David Smith, Co-Author, United Nations Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 and Professor, The University of the West Indies - *On resilience of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda in the context of the pandemic and lessons for SIDS and countries in special situations*

Webinar  
Ensuring Resilience, Accelerating Progress – Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals

THE FUTURE IS NOW  
SCIENCE FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Resilience of the 2030 Agenda in the Pandemic: lessons for SIDS & countries in special situations

DAVID SMITH, CO-AUTHOR, UN GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2019 & COORDINATOR, INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

2020-06-10 10:43:56

## Introduction & Context

From the COVID-19 pandemic, there are results showing the social impacts in terms of over the 7.2 million cases and approximately 407,000 deaths so far. Also, economic impact has occurred through this pandemic as there has been a global reduction of about 5.2 of the world's GDP in this year alone. With regard to the social aspect, Mr. Smith indicated that it is useful to know the number of the population does not relate to the size of the country's economy. Rather he argues that it is tied to the ability to the government's science action and persuade and help the public more aware of the virus and act accordingly.

He also shared a finding from Johns Hopkins University, stating that deaths are not only related to the national population size but also not necessarily related to GDP per capita between nations (though may be related to income within). Rather, it is impacted by the people's and government's intervention.

## Questions, Challenges or Gaps Noted

Mr. Smith noted that tourism-based economies, especially Small Island Developing States (SIDS), will soon re-open to tourism under economic pressure. Therefore, this sector will need to operate in new ways to protect their employees, clientele and brand. In order to successfully implement this, setting up appropriate border protocols and start to assess the data, implement restrictions as needed, and be prepared to re-close borders as necessary is a must.

He noted COVID-19 is a 'wicked problem' – a complex problem presenting systemic risks and requiring collaboration and strategic engagement across sectors. He highlighted there is not enough scientific knowledge to know everything on the novel coronavirus pandemic, though we



have enough of it to make a useful recommendation. A key challenge noted was the importance of data collection and evidence-based decision-making. It is important to address gaps in knowledge and strengthen evidence-based cooperation and policy responses that are based on science.

## Recommendations offered or Next Steps

Lessons learned

- ▶ COVID has exposed pre-existing weaknesses and inequalities in our social and economic systems.
- ▶ We should address those and not seek to restart them as we go back to business
- ▶ Resist the urge to go back to business as usual. (Build the economy back better)
- ▶ Lead with science-based policies
- ▶ Address the needs of the vulnerable
- ▶ Educate, and find ways to diversify economies
- ▶ Prepare for the next cyclone or drought with COVID-19

Mr. David Smith

2020-06-10 10:54:38

Dr. Smith suggested that COVID has exposed the pre-existing weaknesses and inequalities in our social and economic systems. In response, multidisciplinary approaches are needed, that especially address the needs of the most vulnerable if we are to achieve key principles of the 2030 Agenda like 'Leave no one behind'.

He concluded that it is vital to not only implement policy and practice based on good science but also investigate the linkages maximize benefits minimize tradeoffs, science-led policy actions.

He also recommended to learn from other countries' cases such as Bangladesh and other countries who have been through a complexity of challenges, as many countries as risk of disasters will need to prepare for these amidst the Pandemic. Lastly, he underscored that it is important to recognize that economies based on science are valuable today and this will reduce fragility as we confront disasters and pandemics simultaneously.

## Notable Quotes

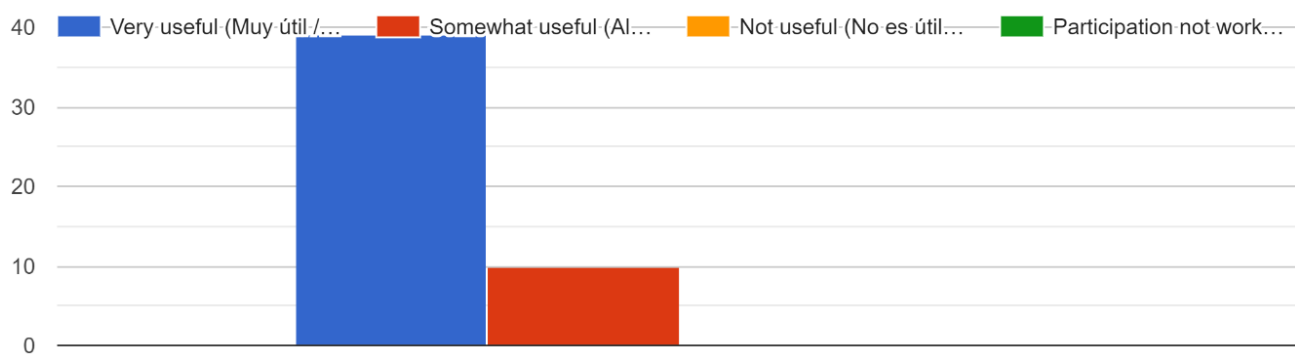
- *"Today, 'Normal' is wrong. There is a problem with 'normal' This underpins the argument of 'build back better'.."*
- *"Deaths [as a result of COVID-19] are not related to the national population size and also not necessarily related to GDP per capita between nations,...People's and government's intervention is more important."*
- *"What we learn from the crisis would enable us to prepare for the next pandemic, next crisis."*

*As part of the global community, we learn the lessons and prepare better for the next ones.”*

#### IV. Summary of the Post-Webinar Evaluation

The post-webinar evaluation, which UNDRR conducts through its Zoom webinar system immediately after the webinar concludes, typically includes six questions to assess the webinar results and improve future activities. The six questions assessed usefulness of the webinar and how participants learned about the webinar for strengthening future promotion. The questions also gathered key feedback on preferred topics future webinars. The short survey was conducted in the webinar’s three languages. The survey received 49 responses from the 226 attendees. The following summarizes the responses received.

##### Question 1. How useful was today’s webinar for your work?



##### Question 2. What topics would you like to see for future webinars?

###### COVID-19 related responses

- More on COVID-19 as it evolves, health inequalities and the models that work best, both generally and in the pandemic situation, gender inequality and how this can be addressed in both developing and developed countries, how to foster a global approach to protecting the planetary ecosystem and environment in ways that have a positive effect locally.
- More topics on Adaptation of hazard prone countries vis a vis Pandemic; Policies in place for Pandemics; Technology-based and science -based strategies in dealing with Pandemic
- GID and territorial management for the pandemic
- COVID effects on water
- COVID-19 and urban planning
- Governmental Response toward Healthcare, Educational Response toward Public Relations
- UN response measures and plans
- Impact of the Pandemic on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
- I would like to know about the migrants health during pandemic
- SDG's and the Caribbean in light of COVID-19 Preparedness of Caribbean nations for other pandemic

- Also interested in seeing the environmental impact of Covid-19 to the SDGs and are there forecasts or any anticipated long term effects [of the Pandemic]
- More about the COVID-19 responses from various countries
- Business Continuity Planning; would like to have a topic on how business could manage this pandemic on a corporate level, given that this may not end in the coming weeks but may continue. Like best practices in prevention and control and what are the learnings along the way and improvement of controls
- The Pandemic as an opportunity to build back better "in simple more practical terms" using practical solutions rather than generic terms such as inclusive, participatory, environment-friendly, etc.
- All of the society approach in COVID response, BBB in economy and social policy, Mainstreaming DRR, Risk-informed approach in such epidemics etc
- recovering from the world wide scale pandemic, lessons and strategy for recovery in tourism and cultural heritage sector, Information Technology and Economic Blooms due to pandemic
- Economic Effect on SIDS
- Still related topics in COVID 19, economics, health, people etc.

### **Broader responses**

- More topics geared towards achieving 2030 sustainable goals for the Caribbean
- Developing Continuity Plans/Strategies. Systemic risk.
- Use of frontier technologies in mapping and learning about risks
- Monitoring and Evaluation of DRR actions
- Planning to prevent and mitigate risks
- Human rights, Economic cooperation, Artificial Intelligence
- Climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Best practice models for building back
- Resilience planning, inter-regional cooperation
- Systematic Risks
- How can we go long term programs from short term?
- Building Resilience in tourism dependent SIDS
- Multiple risk mitigation
- Data gathering tools for SDGs
- Strategic Planning in economics improvements in Covid-19 Pandemic

### **Question 3. Any additional comments for the organizers:**

- *This was a great webinar and I really appreciated the opportunity to participate as it brought together many of the issues I am very interested in.*
- *It's a good source of learning for my research.*

- *Excelent panelists.*
- *This was well put together. Those panelist were well informed*
- *Thank you very much for organizing such seminar.*
- *good and effective webinar*
- ***Thank you for facilitating an excellent webinar. Today's session was the best UNDRR webin ar I have so far participated in. The resource speakers presented their views clearly.***
- *Very good webinar. Very insightful.*
- *they all presented well and provides good details*
- *It was excellent*
- *None. The event was insightful*
- ***Please make the session longer that the panelist could answer more questions***
- *Congratulations!!*
- *Well done. The webinar is informative*
- ***It would be good to have a panel of discussants to comment on the presentations***
- *Congratulations. Very useful*
- ***Would like to see some of the data asked for to compare regions and countries***
- *Well organized and Very timely*
- *Congratulations – very good discussion!*
- *It would be great to know more about Americas information*
- *Good job*
- *It was informative and interesting*

#### Question 4. Tell us your organization

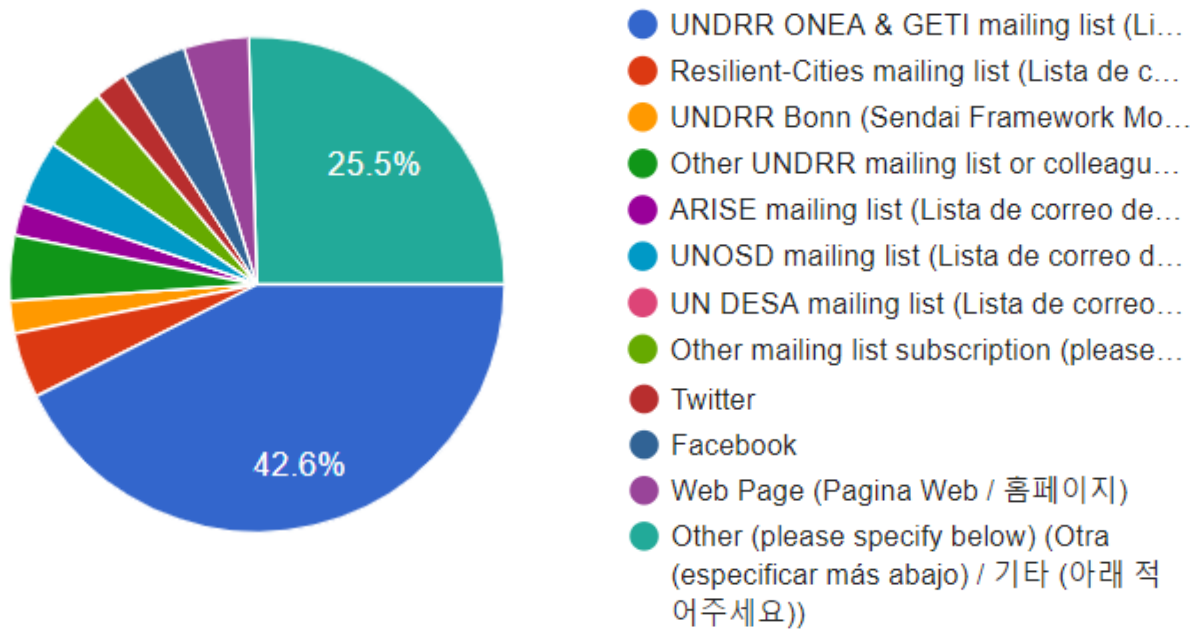
National Economic and Development Authority (Planning Ministry of the Philippines)
Indonesian Ministry of Village
ADRC
Ministry of Agriculture Trinidad and Tobago
North Lake College/Dallas County Community College District (Dallas County, Texas, USA), and RCE North Texas
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Honduras
UNICEF
The University of the West Indies

행정안전부
IFMSA
Sookmyung Women's University
Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
University of the West Indies
Linden Mayor and Town Council
Dominica Mission to the UN
Instituto de Planeación para el Municipio de Colima
City Government of San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines
Municipal Council of Curepipe
University of the West Indies, Mona Campus
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law, Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal
GCDMX
Local Government Academy - it is an government office mandated to provide capacity development interventions to local governments.
IGES
The University of the West Indies (UWI)
IFRC
I'm a student of Disaster and Human Security Management
University of Atma Jaya Yogyakarta
Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia
Cairo University
The University of Melbourne Medical School
Department of Science and Technology-National Capital Region is a government agency promoting various technologies including DRR technologies in Metro Manila, Philippines
Centro de Estudios y Prevención de Desastres, PREDES
National Water Agency - Brazil
University of the Philippines - Institute for Small-Scale Industries
University of San Carlos
Telecommunication company



**Question 5. Where did you hear about our webinar?**

**Question 6. If you selected other, please specify**



- The GEO Health Community of Practice
- University of the West Indies facebook site
- Direct email form Sara Castro-Hallgren, UN DESA to our institution
- colleague from ADRC
- A colleague shared the information
- UWI Open Campus Newsletter
- Web Page of Sookmyung Women's Univ.
- UNOSD Instagram Page
- Friends
- It was emailed to me
- Colleague from UWI, Mona
- RCE Americas

## Appendix 1 – List of attending participants by country

Country	Female	Male	Other/Prefer not to say	Total
Argentina		1		1
Australia	2	4		6
Bangladesh	4	2		6
Barbados	6			6
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1			1
Brazil		1		1
Colombia	1	1		2
Costa Rica	1	1		2
Dominican Republic	1			1
Ecuador	1			1
Egypt	1			1
El Salvador	1	2		3
Ghana		1		1
Grenada	1	1		2
Guatemala	1	3		4
Guyana	2			2
Honduras	1			1
India	2	4		6
Indonesia	4	3		7
Jamaica	10	1		11
Japan	6	8		14
Korea, Republic of	18	11		29
Lao People's Democratic Republic		1		1
Liberia		1		1
Malaysia	2			2
Mauritania	1			1
Mauritius	1	1		2
Mexico	2	2		4
Nepal		3		3
Netherlands	1			1
New Zealand		1		1
Pakistan	1			1
Peru	2			2
Philippines	16	5		21
Russian Federation	1			1
Saint Lucia	1			1
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1			1
Singapore	1	1		2
South Africa	1			1
Spain	1			1

Sri Lanka		1		1
Sweden		1		1
Thailand	2	2		4
Togo		1		1
Trinidad and Tobago	15	6	1	22
Turks and Caicos Islands	6	3		9
United Kingdom	1		1	2
United States of America	12	17	1	30
Venezuela	1			1
Grand Total	133	90	3	226

## Appendix 2 – Webinar Agenda and Format Overview

Time	Content
10:00-10:02 (2 minutes)	<b>Opening of the webinar by Moderator</b> introducing the webinar. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderator: Mr. Sanjaya Bhatia, Head, UNDRR Office for Northeast Asia (ONEA) and Global Education and Training Institute (GETI)</li> </ul>
10:02-10:05 (3 minutes)	<b>Introductory statement</b> on the webinar topic and rationale, setting the scene for forthcoming presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. Jean D'Aragon, Officer in Charge, UN Office for Sustainable Development, UN DESA</li> </ul>
10:05-10:15 (7-10 minutes)	<b>First panellist</b> Mr. Tae-Hoon Moon, Chairman of the National Committee for Sustainable Development, Government of the Republic of Korea - <i>Lessons learned in assessing the Pandemic impacts on the SDGs and in combining SDGs and COVID-19 responses for a resilient recovery through a 'Green New Deal'</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This presentation will touch on the UN Secretary-General's recognition of the Republic of Korea as a model for other nations to follow in responding to the Pandemic through 'building back better'</li> <li>It will also covers <u>the rationale</u> for the Green New Deal and its <u>'whole of government' or coherent and integrated approach</u></li> </ul>
10:15-10:25 (7-10 minutes)	<b>Second panellist</b> Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator, Bangladesh – <i>Coordinating UN country responses to accelerate recovery and SDG progress in the Decade of Action</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The presentation will highlight the case of Bangladesh</li> </ul>

as a country vulnerable to climate change, disasters and hazards such as the current Pandemic.

- It will touch on Bangladesh's rapid progress as a Least Developed Country before the Pandemic across the SDGs – where Bangladesh was likely to graduate from LDC status and its SDG tracker and more showed progress in nearly all goals

10:25-10:35 (7-10 minutes)

**Third panellist**

Professor David Smith, Co-Author, UN 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report

- The presentation will introduce how the Pandemic responses can fit within the GSDR model and ensure accelerated progress and synergies for remaining on track with the SDGs where possible

The presentation may also address the following questions:

- What SDGs are most at risk potentially of not being achieved?
- While the responses needed for recovery are urgent, how can we ensure integrating planning for resilience and risk reduction for policymakers?

10:35-10:55 (20 minutes)

**Question and Answer Portion**

10:55-10:58 (2-3 minutes)

**Final Reflections**

Mr. Jean D'Aragon will summarize two main messages from the webinar.

10:58-11:00 (2 minutes)

**Wrap up by the Moderator**

**For more information**

Ms. Ana Cristina Thorlund, UNDRR Office for Northeast Asia (ONEA) and Global Education and Training Institute (GETI) at [undrr-incheon@un.org](mailto:undrr-incheon@un.org)

Ms. Sara Castro Hallgren, [sara.castrohallgren@un.org](mailto:sara.castrohallgren@un.org) at UNOSD, UN DESA