

Update on UNDP's Socio-economic Response

Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030

24 May 2021 - Briefing Note #3



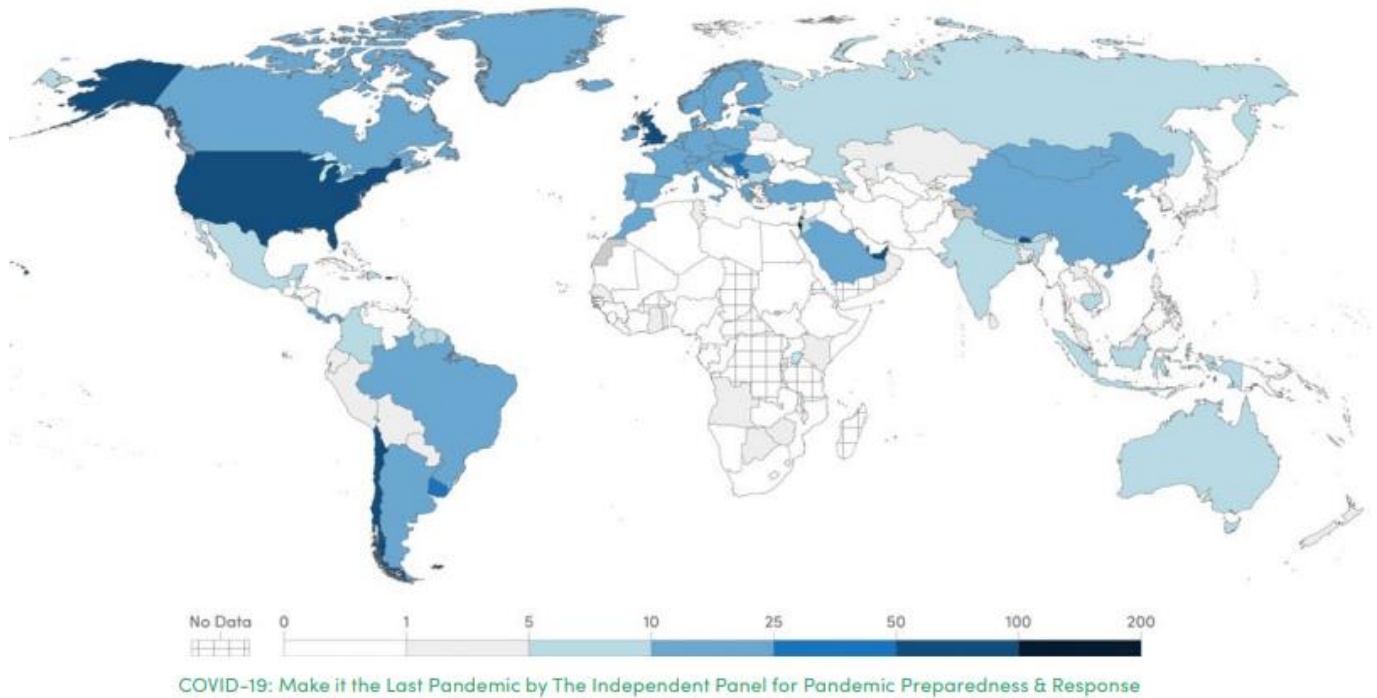
The Executive Board, during its Annual Session held in June 2020, welcomed UNDP's "commitment to help programme countries respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and [...] UNDP's technical lead on the socio-economic response and recovery efforts under the United Nations Framework for the immediate 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 third briefing note to the Executive Board to provide such an update¹.

Fast and Furious: COVID-19 Impact on Countries

1. Governments, businesses, and communities continue to grapple with the devastating health and socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world. The pandemic gained strength in 2021, fueled by the COVID-19 variants. Globally, it took only 3 months to move from 2 million to 3 million COVID-19 deaths. USA, India, Brazil, France, Turkey, Russia, UK, Italy, Spain, Mexico, and Germany, account for over 60% of the total confirmed recorded cases of deaths by COVID-19. Together, USA, Brazil and India account for more than 1 million deaths (as of 8 May 2021). The actual death toll could be much higher², with deaths under-reported from remote or rural communities with little or no access to health facilities, for example, and the deaths of irregular migrants often left out of official numbers.
2. Although the situation across continents continues to change rapidly, at the time of publication, a few countries were still entirely free from confirmed COVID-19 deaths, namely Dominica, the Holy See, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu³. Other countries have not reported changes to their death tolls, namely Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, Grenada, Iceland, Tajikistan, and Vietnam⁴.
3. A more rapid, equitable COVID-19 vaccine roll-out combined with public health measures is essential. As of 6 May, a total of 1.17 billion vaccine doses have been administered⁵. More than 80% of these have been in high-income countries, while low-income countries have received only 0.3% of the supply of vaccines. Thus far, COVAX has shipped 54 million doses to 121 countries⁶.
4. Overall, equitable vaccine distribution has been affected by multiple bottlenecks, including the inability of current manufacturers to meet global demand, trade barriers and export bans imposed by certain countries, and overstretched health systems. Based on limited access to the vaccine and the current pace of production, 85 of the world's poorest countries will achieve widespread COVID-19 vaccination only in 2023 or 2024 (see map below)⁷. A Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver to temporarily suspend intellectual property on COVID-19 tools, including vaccines, is considered as an option that would accelerate equitable access. The proposal put forward by South Africa and India at the World Trade Organization, has recently received the support of the US in the specific case of COVID-19 vaccines. Broader support, and timely negotiation of the actual waiver, will be required to ensure its success.

Total COVID-19 vaccine doses per 100 people as of 21 April 2021

Source: World Health Organization Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard. Data as of 21 April 2021.



5. Several research institutes have estimated the economic costs associated with vaccine nationalism, finding that equitable access benefits all countries in the long run. For instance, less than 1% of debt service in 2021 would cover the cost of 1 billion vaccine doses under the COVAX initiative⁸. The cost to ensure access by lower income countries to the vaccine would be about \$25 billion dollars. High-income countries could benefit from about \$4.8 for every dollar spent with the vaccines for low-income countries. In contrast, unequal allocation of COVID-19 vaccines could cost the global economy up to \$1.2 trillion a year in GDP losses⁹ due to continued restrictions (RAND Europe). Another report (Eurasia Group) indicates that equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines is a good investment as it can generate economic benefits of \$466 billion by 2025 in 10 major economies¹⁰.

6. COVID-19 has demonstrated we are living through a crisis of unsustainability and inequalities. An 'SDG push'¹¹ is required to build resilient societies and systems with strong health and social protection services as well as restored jobs and livelihoods, trade flows, tourism, remittances, and commodity prices. Without an ambitious push, partial recovery pathways and W- or L-shaped rebounds may stretch into 2024 and beyond.

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

7. The United Nations 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. Since April 2020, the UN's support has been delivered through five pillars of action contained in the UN Global Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19, which include: (i) strengthening health systems and services; (ii) protecting people and basic services; (iii) economic response and recovery, including protecting jobs and livelihoods and MSMEs; (iv) macroeconomic response; and (v) social cohesion and community resilience. 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.

JOINT OPERATIONAL RESPONSE STRATEGIES FOR UN FAMILY AND PARTNERS

COVID-19 STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN (SPRP)	GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN (GHRP)	UN SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE FRAMEWORK
1 Mobilize all sectors and communities	1 Contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and decrease morbidity and mortality	1 Protect health services and systems during the crisis
2 Control sporadic cases and clusters and prevent community transmission	2 Decrease the deterioration of human assets and rights, social cohesion and livelihoods	2 Protect people: Social protection and basic service
3 Suppress community transmission	3 Protect, assist and advocate for refugees, internally displaced people, migrants and vulnerable communities	3 Protect jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, informal sector
4 Reduce mortality		4 Facilitate macroeconomic response & multilateral collaboration
5 Develop safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics		5 Support social cohesion and community resilience

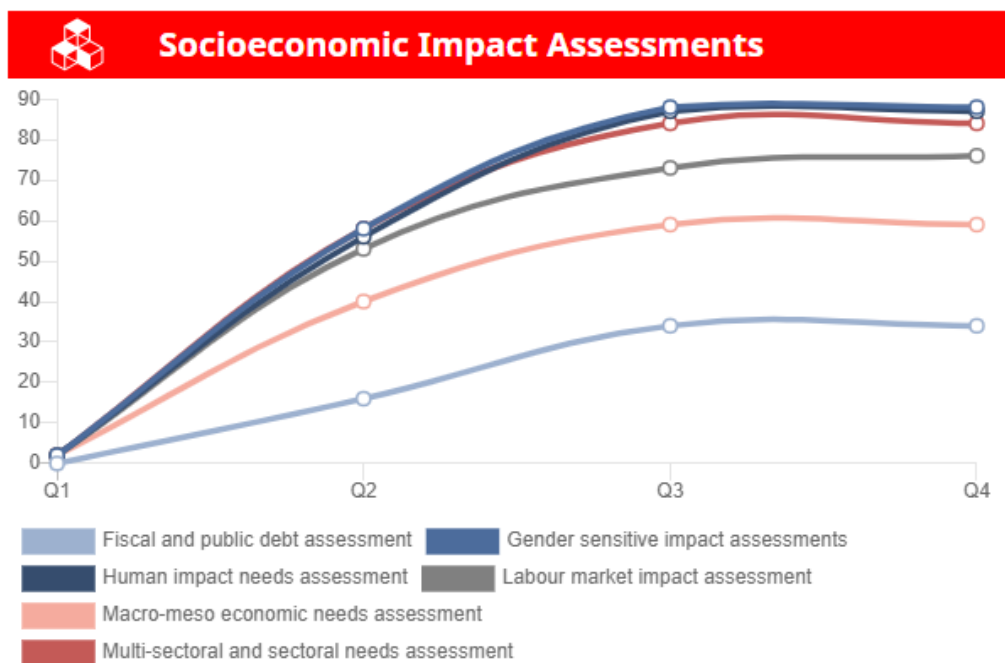
Source: UN (2020), United Nations Comprehensive Response to the COVID-19, September 2020.

8. To date, UNDP, in collaboration with the broader UN system, has supported the preparation of 144 socio-economic impact assessments (SEIAs) in 97 countries across five regions¹², often jointly with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs)¹³, the European Union, and other partners, including rapid and in-depth assessments of affected economic sectors and population groups, as the situation continues to evolve¹⁴. Additional SEIAs are in the pipeline to be released this year.

9. UN Country Teams have supported the preparation of 121 UN socioeconomic response plans (SERPs) covering 139 countries. These plans were developed in close consultation with governments. From 2022 onwards, these plans are expected to be integrated into the existing UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks at the country level. 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.

10. The UN Development Coordination Office and UNDP just released the COVID-19 Response data, based on the 18 key programme indicators selected to measure the impact of the UNCT's collective efforts in a country as part of the implementation of the UN Socio-Economic Framework for the COVID-19. A total of 124 out of 131 UN country teams have reported data on the COVID-19 response, making this the most comprehensive dataset on the UN response¹⁵.

11. Based on the data reported in the COVID-19 Portal, UNCTs supported 62 countries to carry out macro-meso economic needs assessment, 74 countries on labour market impact assessments, 79 countries on multi-sectoral and sectoral needs assessments, 33 countries on fiscal and public debt assessments, 78 countries on human impact needs assessment for at risk populations, and 77 countries on gender-sensitive impact assessments. These assessments take into account national policy priorities to determine the best available policy measures, taking the financing and implementation constraints faced by governments into consideration.



UNDP's COVID-19 Response

12. UNDP responded swiftly to the COVID-19 crisis through multiple channels, starting with its Offer 1.0 (March 2021) focused on preparedness, response, and recovery. This was followed by UNDP's appointment as technical lead for the UN socio-economic response (April 2021), and the development of UNDP's Offer 2.0 (June 2021) focused on social protection, governance, digital disruption, and green recovery, as well as on financing for development. UNDP channeled funding through its COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility (RRF)¹⁶ and the COVID-19 Rapid Financing Facility (RFF)¹⁷, established and strengthened partnerships with UN agencies and IFIs, and focused on thought leadership, advocacy and communications.

13. In line with the advocacy from the UN Secretary General and WHO Director General, UNDP is engaged, together with UN partners, in calling for faster and fairer vaccination and greater vaccine equity. UNDP was one of the early signatories of the WHO's [Vaccine Equity Declaration](#) and has been an important voice in the public domain on the need for COVID-19 vaccine equity in line with a just, inclusive, green, and sustainable recovery.

14. Over 50 UNDP Country Offices (COs) are already leveraging their implementation of UNDP's COVID 2.0 Offer to support national COVID-19 vaccination efforts, in line with national deployment and vaccination plans (NDVPs) led by governments, WHO and UNICEF. UNDP's contribution includes a focus on 1) digital solutions for vaccine delivery and health systems, 2) working with WHO, Oxford University and other partners on a global dashboard and hyperlocal analytics for vaccine equity; and 3) greening COVID-19 vaccination systems. This includes, for example, working with WHO, UNICEF, UNEP and Engineers Without Borders, among others, on vaccine waste management and reliable energy solutions for health facilities and vaccination programmes, including through Smart Facilities.

15. UNDP, in close collaboration with UNEP, FAO, ILO and UNCTAD, has worked to advance a framework for promoting an Inclusive Green Recovery, which was presented to a meeting with UNRCs and UNCTs. Four areas are identified where the UN System can be catalytic. These include: (1) Investing in nature (e.g. integrating nature in national economic policymaking processes, ecosystem restoration

and others); (2) Facilitating a just transition for all (e.g. embedding the LNOB principle in inclusive green recovery policy analysis); (3) Financing an inclusive green recovery (e.g. greening budgets and repurposing environmentally harmful subsidies, creating an enabling environment for the private sector and others); and (4) Investing on human capability and social equity (e.g. social protection floors and programmes, fiscal reforms to finance required interventions, and others). For instance, UN agencies – including UNDP, UNEP, ILO and FAO – are working together to support the many SERPs to include a focus on green economy, innovation and digital solutions (e.g., **Dominican Republic, Myanmar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Trinidad & Tobago**) and rebuilding low-carbon and climate resilient economies (e.g., **Ecuador And Trinidad & Tobago**).

16. Responses to COVID-19 are taking place at varying speeds and at 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.

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

17. The choices countries make during the COVID-19 response will frame their recovery pathway. These choices must be underpinned by reliable data providing a clear picture of how COVID-19 is rapidly changing the development landscape around the world and options available to build forward better. UNDP has just released [an assessment of the COVID-19 impact on the SDGs](#), focusing on those that are being left behind. The report finds that the long-term social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will widen the gap between people living in rich and poor countries. Approximately 8 out of 10 people that could become poor by the end of this decade because of the pandemic will live in countries with low or medium human development. The report provides a ‘SDG Push’ scenario, adaptable for each country context, and outlines the impact of targeted investments that can accelerate progress towards an inclusive green recovery¹⁸. UNDP also launched a complementary policy modelling platform -- [UNDP’s Data Futures Platform](#) -- to help decision-makers analyze the potential impacts of different combinations of policy choices before precious investments are locked in.

18. Crisis-affected countries have been especially hard-hit by the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, including rising poverty rates, a rise in domestic and other forms of violence and an erosion of trust between citizens and state. These emerging trends are outlined in UNDP’s report [Overcoming the Setbacks: Understanding the Impact and Implications of COVID-19 in Fragile and Conflict-affected Contexts](#). The report notes that fragile and conflict-affected countries are both more vulnerable to shocks from crises, and less able to cope with the impacts. It focuses on the six dimensions of fragility — economic, social, human, political, security and environmental. In **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**, 50% of surveyed families reduced food consumption because of the pandemic. In **Syria**, remittances more than halved from 2017 levels, affecting 1.2 million people. In addition, rising authoritarianism, democratic backsliding and ethno-nationalism are reported, while civil unrest including protests have risen above 2019 levels. The **Central African Republic** has witnessed a 69% increase in gender-based violence (GBV) since the start of the pandemic. Compared to the same period in 2019, all major UN-designated terrorist groups in Africa recorded an increase in activities in 2020.

19. On 11 March, UNDP and the group of g7+ countries called for greater international support to help vulnerable populations recover from COVID-19¹⁹ through an development approach that address the multidimensional drivers of crisis in each specific context; invest more in social cohesion by strengthening democratic institutions, fostering stability, and countering hate speech and misinformation; and harness new technologies and data to more accurately respond to crisis. The pandemic has also reinforced the importance of collaboration across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to pursue lasting peace and sustainable development.

20. How are countries investing in green recovery from COVID-19 at global, country, and individual policy levels? Hosted on UNDP's Data Futures Platform, the [Global Recovery Observatory](#) is designed to showcase policy solutions and to help identify investment opportunities for governments and partners that are more impactful and sustainable.

21. As countries move forward with a recovery agenda, crushing debt could undermine developing countries' ability to fight and build forward better from COVID-19, according to new UNDP research on [sovereign debt vulnerabilities in developing economies](#). Nearly a third of the 120 low- and middle-income economies studied are either 'vulnerable' or 'severely vulnerable' to a sovereign debt crisis while, as noted above, less than 1% of debt service in 2021 would cover the cost of 1 billion vaccine doses under the COVAX initiative. Developing economies need bold new mechanisms to address crippling debt. That includes ways to facilitate debt suspension and relief, revamp tax and trade policies, and introduce innovative approaches to boost liquidity, such as debt-for-nature swaps.

22. Developing countries are already facing a shortfall of \$4.2 trillion in the financing they would need this year to be on track to meet the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, public finance is not sufficient to meet their financing needs. The private sector must align its activities with the SDGs. To this end, UNDP and its partners are driving forward a range of initiatives. For example, the [SDG Investor Platform](#) provides local market intelligence on investment options. The [SDG Impact Standards for Bond Issuers](#) provides a common language and a clear system to integrate the SDGs into business and investment decisions. Based on this framework, the BRICS New Development Bank issued a Sustainable Development Goals Bond valued at \$767 million in March 2021. UNDP, the European Commission and the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) have launched a new [Integrated National Financing Framework \(INFF\) Knowledge Platform](#). Under the leadership of the Prime Ministers of Canada and Jamaica and the UN Secretary General, UNDP was a leading contributor to the SG's Financing for Development Initiative in 2020. In addition, UNDP is now the secretariat to the [G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group](#), co-chaired by China and the United States, which is examining the major gaps and barriers to mobilize sustainable finance.

23. Men outnumber women three to one across COVID-19 government task forces around the world, according to new data from the [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#) by UNDP and UN Women²⁰. Released to coincide with the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the data is a warning: without women in decision-making roles, COVID-19 measures taken by governments are more likely to ignore women's needs and continue to entrench inequalities. Specifically, the data shows that only eight countries in the world have COVID-19 task forces with gender parity. The COVID-19 [Global Gender Tracker](#) points out that the global response has been largely blind to women and girls' needs. To help country offices fill in this gap, UNDP established the [Gender and Crisis Engagement Facility](#), designed to deliver gender-transformative programming. A review of the gendered dimensions of UNDP's COVID-19 response is currently being conducted to guide future COVID-19 recovery efforts.

24. Overall, UNDP's thought leadership and knowledge production continue to inform the COVID-19 response and recovery, driving integrated SDG solutions at the country level in close collaboration with UN Resident Coordinators and UNCTs²¹.

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

25. 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, digitalization, and financing for development.

26. In **Africa**, UNDP swiftly mobilized \$310 million and has delivered \$217 million across 46 countries since the outbreak of the pandemic. UNDP provided immediate support to national health systems. That included the procurement of medical supplies, ventilators, personal protective equipment (PPE), and building COVID-19 isolation centres. It strengthened the capacity of the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and its national partners in preparedness and response. UNDP supported countries in vaccine procurement, fostered innovative solutions for infectious waste management, empowered women and youth, particularly in the informal sector and in small businesses, through cash transfers by establishing linkages with markets and e-commerce platforms. UNDP also supported innovative solutions to respond to COVID-19 through the UNDP Accelerator Labs and Youth Connekt. UNDP helped to establish solidarity funds to support vulnerable people such as people living with disabilities. UNDP is also helping to boost e-governance, for instance by procuring Zoom licenses for **Burkina Faso's** state institutions. UNDP is undertaking assessments, analyzing long-term impacts, providing fiscal and SDGs financing policy support, and helping countries such as **Nigeria** to re-imagine the future after COVID-19. UNDP continues to adapt its way of working, creating platforms for joint donor funding, developing key partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the private sector, and broadening stakeholder engagement. In doing so, UNDP is prioritizing efforts to promote social cohesion and enhance stabilization.

27. In the **Arab States Region**, UNDP has drawn on its longstanding experience in managing crises to help health systems respond to COVID-19. That included setting up new frontline COVID-19 facilities in **Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan** and expanding capacity in existing facilities in **Iraq and Somalia**. UNDP procured medical equipment, PPE and testing kits in countries such as **Libya and Sudan**. It launched online platforms for telemedicine and mental health support and introduced technologies to improve medical waste management. UNDP helped to fight stigma and tackle misinformation. It also supported communication campaigns to stem the spread of the virus in Iraq and Somalia. Working closely with Residents Coordinators and UN Country Teams, UNDP assessed the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. Country assessments informed national plans and UN response frameworks to the pandemic. Sector assessments informed policy actions, including financial services and small businesses. A regional assessment analyzed the impacts of the dual crises of COVID-19 and declining oil prices while charting paths toward recovery and inclusive, sustainable development. UNDP repurposed programmatic interventions and launched new initiatives to expand social protection. It worked to promote the inclusion of women in decision-making processes and address gender-based inequalities and violence exacerbated by the pandemic. UNDP helped to provide alternative livelihoods for affected communities. It also helped to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on vulnerable groups in **Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco** and **Syria**. Promoting online digital solutions, UNDP helped to keep Governments connected while supporting the economic recovery of women-led SMEs. UNDP employed digital tools to provide critical health data in **Iraq and Lebanon**; provided targeted support to small businesses; extended services to survivors of gender-based violence; and facilitated hackathons to engage youth and enhance public sector performance.

28. In **Asia and Pacific**, UNDP in **China** supported procurement globally with PPE and joined forces with WHO on an education campaign to help curb the virus, especially among vulnerable and marginalized communities. UNDP's Country Offices in the region responded in a timely manner, providing Governments with life-supporting medical equipment such as x-ray machines, infrared thermometers, infusion pumps, protective suits, gloves, hand sanitizers (see response in **Indonesia**²²), as well as digital tools (see cash transfer programmes in **Cambodia**²³), thereby helping to mitigate the immediate impact of the pandemic. UNDP quickly produced [a socio-economic analysis of the impact of COVID-19](#) in the region that urged governments to overhaul policies and invest in public health, economic stimulus, and social safety nets²⁴. UNDP then switched gears to focus on longer-term, socio-economic recovery and re-building for a more inclusive, resilient, digital, and green future. According to a recent released UNDP report in **Myanmar**, [the turmoil following the military coup and the impact of COVID-19 could push half of the country's population \(about 25 million\)](#) into living in poverty by early

next year. Without rapid corrective actions on economic, social, political and human rights protection policies, these scenarios will put Myanmar's efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030 well out of reach. In 2021, increased focus will be in supporting countries with digital innovations to ensure the equitable and efficient delivery of the COVID-19 vaccines in countries such as **India**, [Bangladesh](#), [Indonesia](#), and others. To support strengthening health systems and continued delivery of health services in **India**, WHO deployed over 2,600 public health specialists working on other diseases to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF and UNDP are also supporting authorities to monitor over 175,000 nationwide [COVID-19](#) centers, with over 820 personnel deployed²⁵.

29. The pandemic devastated **Europe and Central Asia**, over-stretching health systems, pushing economies into recession, and reversing hard-won development gains. In response, UNDP Country Offices in the region quickly repurposed existing projects, mounted a "digital defense" in the fight against the virus in counties such as in **Azerbaijan**. UNDP also supported Governments to transition to digital service delivery in a range of countries including **Kazakhstan and Georgia**. To deliver coherent and integrated national support, UNDP rapidly designed an integrated mechanism. Programmes were revised in a coordinated and concerted way to provide a lifeline to millions already coping with crises in eastern **Ukraine and Turkey**. They also helped to provide targeted assistance to the most vulnerable in **North Macedonia and Kyrgyzstan**. UNDP also helped businesses to respond to supply chain disruptions and production challenges in **Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina**. Partnering with a major telecommunications company, UNDP **Albania** helped to provide trustworthy and life-saving information on the virus, while UNDP **Serbia**, in cooperation with the European Union, delivered medical and personal protective equipment exceeding 3,000 cubic meters in volume. UNDP **Moldova** helped 32,000 students and 2,500 teachers avoid disruptions in education through its support to the e-learning platform studii.md, and in **Armenia**, UNDP's social impact lab helped launch 12,000 new online classes in just two weeks.

30. The **Latin America and the Caribbean** region is amongst the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. What started as a health crisis quickly became a socio-economic and governance crisis, reversing years of development gains. In **Mexico**, UNDP helped to procure 138 ventilators for critically ill patients and supported young entrepreneurs in **Argentina** to develop an open-source ventilator that can be scaled up. UNDP also helped to strengthen social protection systems. In **Honduras**, UNDP helped the Government implement a voucher transfer programme to assist up to 500,000 self-employed workers. In **Guatemala**, UNDP provided technical assistance to a social programme that allocated cash transfers to more than 2.6 million people. To stimulate discussion on a "new social contract", UNDP in **Panama** designed a crowd-sourcing platform, Agora. To help Governments understand the impact of COVID-19, UNDP provided advice and partnered with think tanks and economists to produce its COVID-19 Public Policy Document Series, which has been downloaded nearly 100,000 times. To revive economies, UNDP implemented initiatives such as Cascos de Vida and Tiendas Comunitarias in **Colombia**. In **Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean States**, UNDP partnered with the online platform WiFetch to connect SMEs to potential buyers and ensure safe home deliveries to vulnerable populations. The #EnMarchaDigitalinitiative has helped to support some 3,000 SMEs in 2020. UNDP also supported digitalization efforts in education. In the **Dominican Republic**, UNDP helped to train 115,000 teachers, and in **El Salvador**, UNDP helped procure laptops and tablets for learning. In **Peru**, the "No estas sola" initiative reached approximately 3.5 million people monthly with messages centred on the prevention of gender-based violence.

[Impact assessments](#)

31. UNDP Africa's new report [Analysing long-term socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 across diverse African contexts](#) examines the effect COVID-19 will have on macro-economic development in 10 African countries by 2030 and 2050. The study highlights the multifaceted economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic across Africa, including on human development

indicators, economic interdependence, and growth and resilience patterns. Changes in mortality, economic growth and international financial flows in **Angola, Cabo Verde, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritius, Nigeria and South Africa**. It includes the longer-term impacts on trade, economic growth and health indicators and proposes actionable solutions. The report [Through the Pandemic and Beyond](#) – prepared by UNDP and the African Union Commission, in close collaboration with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) – outlines the power of partnerships in addressing development challenges and crises.

32. UNDP Arab States Report – [Compounding Crises: Will COVID-19 and Lower Oil Prices Prompt a New Development Paradigm in the Arab Region?](#) – notes that the region has been deeply affected by the ‘dual shocks’ of the simultaneous occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant drop in oil prices. The report notes that the pandemic lockdowns have triggered economic crises, exacerbating existing problems such as low per capita growth, high investment volatility, low productivity, fragile political transitions, entrenched economic rentier systems, insufficient economic and political participation by women and young people. The report draws from the previous socio-economic impact assessments conducted in the region, led by UNDP.

33. The most recent Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in **Thailand** examines the effects of the pandemic, analyses the implications for the SDGs, and outlines key policy directions to guide the recovery process. The report was commissioned by the UN Country Team in Thailand and led by UNDP and UNICEF in partnership with the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) and the Asian Development Bank²⁶. Policy recommendations include short-term measures focusing on public health; medium-term measures focusing on improving social protection for vulnerable groups; and long-term measures shifting towards a green economy.

34. The Ministry of Human Rights of **Pakistan**, in collaboration with UNDP, launched a report entitled “COVID-19 and Disaster Vulnerability in Pakistan: A Human Rights Based Analysis”. The report proposes recommendations to protect the rights of vulnerable people²⁷.

35. UNDP, in partnership with the UN Resident Coordinator, has worked with the Government of **Seychelles** for the preparation of a COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessment²⁸. The assessment indicates that tourism revenues are projected to decline by more than 70%, contributing to a projected GDP contraction of 11.5%.

36. In **Jordan**, a first round of rapid impact assessments, conducted by UNDP, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and FAFO Institute for Labour and Social Research, outlines the many impacts of the pandemic on vulnerable households and enterprises²⁹. Lockdown measures forced enterprises to suspend or scale down operations, led to disruptions in production and distribution chains and caused demand for goods and services to plummet with enormous implications for the economy, employment and livelihoods. In **Bahrain**, A new assessment by UNDP and the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies examines the effect that COVID-19 has had on people’s lives as well as their physical and mental well-being³⁰.

37. **Iraq**’s recovery from COVID-19 is an opportunity to strengthen the country’s social protection system to support the most vulnerable, according to an assessment released by UNDP in collaboration with ILO³¹. It sets out that the country’s current social protection framework is not sufficient to target and protect all vulnerable groups.

38. The Rapid Socio-economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) of COVID-19 in **Kosovo**, produced in partnership by UNDP, UNFPA, and UN Women, examines the impact of the pandemic on households and businesses,³² and complements the first assessment undertaken in May 2020. The assessments aim to produce comparable data over time and enable a comprehensive understanding of the effects of the crisis in Kosovo.

39. A UNDP policy brief examines the possible effects of the pandemic on human development in **Cambodia** and Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. The simulations show that COVID-19 is set to cause a drastic decline of HDI in all four countries. Cambodia is set to be hit hardest with aggregate HDI declining by 3.93% from 0.594 in 2019 to 0.571 in 2020. This is equivalent to erasing all progress made in human development over the past four years³³.

40. The COVID-19 pandemic is having significant consequences on **Myanmar's** economy, according to the Household Vulnerability Survey (HVS) 2020. UNDP and the country's Central Statistical Organization conducted the HVS, a nationally representative survey of 2,016 households. Growth is predicted to be sluggish (1.5%) and nearly 500,000 non-farm jobs could be lost, mostly amongst women and young people³⁴.

41. In **Indonesia**, more than 85% of Indonesians in disaster-stricken communities of Central Sulawesi and West Nusa Tenggara have experienced a "double burden" of economic losses due impacts of disasters and of COVID-19, according to a rapid survey by UNICEF, UNDP, and the SMERU Research Institute³⁵.

42. 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 Country Offices in conducting digital SEIAs with primary data collection often focused on vulnerable groups. The initiative has also built capacity across 65 countries for undertaking digital assessments in crisis circumstances. UNDP's 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

43. The COVID-19 pandemic spotlights the vulnerabilities of informal economy workers in sub-Saharan Africa. Together, they represent 86% and 92% of men and women's total employment respectively, and nearly 9 in 10 young workers. These workers also represent a large share of the 82% of sub-Saharan Africans without access to social protection. While not all workers within the informal economy are poor, most are highly vulnerable to poverty, with limited means to cope with the economic, social and health impacts of the pandemic³⁶. UNDP and ILO recently launched a study on [Informality and Social Protection in African Countries: A Forward-Looking Assessment of Contributory Schemes](#).

44. UNDP and Japan are working together to implement a project that will improve the social stability and security of conflict-affected communities in **Nigeria** and mitigate the negative socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project is supporting early recovery and peace building in conflict-affected communities in the states of Adamawa, Borno, Yobe in the North East, and Taraba, Nasarawa, and Benue in the Middle Belt. Protracted conflict in the North-East and the conflict between farmers and herders in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria continues to cause human critical incidents with casualties, the displacement of people and increased dependency on emergency humanitarian aid. The pandemic has further deteriorated the security situation and the standard of living of these communities³⁷.

45. In 2020, many refugees and host communities lost their livelihoods because of the COVID-19 pandemic. With savings exhausted, poverty levels have sky-rocketed and many refugee and host communities struggle to put food on the table or access critical social services. According to the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)³⁸ estimates, more than 10 million people – including 5.5 million Syrian refugees and 4.8 million members of their host communities – need urgent support. This is the highest number of people in need in these countries since the crisis began, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and tough socio-economic conditions.

46. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNDP will join efforts to support migrants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in **Belarus** as part of the Global IOM-UNDP Seed Funding Initiative³⁹.

47. In Darfur, **Sudan**, UNDP is helping internally displaced people learn new skills, boost their income, and connect with host communities. The project, Strengthening Livelihoods Security for Peace and Recovery, targets women, supporting their aspirations, providing training and farming and farming-related marketing skills⁴⁰. With support from the Swiss Development Cooperation and UNAMID SLF Transition Mechanism, it is set to reach 15,000 families in the next 3 years.

48. In **Rwanda**, UNDP, the National Union of the Deaf (RNUD), and National Council for People with Disabilities (NCPD), translated COVID-19 information into sign language for over 5,000 deaf and hard of hearing people across the country⁴¹.

49. UNDP and UNICEF have launched a project to advance resilience, good governance and socio-economic security of communities living in three border regions of **Armenia**: Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik. These areas have been particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict. The project is funded by the United Kingdom Government's Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund⁴².

50. The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating food insecurity and hunger worldwide. Many countries and local communities have adopted coping measures to expand the availability of food. In **Serbia**, about 250,000 tons of food is wasted annually, prompting UNDP and Delhaize Serbia to launch the first-ever digital food donation platform in the country. Through the platform, the shops will make daily updates in the information on available quantities of fruits and vegetables and a beneficiary organisation can collect food supplies from more than one shop. The digital platform is increasing the quantity of food donated and the number of final beneficiaries of the Belgrade Food Bank⁴³.

51. The pandemic has frozen a lot of the world's financing for natural areas, many heavily depending on the revenue from tourism. The Galapagos Islands of **Ecuador** - home of a wealth of unique biodiversity -- have a highly tourism-dependent economy, receiving 250,000 visitors per year. Tourism guarantees 80% of the jobs. In 2020, tourism revenue dropped to less than half of what it would be in a typical year. UNDP's Biodiversity Finance Initiative is working with partners on a crowdfunding campaign to support local communities⁴⁴. UNDP is working with **Bhutan** to re-train and upskill more than 150 tourism workers and their families, as the tourism sector reels as a result of the pandemic⁴⁵. In Dominican Republic, tourism contributes directly with about 7.4% of the GDP and indirectly with 36.9% due to demand from other sectors. UNDP and partners are working to transform the tourism sector in the **Dominican Republic** from a mass-market, based on an all-inclusive model, to a resilient system grounded on services that adds local value, benefiting people and nature⁴⁶. Similarly, UNDP is working with the **Maldives** to transform tourism with a focus on diversification of the tourism offer, through the leveraging of community-led conservation of natural ecosystems and cultural heritage as a novel tourism product, expand livelihoods, creating avenues for greater participation of women and youth⁴⁷.

52. In **Nigeria**, state authorities and UNDP, with support from Japan and the European Union, launched a cash transfer project to alleviate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on the poor and vulnerable in Kano State in northern Nigeria⁴⁸. With support from UNDP, ethnic minority Santal women in Bodhghari, Tolpara, and Tallapara villages in **Bangladesh** are getting financial assistance to produce masks to help curb the spread of COVID-19⁴⁹. In **Burundi**, UNDP is supporting women-led businesses which have been forced to halt their activities because of COVID-19. Over 100 women have benefited from financial support to date⁵⁰.

Economic response and recovery, including inclusive and green initiatives

53. COVID-19 has impacted women disproportionately and is having a regressive effect on gender equality. The gender gap is expected to get worse, with gains made over decades in reducing gender

inequalities feared to be lost due to the pandemic, unless adequate financing is channeled to the most pressing priorities of women and girls. Pioneered in Latin America beginning in 2009 with the support of UNDP, the [Gender Equality Seal for Public and Private Enterprises \(GES\)](#) engages the private sector to achieve excellency standards to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the business world. Given the impact of COVID-19 on women, the Gender Equality Seal is an important tool to continue to advance an agenda of gender equality and ensure that recovery is strongly informed by a gender lens. UNDP is currently working with over 600 companies on a Gender Equality Seal.

54. UNDP is collaborating with the Global Compact, ICC and with major private sector actors like Microsoft, DHL through a COVID-19 Private Sector Global Facility on SME solutions to economic recovery. The partnership has co-created 5 solution areas that address the most pressing challenges threatening SME survival and focus on promoting SME resilience through public-private partnerships, including 'empowering SMEs with digital capabilities, and 'integrating SMEs into sustainable procurement, responsible supply chains', which have already been initiated in pilot countries like Colombia and Turkey.

55. In 2020, the Connecting Business initiative (CBI) supported 17 private sector networks around the world in strategically engaging the private sector in disaster management. These networks reached a combined membership of 4,100 companies and with access to about 40,000 micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). All CBI Member Networks responded to COVID-19 and, in addition, nine networks responded to other 19 emergencies, including conflict, drought, earthquakes, fire, flooding, tropical storms and a volcanic eruption. They reached 17 million people through crisis response activities and raised US\$45 million.

56. As the Covid-19 emergency passed, internal assessments conducted on Tanzanian savings groups in 2020 surpassed expectations in terms of their resilience and self-reliance. Therefore, UNCDF decided to invest in the capacity of the end beneficiaries to become investors themselves and build new sources of income. In **Tanzania**, UNCDF supports [Digital Mobile Africa](#) to provide smallholder farmers access to formal financial products, training on good agricultural practices and lower-priced inputs. In addition, UNCDF supported the development of an agri-tech layer on top of existing community savings groups, allowing participants to increase agricultural productivity and earnings, connect with off-takers of agricultural produce, and participate in mobile-based trainings.

57. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed gaps and the need to increase resilience in the climate and health sectors in **Uzbekistan**. A new programme funded by the Green Climate Fund ensures that the climate agenda remains central to Uzbekistan's development efforts during the pandemic⁵¹.

58. Nine out of 10 micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in **Indonesia** have seen plunging demand for their products during the pandemic, while more than eight in 10 have recorded lower profits, according to a new report by UNDP and the University of Indonesia's Institute for Economic and Social Research⁵². UNDP's new "Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Business Sector and the Growth Prospects of the Montenegrin Economy" assesses the impact of the pandemic on enterprises in **Montenegro** in May versus September 2020⁵³.

[Strengthening governance institutions, and participation](#)

59. COVID-19 goes beyond a health crisis and must be understood as a crisis of governance. UNDP helped governments of 82 countries to move business continuity online and deliver essential services, as part of a strategy to strengthen core government functions. In partnership with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNDP continued to deliver electoral assistance support to various countries. Overall, UNDP is the major UN body for implementing support to electoral institutions, legal frameworks, and processes to support elections in non-conflict settings. On average, UNDP manages some 40 to 50 electoral projects per year. As a result, people were able to exercise their

right to vote despite the restriction of public services and continued lockdown with the pandemic. In 2020, with financial support from the European Union (EU), UNDP provided direct electoral assistance support to **Bolivia, Central African Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Nepal, Somalia, and Zimbabwe**⁵⁴. In **Niger**, over 740,000 people were registered to vote, out of which 55% are women.

60. Through its support to human rights and anti-corruption institutions, UNDP helped government systems to be more transparent, accountable and responsive. In **Angola** and **Zambia**, through the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law system, new operating procedures were developed, and law enforcement officers were trained online on how to uphold human rights standards in policing during a state of emergency.

61. In the **Republic of the Congo**, UNDP trained 100 journalists on women and children's rights and on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, to enhance their capacity to work with international human rights instruments. UNDP worked with countries including **Albania** and **Kyrgyzstan** to meet a growing demand for free legal aid. In **Fiji**, it worked with the EU to establish an electronic case management and e-filing system for the courts.

62. The UNDP publication "Latin American and the Caribbean: effective Governance, beyond recovery" explores the need to bolster effective governance in **Latin America and the Caribbean** in the wake of COVID-19⁵⁵ by adopting a three part approach: productivity, inclusion, and resilience, with effective governance as the foundation. As COVID-19 has become a crisis of governance with unprecedented economic, social, and political consequences in **Latin America**, UNDP, the judiciary, and the international community collaborate to promote access to justice as a pillar of development and social inclusion⁵⁶.

63. Legal Environment Assessment reports on **Angola, Madagascar, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe** highlight the importance of focusing on key populations to [reduce HIV infections and improve sexual and reproductive health and rights](#). The assessments highlight specific recommendations on how to remove legal, human rights and gender-related barriers to safe, accessible and effective health care for young key populations to ensure they are not left behind in the HIV and sexual and reproductive health national response. Targeted at policy makers from government, parliaments, communities, and other young people, the assessments were led by multisectoral National Steering Committees and technical working groups under the leadership of National AIDS Commissions, Ministries of Justice and Ministries of Health with direct support from UNDP country offices⁵⁷.

64. A new "chatbot" will offer free legal aid to people in the **Kyrgyz Republic**. It has been developed as a result of a UNDP project that is supported by the Government of Japan entitled: "Supporting an Inclusive and Multi-sectoral Response to COVID-19 and Addressing its Socio-economic Impact"⁵⁸.

65. During the COVID-19 pandemic, **Mexico** City experienced an increase in violence against women. In response, UNDP, UN Women and the Government of Mexico implemented strategies for both victim support and institutional capacity building to address this public problem⁵⁹.

66. In **Tanzania**, UNDP, with its partner Xsense AI, is studying Twitter data to evaluate the prevalence of misleading information related to COVID-19⁶⁰.

67. UNDP is providing key support to Parliaments and Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in the **Asia and the Pacific** region during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included the provision of hardware and software solutions to allow SAIs to function remotely⁶¹.

68. In **Honduras**, UNDP and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation have developed seven radio messages and 16 live radio programmes to broadcast reliable information about COVID-19 in Miskitu, the most widely spoken language in the La Moskitia region⁶². Through UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization, 564 schools which were destroyed during the ISIL conflict have been renovated across

Iraq, and 156 additional schools are in process of renovation. Now that children are back to school, COVID-19 safety procedures are being observed as part of the “new normal”⁶³.

69. UNDP Accelerator Labs in **India, Morocco, Cabo Verde, and Timor-Leste** have teamed-up to use gamification and digital technologies to combat COVID-19 misinformation⁶⁴.

Leveraging digitalization for a rapid response

70. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented an innovation opportunity for developing countries to promote technologies that are contextual, accessible, and affordable to its citizens. Investment in internet infrastructural development, digital skills and the right policy frameworks will accelerate digitalization. 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.

71. UNDP’s 91 [Accelerator Labs](#) are a unique network, supporting 115 countries, that accelerate learning on what works and what doesn’t in sustainable development. They do so by identifying [local innovators](#), tapping into their expertise and creating actionable insights across the globe. In 2020 alone, the Labs documented more than 1,700 grassroots-led solutions covering all 17 SDGs. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they enabled governments to respond more effectively to citizens’ needs; from using non-traditional data to help inform responses in the [Philippines](#) and [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), to [harnessing mobile money](#) in Kenya and Uganda and [using gamification to counter misinformation](#) in India, Morocco, Timor-Leste and Cabo Verde.

72. In **Azerbaijan**, UNDP is supporting the Government to expand its Turn Digital! platform to enable SMEs to reach customers online to help ease the effects of COVID-19 on SMEs. Via Turn Digital!, consumers and SMEs can transact online. Consumers can access online education, health, entertainment, food, telecommunications, and more. For SMEs, the platform offers access to consumers, as well as support in digitalizing their businesses.

73. In **India**, UNDP is scaling up the functionalities of the Ajeevika app to provide women with information about available public services. The app was first launched in the state of Uttarakhand to provide women in rural areas better access to information on public services. In the new phase, services are being expanded to meet the challenges of COVID-19. Ajeevika aims to slow the spread of the virus by reducing in-person contact at government offices, with significant time savings. A further expansion will create an online marketplace for informal vendors, allowing people to continue their business with reduced risk.

74. UNDP is working with the Government of **Somalia** to implement a skills-building and job training platform. UNDP will build a platform to map private sector demand and talent pipeline in real time. The program is intended to address a staggering 67% youth unemployment rate. The platform will be built on the successful NISE2 platform in Bangladesh, and will comprise a job aggregator and dashboard, as well as a community space to train job seekers, employers, academics, and policy makers.

75. In **Ethiopia**, the Inclusive Digital Economies Action (IDEA) programme, in partnership with UNHCR and the government specialized Agency, aims to solve humanitarian problems with development solutions by promoting digitization and local market creation through capacity building of all key stakeholders, ecosystem-level advocacy and market-based incentives. To support community cooperatives that were impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, UNCDF is supporting delivery of savings-led financial services to cooperatives that have both refugee and host community members and/or benefit both communities alike with their products and services, are gender inclusive and investment oriented.

Using an application for community-based savings, financial service providers are adopting a credit scoring algorithm based on transactional data to allow a bank to provide loans based on the credit score.

76. UNDP is supporting implementing geospatial data collaboration space for renewable energy electrification in **Africa and in SIDS**. This project aims to create an advocacy and partnership matchmaking platform to accelerate access to energy to the one billion people globally who still do not have access to electricity. The collaboration space will bring together stakeholders including non-traditional finance actors, social impact investors, carbon credit markets, crowd funders and more to support a wide variety of energy interventions.

77. UNDP is working to support the Government of **Dominican Republic** to expand digital healthcare services platform eHospital facilitates medical care for vulnerable people in the Dominican Republic through tele-consultations with doctors. Via an online platform, patients are screened by eHospital's AI doctor, who either answers patients' questions, refers them to a specialist, or directs them to call for emergency response. Patients are also able to see a live doctor through a digital consultation.

78. Following the COVID-19 outbreak, a major downturn in economic activity hit refugee communities in the **United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania)** and **Rwanda**, thereby hampering their resilience and that of their businesses. Since refugee camps were closed to non-essential operations and travel was largely restricted, UNCDF worked with partners to set up communication trees from the grassroots level of community savings groups to ensure that groups felt ready and supported to make immediate plans and adapt to changing circumstances. In **Tanzania**, as part of digital-financial literacy material, UNCDF distributed new modules on business continuity during COVID-19 through mobile phones, radio, and digital applications in addition to the existing [edutainment toolkit](#). In **Rwanda**, UNCDF worked with stakeholders to adapt to help savings groups digitize their earnings and build resilience as they tried to diversify and strengthen their income sources.

79. **Jamaica**, with support from UNDP, has launched a new digital emergency response mechanism to coordinate and track multiple demands for financial support, goods and services during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic⁶⁵.

Financing the COVID-19 response and recovery

80. The [SDG Investor Platform](#), co-created by [UNDP's SDG Impact](#) flagship initiative and UN Secretary-General's Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance, makes the market intelligence generated through the SDG Investor Maps available to investors interested in SDG-enabling investment opportunities. The platform currently provides insights on over [200 Investment Opportunity Areas](#) identified in eleven countries and will further expand with new SDG investor maps.

81. Through [SDG Impact](#) initiative which aims to support investors, bond issuers, and enterprises to make measurable contributions toward the SDGs, UNDP developed the [SDG Impact Standards for Private Equity Funds](#) and for Bond Issuers. The standards are a public good and can be used as an internal diagnostic tool for organizations aligning their internal decision-making processes. SDG Impact Standards are already being used in the market. The New Development Bank announced a RMB 5 billion SDG bond issuance utilizing the Standards and the SDG Finance Taxonomy. An external assurance framework and SDG Impact Seal are being developed making the Standards available as a voluntary, self-assessment guide. Mexico was the first country to issue Sovereign SDGs Bond (890 mil), with UNDP engagement. Demand reached 6.4 times the allocated amount. A total of 267 global investment firms participated.

82. UNDP has been a leading contributor to the SG’s FFD initiative in 2020. Under the leadership of the Prime Ministers of Canada and Jamaica and the Secretary General, a series of consultations were held in 2020 to distill a menu of policy options to finance a COVID-19 recovery and an inclusive and resilient future. These policy options are being taken forward through an inclusive process, structured around six clusters of issues. UNDP is facilitating the cluster on sustainability and climate action.

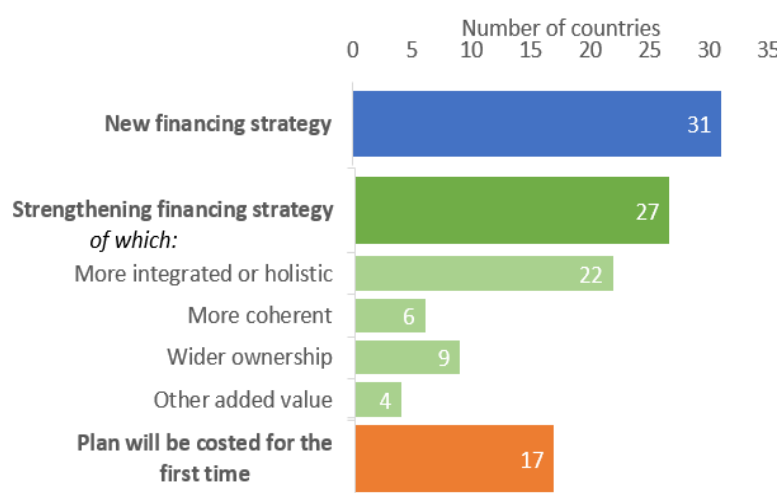
83. The current Italian presidency of the **G20** reactivated the Sustainable Finance Study Group and transformed into a fully-fledged Working group (SFWG) at the last meeting of the G20 Finance Ministers meeting (held on 7 April). UNDP facilitates the Secretariat of the Sustainable Finance Working Group which is co-chaired by the United States and China.

84. In **Lao PDR**⁶⁶, UNCDF, together with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO, supported the strategic financing of the 9th national socio-economic development plan with the specific aim to sustain recovery efforts amidst COVID-19 through policy priority costing, the development of an evidence-based approach to supporting budget allocation decisions and implementation of an innovative budget tagging methodology to track spending against national development priorities.

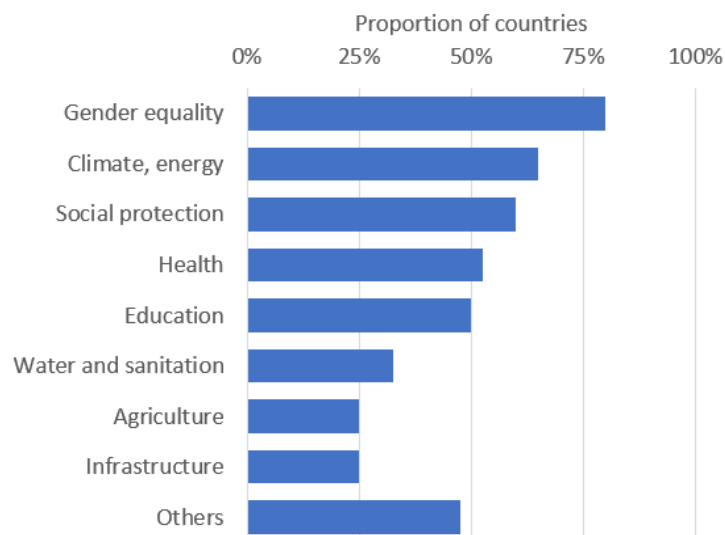
85. Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) are now being used by governments in more than 70 countries to shape robust approaches to financing recovery from the pandemic, in ways that bring together the policies and instruments used to govern public and private financing. UNDP is providing direct support, in close collaboration with UNDESA and more than 15 UN agencies, the IMF and EU. The scale is there, as countries start to operationalize INFFs, many have developed INFF Roadmaps and 14 in progress. Some 31 countries are launching financing strategies for the first time, while 27 more are strengthening existing strategies.

86. INFFs are shifting traditional spaces. Nearly all countries engaged are linking financing strategies to medium and/or long-term development plans. Comprehensive financing strategies with social dimensions are emerging, including alignment with equity goals and a focus on gender, climate and energy (with some tensions on which to prioritize in specific development settings). This is shifting engagement with financial institutions, including with the IMF and the IFIs.

Financing strategies: added-value



Thematic focus



87. More than 30 countries will use INFF processes to articulate an integrated financing strategy for the first time. **Namibia** is introducing a new financing strategy to support the country’s long-term Vision

2030 plan as well as the 5th Medium-Term National Development Plan. Another 27 countries will strengthen existing financing strategies, in a variety of ways. More than three-quarters of financing strategies will prioritize gender equality, while climate change or energy is a priority in 65% of countries. Social protection and health are each emphasized in at least 50% of countries. Mainstreaming these issues within financing strategies will help to drive financing for greener, more sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

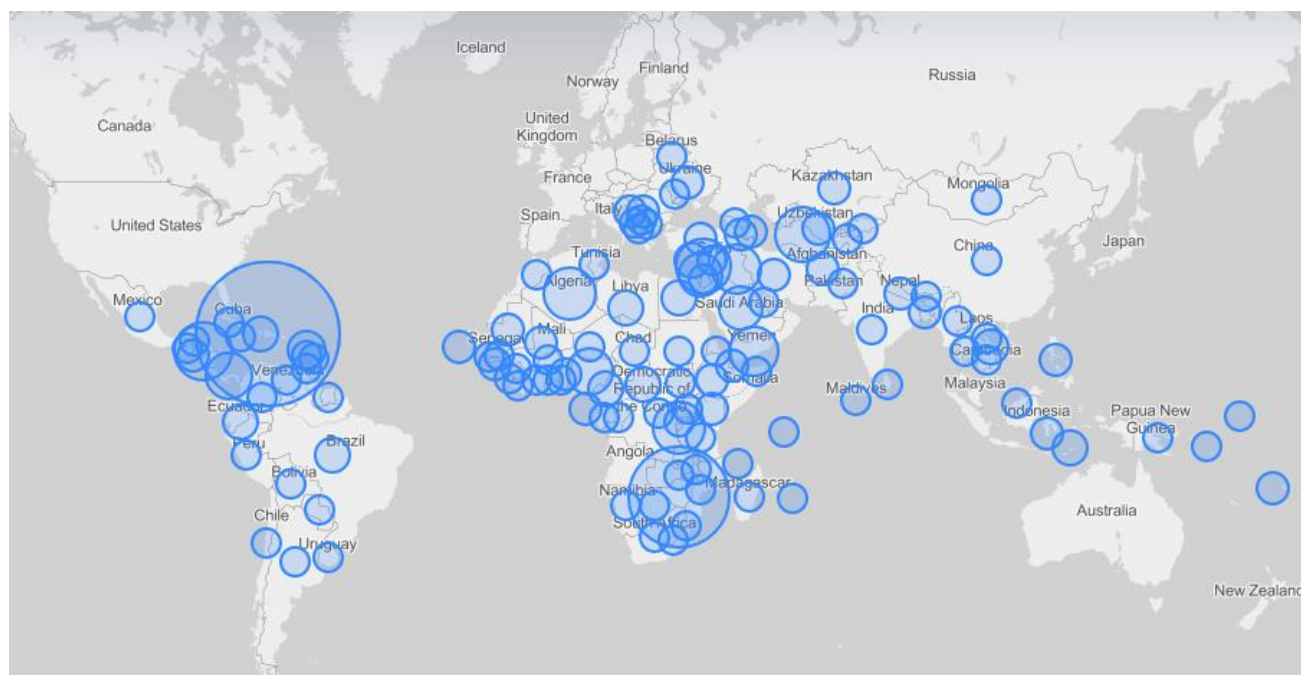
Supporting programme countries to build ‘forward’ better

Rapid Allocation of Programmatic Resources: Procurement Services

88. During 2020, UNDP re-programmed and mobilized nearly USD 1 billion 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 pandemic⁶⁷. The map below shows the size of budget allocated for COVID-19 response across countries.

89. UNDP systematically tags all COVID-19 response using the COVID-19 Project Marker. The detailed information and latest data on UNDP’s COVID-19 response work is publicly accessible through [UNDP’s Transparency Portal](#).

90. 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.



91. UNDP reduced the time it takes to approve procurement decisions by one quarter through an audit-reviewed process. One of the most-reported challenges from country offices in 2020 was the delay in procurement of supplies due to limited and interrupted supply chains.

92. The Global Health Procurement Centre (GHPC) in coordination with regional bureaus procured COVID health products in excess of US\$230 million for the period March 2020 to May 2021, including

PPE, medical equipment, and diagnostics, responding to over 11,200 requests with over 3658 Purchase Orders placed. These efforts were supported by the PSU Kuala Lumpur Procurement Hub and provided market research for COVID related products, specifically for ventilators, PPE, oxygen concentrators, diagnostics to address the need from the business units (Bus) globally. The Hub established Long-Term Agreements (LTAs) for airfreight services out of China to facilitate logistics support to COs globally.

93. UNDP has actively coordinated the emergency PPE and medical equipment procurement in the regions and provided procurement advisory support to COVID-recovery projects. These activities included support to UNDP **Algeria** CO supporting local governments in the procurement of medical equipment; support to UNDP **Syria** CO for hospital renovation contracting; advisory support to Yemen CO for ambulance sourcing; reinforcement of national capacities in **Mauritania** through the UNDP led implementation of a IT portal related to vaccination; development of health infrastructures and civil works procurement such as warehouses in **Mozambique** and **Zimbabwe**; and support to early recovery activities including sourcing of cold chamber and specialized materials in **Guinea Bissau**. Extensive advisory and support were provided to UNDP country offices to clarify needs and to respond to technical questions from national partners. When COVID-19 triggered countries to invest in upgrading health care systems, UNDP was requested to provide support, including with the procurement of medical equipment (for World Bank Projects in **Belarus, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan**, for example) and ambulances (**Kyrgyzstan** and **Serbia**).

UNCDF: Supporting Programme Delivery

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

95. 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.

96. In **Cambodia**⁶⁸, UNCDF launched two joint programmes to support the achievement of the SDGs as well as support national recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Firstly, financed by the Joint SDG Fund, UNDP and UNCDF are helping the Government of Cambodia to define an integrated national financing framework (INFF) to catalyse blended finance for transformative SDG achievement. Secondly, UNCDF is working with UNDP, IOM and IFAD to unlock Cambodian women's potential through fiscal space creation, that is, a credit guarantee scheme for women-owned enterprises and MSMEs in Cambodia. These initiatives will move the policy and legislative agenda towards the identification and attraction of new and sustainable sources of finance for development, as well as the maintenance and boosting of existing flows, to meet increasing development demands.

97. In **Mozambique**⁶⁹, UNCDF supported 12 vulnerable districts with performance-based climate-resilient grants under its LoCAL initiative for the construction of climate adaptive infrastructure as part of Covid-19 response to reinforce preparedness and response to the pandemic. The UNCDF investments were made possible with the support of the Government of Sweden and were directed to rehabilitating and building new facilities, specifically schools and hospitals, to improve access to basic social services for climate vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

98. In **Zambia**⁷⁰, UNCDF together with the United Nations Office of South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), funded by the India-UN Partnership Fund, worked with the Ministry of Finance to support the digitisation of utility payments to increase the availability and usage of utilities (such as water, energy and sanitation) for women and youth, thereby driving digital and financial inclusion for many of Zambia's underserved customers. The Ministry of Finance in Zambia commented that, "In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, digitalization of payments for services in the utility sector and other sectors makes it more convenient, cost effective and safe for service delivery which is critical in arresting the spread of the pandemic."

99. Through a [regional request for applications](#), UNCDF selected private sector partners in **Senegal**, **Benin** and **Ghana** to leverage the power of digital technologies to strengthen the resilience of MSME facing the Covid-19 pandemic⁷¹. [Six drivers of innovations](#) were supported, including 1) Club Kossam, an online marketplace for agricultural produces; 2) Jalô Market, a web and mobile platform integrating instant payment and logistics monitoring services for neighborhood shops; 3) BAOBAB+, tablets to equip small retailers with a visual and simplified digital checkout solution to track sales and manage stocks; 4) KKIAPAY, an application which allows merchants to accept digital and remote payments in addition to selling products online; 5) DIGISTORE iPay, providing MSMEs with a simple point-of-sale solution for cashless transactions and contactless delivery; and, 6) Microensure, offering a 7-in-1 digital insurance to MSME that covers life insurance, accidental disability, hospitalization, maternity, daily telehealth advice, weekly health advice and protection in case of flood, fire or loss of property. These innovative digital solutions for MSMEs are part of UNCDF's Recovery 2 Resilience (R2R) initiative in line with its inclusive digital economy strategy to leave no one behind in the digital era.

United Nations Volunteers: Supporting Programme Delivery

100. As one of UNDP's system-wide assets, the UNV programme continues to work across the UN system to support responding to the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. From the onset of the global pandemic, UNV approached its response in a systematic manner, addressing issues faced by all constituency groups: UN Volunteers, UN partner entities and Member States.

- a. *Duty of care for UN Volunteers*: Since the start of the pandemic, UNV responded to challenges faced by UN Volunteers requiring medical evacuation and stranded in airports, and promptly updated administrative guidelines to support volunteers, enable telecommuting and introduce special response measures.
- b. *Scaling COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts*: As of 31 March 2021, a total of 1,183 UN Volunteers have supported the UN's system-wide response to COVID-19, of which 84% are national UN Volunteers and 55% are female. Around 45% of those UN Volunteers served with UNDP, the lead technical agency in socio-economic recovery efforts, supporting emergency mitigation and response measures. In Kenya, 50 UN Volunteer health experts helped the 14 most vulnerable counties through the Joint UN COVID-19 Response Programme. In India, UN Volunteer District Youth Coordinators conducted awareness campaigns in 58 districts and produced personal protective equipment, also training community volunteers to reduce the burden of frontline healthcare workers.
- c. *Access to pre-identified local expertise*: National volunteer schemes established with UNV support facilitated rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Burkina Faso, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF leveraged UNV-supported national volunteer scheme, deploying 9,019 volunteers for COVID-19 sensitization. In Uzbekistan, 2,000 community health volunteers trained by UNV through a UN joint programme promoting awareness on tuberculosis and other chronic respiratory diseases helped 200,000 people in the Aral Sea region by improving hygiene awareness and providing psychological support.
- d. *Supporting and incentivizing for systemwide action*: UNV supported system-wide action on COVID-19 by investing US \$2 million from its Special Voluntary Fund in the mobilization of

national UN Volunteers in 79 countries and with 18 UN entities. Most of these UN Volunteers have been deployed in support of inter-agency coordination, joint programmes and public health response.

- e. *Maximized support to UN partners through online volunteering:* As of 31 March 2021, UNV published 374 online assignments specific to COVID-19 response. Online Volunteers in Fiji supported the UNDP Accelerator Lab for the Pacific with the visualization of pandemic-related data to aid health system response and crisis management, as well as scoping the impact of COVID-19 on Small Island Developing States, identifying innovative solutions and interventions implemented.

101. 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 of 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

102. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020. It quickly became clear that the pandemic was both a health and a development crisis. The pandemic is hitting the world's poorest and most vulnerable people hardest, with significant implications for marginalized groups. Women are bearing the brunt of the economic and the social fallout of COVID-19, as they shoulder a greater share of unpaid work, while suffering from a 'shadow pandemic' in the form of a surge in domestic violence. This has implications for the future. **A Leaving no-one Behind (LNOB) strategy will be a critical component of UNDP's building back forward positioning in the future**, under UNDP's new Strategic Plan. 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.

103. **COVID-19 meant human development took a pummeling for the first time since we began measuring it.** Extra action and commitment to protect hard-won gains of the past 30 years will be required, particularly to capitalize on economic opportunities, health, and education. UNDP will continue its vital stabilization work in countries in conflict and crisis, where the pandemic has worsened already dire situations.

104. **COVID-19 recovery needs a strong gender-lens to ensure to get to gender-equal world.** More attention must be paid to the role women bring to crisis response and recovery, and the benefits that will flow from removing the structural inequalities they face in the labour market and easing the massively disproportionate role they play as unpaid caregivers.

105. **Investments in connectivity in governments have allowed basic services to continue function in at critical times.** UNDP is committed to unlocking all the advantages of digital transformation and to ensure that benefits such as the internet are seen as a necessity, not a luxury.

106. **UNDP is now supporting countries and communities to build forward better from this pandemic -- towards a greener, more inclusive and more sustainable future.** As part of these efforts, UNDP is currently implementing its Climate Promise in 118 countries -- the world's largest offer of support for the enhancement of countries' Nationally Determined Contributions. Through such support, UNDP is helping developing countries to move away from fossil fuels in a way that is just and fair, and embrace clean, renewable technologies, boosting economies and creating new jobs. Further, UNDP's direct

support in implementing INFFs in 70 countries – in cooperation with the European Union, the IMF, and other parts of the UN system – provides a platform to ensure that financing for the COVID-19 recovery is fully aligned with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

107. **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 through [purposeful 'SDG push' investments](#) if countries are to build a more resilient future from the perspective of sustainable and people-centred development.

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- ¹ 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 complementary to the information provided here.
- ² The WHO estimates that, prior to COVID-19, about two-thirds of global deaths (about 38 million) are not registered with local authorities and the casualties are not recorded either.
- ³ Based on data tracked by the John Hopkins University and WHO Dashboard, updated on 22 May 2021.
- ⁴ Updated on 22 May 2021.
- ⁵ According to [WHO dashboard](#).
- ⁶ WHO Director General statement of 7 May 2021.
- ⁷ Based on data by WHO, map included in the report by the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response – [“COVID-19: Make it the Last Pandemic”](#) (May 2021).
- ⁸ [Sovereign Debt Vulnerabilities in Developing Economies | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)
- ⁹ See the study by RAND Europe, available [here](#): Hafner, Marco, Erez Yerushalmi, Clement Fays, Eliane Dufresne, and Christian Van Stolk, COVID-19 and the cost of vaccine nationalism. RAND Corporation, 2020.
- ¹⁰ [Global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines estimated to generate economic benefits of at least US\\$ 153 billion in 2020–21, and US\\$ 466 billion by 2025, in 10 major economies, according to new report by the Eurasia Group \(who.int\)](#)
- ¹¹ UNDP, [How can countries at risk of being left behind build forward from COVID-19?](#)
- ¹² Number updated on 10 May 2021.
- ¹³ In most cases with the World Bank and the IMF.
- ¹⁴ Many of these SEIAs also leverage new digital technologies such as mobile phones data, to accommodate social distancing requirements.
- ¹⁵ For more information see: [Macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration | COVID-19 \(uninfo.org\)](#)
- ¹⁶ 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.
- ¹⁷ 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.
- ¹⁸ The study was carried out by UNDP in partnership with the Fredrick S. Pardee Center for International Futures at the University of Denver.
- ¹⁹ [Development Dialogues – COVID-19 and crisis contexts one year on: What have we learnt? How can we fast-track recovery?](#)
- ²⁰ In addition to the new COVID-19 task force data, which was compiled with the assistance of Gender Inequality Research Lab at the University of Pittsburgh, [the Gender Response Tracker](#) has also been expanded to include over 3,100 policy measures enacted across 219 countries and territories to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, and highlights responses that have integrated a gender lens.
- ²¹ For a complete list of knowledge resources, please visit [UNDP's Library](#) page.
- ²² [UNDP, WHO and IOM provide ventilators to support Indonesia's COVID-19 Response, June 2020.](#)
- ²³ [Lifeline for vulnerable Cambodians as poverty doubles during COVID-19 pandemic, March 2021.](#)
- ²⁴ WEF (April 2020), [Universal basic income is the answer to the inequalities exposed by COVID-19](#), by Kanni Wignaraja and Balazs Horvath.
- ²⁵ UN News (8 May 2021), [What can the UN do to support India through its deadly COVID-19 surge?](#)
- ²⁶ [Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Thailand | UNDP in Thailand](#)
- ²⁷ [Addressing COVID-19 in Pakistan using a human rights lens | UNDP in Pakistan](#)
- ²⁸ [An Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Seychelles | UNDP in Africa](#)
- ²⁹ [Facing Multiple Crises: COVID-19 – Impact on Vulnerable Households and Enterprises in Jordan | UNDP in the Arab States](#)
- ³⁰ [Physical and Mental Well-being and the Role of Telemedicine During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Bahrain | UNDP in the Arab States](#)
- ³¹ [Strong social protection system critical to support Iraq's most vulnerable: New UNDP report | UNDP in the Arab States](#)
- ³² [Rapid Socio-Economic impact assessment of COVID-19 in Kosovo - 2 | UNDP in Kosovo](#)
- ³³ [Projected impacts of COVID-19 on the 2020 Human Development Index in Cambodia and its neighbors | UNDP in Cambodia](#)
- ³⁴ [Household Vulnerability Survey 2020 | UNDP in Myanmar](#)
- ³⁵ [UNICEF, UNDP, SMERU impact study on the pandemic in disaster-hit areas reveals much vulnerability. | UNDP in Indonesia](#)
- ³⁶ [Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, a new UNDP report in collaboration with ILO advocates for social protection for workers in the informal economy | UNDP in Africa](#)

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- ³⁷ [Government of Japan contributes \\$5.7 million towards the UNDP social stability and security of conflict affected communities in North-East and Middle Belt of Nigeria Project | UNDP in Nigeria](#)
- ³⁸ The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for the Syrian crisis is a USD 5.8 billion plan designed to support national efforts to deal with the impact of the refugee crisis in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq.
- ³⁹ [Migration for development: IOM and UNDP in Belarus join efforts to support migrants amid COVID-19 pandemic | UNDP in Belarus](#)
- ⁴⁰ [Learning new skills in South Darfur | by UN Development Programme | Medium](#)
- ⁴¹ [Translation of COVID-19 related information into sign language for deaf and hard of hearing community | UNDP in Rwanda](#)
- ⁴² [UK Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas welcomes partnership with UNDP and UNICEF to support borderline communities affected by COVID-19 and conflict | UNDP in Armenia](#)
- ⁴³ [New digital platform for food donation „Plate by Plate“ launched | UNDP in Serbia](#)
- ⁴⁴ [Make Charles Darwin proud; save the Galapagos from your living room | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)
- ⁴⁵ [Upskilling tour guides in Bhutan as tourism remains in limbo after COVID-19 by UNDP Bhutan - Exposure](#)
- ⁴⁶ [Transforming the tourism sector in the Dominican Republic: From mass-market to a resilient system | by UNDP Innovation | Mar, 2021 | Medium](#)
- ⁴⁷ [Government of Maldives and UNDP Sign ‘Re-imagining Tourism’ Project | UNDP in Maldives](#)
- ⁴⁸ [Cash Transfer Project in Nigeria’s Kano State cushions impact of COVID-19 on SMEs | UNDP in Africa](#)
- ⁴⁹ [Santal women prepare masks to meet community demand amid Covid-19 | UNDP in Bangladesh](#)
- ⁵⁰ [COVID-19 : Le PNUD appui la relance des activités des femmes exerçant le commerce transfrontalier | Le PNUD au Burundi \(undp.org\)](#)
- ⁵¹ [Uzbekistan advances its climate change adaptation planning | UNDP in Uzbekistan](#)
- ⁵² [Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises bear the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia | UNDP in Indonesia](#)
- ⁵³ [Full steam ahead - focusing on green and digital recovery | UNDP in Montenegro](#)
- ⁵⁴ [EC-UNDP Electoral Assistance Projects Update \(July 2020\).](#)
- ⁵⁵ [Latin America and the Caribbean: Effective Governance, beyond Recovery \(undp.org\)](#)
- ⁵⁶ [Transformations Towards Inclusive Justice with Innovation and Resilience \(undp.org\)](#)
- ⁵⁷ [Focusing on key populations is essential to reduce HIV and improve sexual and reproductive health and rights | UNDP in Africa](#)
- ⁵⁸ [A chatbot of the Ombudsman institution will become available in Telegram | UNDP in Kyrgyz Republic](#)
- ⁵⁹ Implementation of various strategies for both victim support and institutional capacity building to address the public problem.
- ⁶⁰ [Using Artificial Intelligence to tackle 'infodemic' in Tanzania \(undp.org\)](#)
- ⁶¹ [The special challenges facing Pacific Parliaments and audit institutions: Impacts of COVID-19 | UNDP in the Pacific](#)
- ⁶² [“The message goes directly to the heart and brain.” | by UN Development Programme | Medium](#)
- ⁶³ [Young girls in Iraq go back to school amidst the new normal by UNDP Arabic - Exposure](#)
- ⁶⁴ [The Learning Network Effect: Gamification to counter COVID-19 Misinformation | UNDP in Timor Leste](#)
- ⁶⁵ [UNDP supports Jamaica in strengthening coordinated response to emergencies like COVID 19 with digital platform | UNDP in Jamaica](#)
- ⁶⁶ [Ministry of Planning and Investment and UN Launch joint programme to support financing of the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan - UN Capital Development Fund \(UNCDF\)](#)
- ⁶⁷ 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](#).
- ⁶⁸ [United Nations Launches Joint Programmes to Support Sustainable Financing for Cambodia to Build Forward Better - UN Capital Development Fund \(UNCDF\)](#)
- ⁶⁹ [Sweden reinforces support to Mozambique in building climate adaptive infrastructures amidst COVID-19 - UN Capital Development Fund \(UNCDF\)](#)
- ⁷⁰ [UN Agencies Support the Republic of Zambia through Ministry of Finance to Digitalize Utilities Payments - UN Capital Development Fund \(UNCDF\)](#)
- ⁷¹ [Six Digital Solutions for the Resilience of MSMEs in West Africa - UN Capital Development Fund \(UNCDF\)](#)