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## **Build back better! A call for a Green Deal and a green Marshall Plan for the Global South to tackle the two-fold Coronavirus and climate crises**

*Thomas Hirsch* gives a critical analysis on the combined effects of climate change and the ongoing pandemic on the Global South. He emphasized on the European Green Deal and Green Marshall Plan to tackle the ongoing global crises.

### **Summary**

COVID-19 has thrown the world into an unprecedented crisis. Its public health and socioeconomic consequences will be painfully palpable for years. And so far, we have only experienced the tip of the iceberg. Whilst many nations of the Global South are still suffering from the first wave of infection, East Asia, Europe and North America are wisely bracing for a second wave due this fall, if not earlier. It would be foolish to count on the development of a vaccine before that, let alone in the quantities that would be required to lessen a second wave's impact. But even if a vaccine were to be developed in the next year, the social and economic devastations that the pandemic has already wrought across the world will have profound and long-lasting effects.

The rate of infection may be decreasing in most of Germany and Europe. The socioeconomic crisis, however, has only just begun. It will provoke a deep shift in the way the world is run. The world of tomorrow will no longer be the world that we knew before COVID-19. Many of our habits and approaches to solving problems will need to be rethought. The health care systems and supply chains that have focused on efficiency and cost-reduction so far will have to begin to prize flexibility and resilience. There is much to suggest that pandemics like the one caused by COVID-19 will reoccur in the future for many reasons, for example, because the habitats are shrinking of many of the wild animals that harbor zoonotic pathogens. Scientific projections suggest that by the end of this decade, the challenges that climate change will be confronting us with will dwarf those of the current COVID-19 crisis.

Since the end of the Cold War, we in Germany and Europe—unlike in the developing world—have forgotten the extent to which our societies are in fact risk societies. This new Coronavirus threat, however, has returned to us a sense of risk in which the individual feels powerless. But that is not necessarily our fate. We can defeat it. And we need preventative action on the societal level, not collective denial. Changes, even painful ones, can be creative if they promise a new beginning.

COVID-19 is changing the world and undermining our societies in a way that parallels climate change. The difference, however, is that there is no end of climate change in sight, unlike of COVID-19, which eventually will subside when a vaccine is discovered or herd immunity is achieved. To deal with climate change, the only choice is containment at an early stage. But containment is precisely what the world, with a few positive exceptions like Taiwan, failed to do with COVID-19 because the vast majority of countries did not take the threat seriously soon enough. How much human suffering, and what economic damages and financial costs would humanity have been spared if the world had succeeded in containing COVID-19 as quickly and effectively as Taiwan had?

We must learn from our mistakes in our response to COVID-19 if we are to mitigate climate change. We must decisively limit global warming to 1.5°C. We have ten years for it, which is approximately the period that it will take us to fully process the economic and financial consequences of COVID-19. Our only choice is to link our strategies in dealing with the Coronavirus and climate crises. Any attempt to deal only with the former by relying on established approaches to monetary, fiscal, industrial, and economic policy, and thereby ignore the imperative for transformation in the face of climate change will inexorably end in defeat. Firstly, every further delay in undertaking ambitious climate action further diminishes the small window of time in which containment (that is, the limitation of global warming to 1.5°C) is at all possible. Secondly, the global costs involved in a recovery strategy for COVID-19 will be so high and will lead to so much debt that it will scarcely be possible to make similar or higher investments into climate change mitigation soon. And thirdly, conventional stimulus programs that ignore climate policy unavoidably will lead to stranded assets and bankruptcies due to no longer viable business models, to unemployment, social disintegration, poverty, and further political polarization.

" We must learn from our mistakes in our response to COVID-19 if we are to mitigate climate change. We must decisively limit global warming to 1.5°C. We have ten years for it, which is approximately the period that it will take us to fully process the economic and financial consequences of COVID-19. Our only choice is to link our strategies in dealing with the Coronavirus and climate crises."

Conversely, we can overcome both the Coronavirus and the climate crises if we start on the right path today. We must create stimulus packages that focus on promoting sustainable, future-proof business models. We must raise instead of lower the ambition of our climate policies, and accelerate instead of delay the transformation of the energy, transportation, and agricultural sectors, as well as of our buildings and cities. Finally, we must couple these stimulus programs with short-term emergency packages and long-term structural reform. This crucial decade could become a decade of transformation. We could contain the crisis of biodiversity, protect the planetary boundaries, and put an end to the harrowing increases in global inequality. If this opportunity is taken advantage of right now, humanity will one day be able to look back at the Coronavirus and climate crises, strengthened. Our success, however, depends on designing the right strategy, the characteristics of which will be expanded upon in the following.

### Global challenges know no borders: We must act together, not as individual nations

‘Diese Krise kann kein Land alleine lösen’—‘This crisis cannot be solved by any one country’ declared by the German chancellor Angela Merkel at the start of this year’s World Health Assembly in May. According to a poll by Forsa in mid-April 2020, three quarters of all Germans concur with her sentiment, and believe that a higher level of international collaboration will make the management of this crisis more successful.

The Coronavirus crisis has made plain the vulnerability of our societies, and the global economic system. No nation can deal with a crisis of this magnitude by itself, neither the public health, nor economic aspects of it. The world economy is too interdependent for any one country to be able extricate itself from its fabric. International cooperation must become qualitatively better, and strong dependencies in key sectors like health, energy, and food must be reassessed and diminished.

The same holds for dealing with climate change. No country is immune to the consequences of climate change, no country is by itself capable of withstanding the climate crisis. From that realization follows the need for far greater multilateral cooperation, and the Paris Agreement has created an effective and fair framework for all. Whoever undermines its integrity, resists its policies and bets on independent national approaches, is blind to the challenge of climate change, damages itself and others in the process, and is doomed to fail.

### Science-based solutions instead of propaganda and lies

The enlightenment ideal and hallmark of modernity that not made-up truths, but evidence-based facts

should determine political decisions and inform the handling of risk is being seriously questioned by our responses to climate change and COVID-19. In both cases, false information and conspiracies are being spread and quickly multiplied across social media to discredit the authority of experts. These disinformation campaigns are being fueled by power and short-term profit seekers. They must be fought decisively to ensure that political solutions are based on science. That is a prerequisite both to fight the pandemic, as well as to contain climate change.

### Prevention as a head start

The prevention of a catastrophe prevents untold suffering and is, by orders of magnitude, safer and cheaper than dealing with it and its consequences after the fact. In Taiwan, consistent preventative measures succeeded in dodging a wave of COVID-19 infections that would have strained the health care system for weeks in much the same way as those of Wuhan or New York which could not avoid already tens of thousands of deaths. In much the same way, to avoid uncontrollable and relentless climate change with unforeseeable consequences spanning all continents and many generations, it is imperative to do everything possible to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

### No stronger than the weakest link in the chain

A society is as resistant and safe as its most vulnerable members. The same is true in a globalized world society. Risk groups bear the highest health risk, the poorest bear the highest economic risk. When for the latter neglecting social distancing becomes inevitable for economic reasons, the pandemic will become unstoppable. In much the same way, people will stop at no border when their only choice is to flee from the consequences of



climate change. Whether we want it or not: we are all in the same boat. We can make the best of it and act in solidarity with each other, whether from a sense of altruism or naked self-preservation—or we will go down together. Whether it's a pandemic or climate change: only with solidarity will make progress reliably.

### **The poorest are the worst affected. They deserve our utmost solidarity**

UNDP, the United Nations Development Program projects the losses in income caused by lockdowns in developing countries to be at least \$220 billion. The pandemic risks developing into an economic and humanitarian crisis of unprecedented global extent. More than half of all jobs in the African continent could be lost. The world's poorest could be thrown back by five to ten years of development progress. Climate change makes the same threats, but incomparably more gravely and on a far longer term.

Both crises immediately and existentially affect billions of people. In both cases, famines of biblical proportions are to be feared. In the case of COVID-19, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) has warned that up to 130 million people in three dozen countries could die of starvation. In ten of these countries, a million people each are already acutely threatened by starvation because they lost the basis of their existence. This number could increase greatly as a result of a deep economic recession.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has counted five global recessions since World War II in 1975, 1982, 1991, and 2009. Of these, the last was by far the worst, with a decrease of 2.9% of world GDP in 2009. The recession caused by COVID-19, however, will dwarf that figure. As early as late March 2020, the Center for Economics and Business Research in Britain projected a decrease of world GDP of at least 4% as a result of this crisis. Even China, although already on its way to economic recovery, may perhaps achieve only very modest growth at all for 2020. As a result, in April, the Chinese government declined to set a growth target for this year for the first time in decades. In May, the head of the Federal Reserve warned of a recession in the U.S. deeper than ever experienced before in modern history if the country experiences a second wave of infection this fall.

It is to be expected that the overwhelming majority of developing nations will end lockdown measures by June 2020 at the latest to prevent an economic catastrophe, all at the cost of hundreds of thousands of deaths. The world will be divided into those countries that can afford to contain the pandemic and those that out of economic necessity, will have to accept a premature opening. The situation of the climate crisis is comparable. Particularly those that have to invest in climate resilience because they are exposed to the highest risks can often not afford to take precautions against climate risks. Without enormous amounts of international support, in both cases, they risk a deadly spiral that will affect the poorest most severely.

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### **Global challenges both required and possible systemic change**

COVID-19 is a global threat more encompassing and immediate than anything else the world has experienced since World War II. The almost global lockdown has suddenly shut down large parts of public life. The personal habit changes that it precipitated are far-reaching. The predictable socioeconomic consequences that result from the lockdown and persistent changes will be disruptive. To enable something positive to grow out of this shock, all of our energies must be focused on a recovery that is future-proof, and, crucially, climate-proof. The required mobilization and effective realization of the transformational measures—from the short-term emergency aid to the mid-

term stimulus programs to the long-term structural reforms—is only achievable in times of crises like this one. It requires strong and effective governance, a broad societal consensus, and a willingness to change individual behaviors. All of these conditions are present in the current Coronavirus crisis. They can be used creatively for a transformation that overcomes not only the Coronavirus, but also the climate crisis.

### Fossil fuels will not survive COVID-19

In 2020, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are projected to fall by 5-11%, possibly even more because of the pandemic. The reason is history's greatest single drop in demand for fossil fuels. The negative prices for crude oil achieved in the short term as a result of collapsing futures contracts demonstrate the extent of the dreadful economic state fossil fuel corporations are in, whose business model is also being undercut by competitive renewable energies. In the fight to maintain competitiveness, many fossil fuel companies have accepted high risks and ever-growing new rounds of debt. That is especially the case for the U.S. fracking industry. The industry's 27 largest producers alone have had to service \$26 billion in credits.

Meanwhile, the industry's total debt exceeds \$100 billion (Ross, 2020). But the U.S. coal industry is likewise financially pinned to the wall, so to speak. It is beset by a free fall in demand, especially from its largest industrial customers and persistent resistance to spending from consumers as a result of skyrocketing mass unemployment. Investment markets are witnessing massive losses of capital. Institutional investors are making divestment decisions, seemingly a never-ending stream of them. Debts, the competitiveness of renewables,

significant investments flowing into hydrogen fuel technologies, and rising prices on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions all are additionally contributing to a lasting dampening of the industry's demand for coal.

The oil industry is similarly plagued, but it also suffers from a collapse in demand from the industrial sector as well as all branches of the transport sector. Although fuel stores are full to the brim and tankers everywhere are becoming floating fuel stores, it is not currently expected that economic recovery will be quick or that air and marine travel will rise to their pre-crisis levels of activity anytime soon. In the face of a foreseeable longer-term recession, the fossil fuel industry is fighting for its very survival. Without enormous bail-outs, which in the U.S., for example, would come at the price of a no less dramatic further ballooning of national debt, they cannot survive. And even then, the fossil fuel industry's capacity to return to its previous highs is questionable. Most fossil fuel corporations will not survive the Coronavirus crisis.

In order to fill the emerging gap in energy supply quickly, security, and cheaply, it is crucial to design proper stimulus packages. With strategic investments into technologies for the future in energy production, efficiency, mobility, and infrastructure, we can bring the economy back onto its feet, but also create future-proof jobs and accelerate the transformation into a carbon-neutral world.

### A green stimulus package is the motor of an economic transformation into a carbon-free and climate-resistant future. It must be national, European, and global

Without the largest economic stimulus program in history, an unfathomable number of companies will go bankrupt, hundreds of millions of jobs will be



lost, and millions of human fates will worsen all over the world, but especially in those place where lockdowns were not enforced long enough. The hardest-hit are countries in the Global South, where almost all jobs are in the informal sector, where social safety nets are at best rudimentary, where people have either no savings at all or only insufficient ones, where supply chains, for example in the textiles industry, are the first links to break. To support those economies with stimulus packages is not only an ethical imperative of global solidarity. It also helps the economies of the Global North that otherwise risks losing their supply chains as well, resulting in inevitable economic damages.

But only if the economic and financial measures taken to fight the Coronavirus crisis are coupled with a transformation of our economies into a carbon-neutral and climate-resistant ones will the jobs that may be generated by the stimulus program be sustainable. The agricultural sector must be reformed, biodiversity protected, cities made more resilient and livable. Digitalization must be pushed forward and critical infrastructure sectors such as the healthcare must be made more resistant to crises. If the largest aid package in history—as of April 15, 2020, \$8 trillion have been earmarked—is not made to ultimately focus on achieving carbon neutrality, there will be a rollback to the dirty technologies that have precipitated our predicament. The window in which we can still contain global warming to 1.5°C will be forever closed.

In the following weeks, the world will be deciding whether the COVID-19 aid and stimulus packages are supporting or undermining the goals of the Paris Agreement's climate targets. The head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva, decided that the IMF by the end of May will have made decisions on over 50 of the over 100 financial aid applications at the meeting of the G20's finance and central bank ministers in early May. Soon it will be clear how dozens of nations that have been granted freezes in debt payments choose to invest the money. In the face of further measures of the IMF, Georgieva cautioned that

[We will need to step up even more. As you know, we project a deep recession in 2020 and only a partial recovery in 2021. To help countries steer through the depth of the recession and support their recovery, we are prepared to use our full toolbox and \$ 1 trillion firepower [...]. Second, to assist our low-income countries, we plan to triple our concessional lending. [...] Third, we will concentrate both lending and policy support to reduce the scarring of the economy caused by bankruptcies and unemployment, in order to support a speedy recovery. And, [...] to help our members steer through this crisis and come out of it more resilient.]

"The hardest-hit are countries in the Global South, where almost all jobs are in the informal sector, where social safety nets are at best rudimentary, where people have either no savings at all or only insufficient ones, where supply chains, for example in the textiles industry, are the first links to break. To support those economies with stimulus packages is not only an ethical imperative of global solidarity. It also helps the economies of the Global North that otherwise risks losing their supply chains as well, resulting in inevitable economic damages."

At the Petersberg Climate Dialogue, Georgieva stressed that these measures must additionally serve the fight against climate change:

[It would be a mistake to 'pause' action on climate change while responding to coronavirus. We are about to deploy enormous, gigantic fiscal stimulus and we can do it in a way that we tackle both crises at the same time... If our world is to come out of this (coronavirus ) crisis more resilient, we must do everything in our power to make it a green recovery.]

Likewise, in April the World Bank began to steer investment decisions in the context of recovery programs toward, on the one hand, strengthening resilience and climate-relevant adaptation capacity, as well as decarbonisation efforts, and on the other, on sustainable development. They developed a checklist to evaluate the projects based on the following criteria:

- Is the intervention consistent with and supportive of existing long-term decarbonization targets and strategies? (If such targets and strategies do not exist, does the intervention contribute to the respective government's



‘Nationally Determined Contribution’ and the eventual decarbonization of the economic system?)

- Does the intervention create or amplify a lock-in of carbon or energy-intensive development patterns, or does it represent a future stranded asset risk due to decarbonization, technology change or other market trends?
- Does the intervention remove or reduce financial market, tax, and regulatory obstacles to decarbonization?
- Does the intervention contribute to developing or piloting low-carbon technologies, making them more widely available, or reducing their cost?
- Does the intervention provide the technical means to better integrate or employ low-carbon technologies or strategies?
- Does the intervention increase local or national energy security?

If these criteria are applied to all investments—backed up with measurable indicators of progress, this stimulus round could well accelerate decarbonisation efforts. Moreover, the IMF’s criteria make sound economic sense, as IRENA, the International Renewable Energy Agency, has shown in their Global Renewables Outlook in April 2020 (IRENA, 2020). They projected that although full decarbonisation would cost \$120 trillion by 2050 in the energy sector alone, it would also create millions of new jobs and would increase world GDP by \$98 trillion versus a ‘business as usual’ scenario.

If the international community can invest over \$10 trillion of tax payers’ money to deal with COVID-19 and thereby accept unimaginable amounts of debt—debt that, moreover, will Seriously restrict governments’ investment options over the next two decades—, it is more than legitimate to demand that these investments be made in such a way that not only fights the Coronavirus crisis, but also the

climate crisis, which will present a far larger problem for current millennials and future generations. From this principle, two criteria in fact suffice to ensure an appropriate recovery plan:

1. Accordance with the climate targets of the Paris Agreement, including the halving of global emissions by 2030 to give us a fair shot at avoiding global warming above 1.5°C. That implies that a carbon budget must be determined for each country. At the very least, the G20 countries that produce four fifths of global emissions, as well as all other OECD countries and upper middle income countries must make absolute and not just relative deep cuts to their emissions across all sectors. The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) has put forward good guidelines in this respect (Climate Action Tracker, 2020). The areas of activity that would come into question include a ramping up of renewable energy production and storage, improvements in efficiency of buildings and industry, scaling of the use of green hydrogen technology, smart energy systems, transformation of cities, climate-friendly transportation for both people and goods, and improving the sustainability of agricultural practices. Many of the requisite technologies are almost ready to enter the market. They require, however, the planning security that a level economic playing field guarantees, as well as some initial funding to achieve a quick breakthrough. Stimulus programs that set clear and strategic goals make such projects more interesting to private investors.
2. Internationally coordinated stimulus packages must also take into account the needs of the Global South, especially those on the African continent that has the youngest and fastest-growing, but also poorest population. Multilateral development banks, but also



BOX 1: 'European Green Deal'				
Aim/Goal	Policy Areas/ Specific Proposals	Significance	Impacts	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make European Union 'climate neutral' by 2050.</li> <li>• To make EU's economy sustainable;</li> <li>• Boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy;</li> <li>• Stop climate change;</li> <li>• Regress biodiversity loss;</li> <li>• Cut pollution; reductions in carbon emissions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Circular Economy</li> <li>○ Building Renovation</li> <li>○ Zero Pollution</li> <li>○ Ecosystem &amp; Biodiversity</li> <li>○ Farm to fork strategy</li> <li>○ Transport</li> <li>○ Money</li> <li>○ R&amp;D innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stimulates an eco-innovation</li> <li>- Makes sustainable economy for European economy</li> <li>- Aims to turn climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas</li> <li>- Creates scope for green and inclusive economy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Economic Impact-</b> provide scope for economic recovery and transform EU's economic model; promote sustainable development</p> <p><b>Environmental Impact-</b> reduce carbon footprint; help to achieve carbon neutrality; promote low carbon technologies; phase down climate-warming.</p>	<p><b>Legal Limitations-</b> Lack of consensus from EU member states regarding climate law, target's adjustment and the agenda of the goal.</p> <p><b>Financial Limitations-</b> financial allocation of the Deal is unclear; possibility of 'greenwashing' of the allocated funds; in absence of sustained international cooperation, introduction of carbon border tax may hinder exports from the Global South and cause 'tariff wars' with other major economies.</p>

governmental and private donors are called upon to make available the necessary capital at fair conditions in the form of subsidies or very cheap, long-term credits for investment in resilience infrastructure, and the industries of the future. In this respect, the experiences from the Marshall Plan can be learned from. Then as much as today, it has become essential to see the big picture and leave nobody behind.

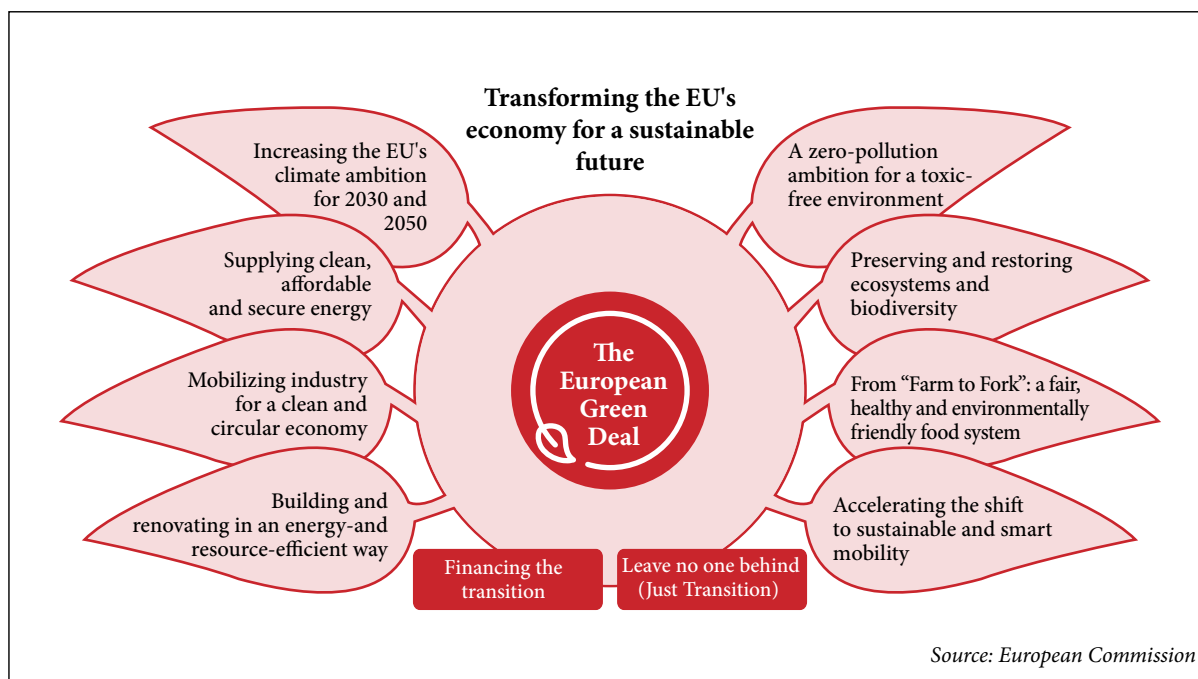
### A forward-looking design of the German stimulus program would secure jobs, modernize our economy, and be good for our international partners

No country in Europe and hardly any country elsewhere is protecting its economy to an extent similar that Germany is. That is why Germany's response measures are being very closely watched, both in Germany and in the rest of the world. Are they forward-looking? Are the socially balanced? Are the burdens shared fairly? Do they support Germany's cooperation with European and other global partners?

"Diese Krise kann kein Land alleine lösen"—"This crisis cannot be solved by any one country" declared the German chancellor Angela Merkel at the start of this year's World Health Assembly in May."

—Angela Merkel  
German Chancellor

'Der Doppelte Booster' ('the double booster'), a study by the think tanks Agora Energiewende and Agora Verkehrswende has shown how a stimulus program of over €100 billion could be made to achieve relief from the Coronavirus crisis at the same time as working toward climate targets (Agora, 2020). The 'double booster' would proceed by a reformation of the law on renewable energies (Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz (EEG)); a step, moreover, which has already been recommended by the environmental ministry (Bundesumweltamt) and promoted by various business associations (Handelsblatt, 2020). It would strengthen the purchasing power and lower the prices for small and mid-size firms, would change the regulations surrounding building renovations to encourage them to more easily be updated to higher efficiency standards. Industrial sectors would receive investment support to improve their energy



efficiency. Green hydrogen would be pushed as the fuel of the future, along with an electrification of all forms of mobility. A European investment program, accelerated environmental licensing and qualification programs, as well as many other elements would be promoted. Only by taking such steps will the currently unfolding bailout avoid locking into place industries and business models that are irreconcilable with plans to achieve decarbonisation by 2050. Such an investment program would be designed for long-term effect and would be calculated to be compatible with the European Green Deal. But for it to become trendsetting, it must happen fast. Fresh capital must be made available quickly.

Many corporations support a green stimulus program. They demand that climate targets be not ignored during the crisis, but conversely that reforms be accelerated. If governments' investments are not coupled with the European Green Deal and the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, stranded assets will be the consequence. 5'000 members of the Entrepreneurs4Future have advocated the creation of a Transformation Fund for climate investments, an acceleration of the deployment of renewable energies, an increase and expansion of CO<sub>2</sub> charges, minimum prices for emissions trading, and other measures in the sectors of transportation, efficiency, and automation, all complemented with further support for developing countries.

### **The solution must be European**

A quick and sustainable economic recovery can only succeed if the effort proceeds across Europe and is built on European solidarity and cooperation.

That requires its member states to prioritize the big picture over national interests. On the short term, the economically more powerful countries will have to make larger contributions. The economically poorer countries, however, will have to accept that these investments are targeted very specifically on greening their economies. A powerful start of the European Green Deal with a total volume of €1 trillion over the next 10 years, combined with a massive program of the European Central Bank to purchase bonds of the same extent this year will give the European economy the necessary push to not only get out of the recession but also make great leaps toward carbon neutrality.

Ottmar Edenhofer, the director of the Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung (PIK) is to be applauded for demanding, as part of the recovery program, the creation of a European investment Fund which would be both extremely long-term (some fifty years) as well as low in interest (e.g. 1%) to make available high-risk capital for investments in sustainable, climate-protecting projects. The European Union is at its most critical moment in history. It must decide to either concentrate all its efforts and make it out of the crisis, or else fall apart. If the wrong decisions are taken now, the European Union could become history within a year, or become weakened to the point of no return. In that case, everybody would end up losing out, including the solvent member states. Not even the economically most powerful of them all, Germany, could compete in a global economy by itself, especially as the U.S. and China wrestle to become the world's preeminent superpower. In this situation,

Europe is more dependent than ever on cooperation to not lose independence in this global power struggle. The Coronavirus crisis is an accelerator in this respect.

### **A plea for a green Marshall Plan for the Global South**

China has begun making massive investments into the technologies of the future such as 5G networks and charging infrastructure for electric mobility. If China continues along these lines, it will become the market leader by 2030 in these and other areas such as AI, biotech and renewable energies.

For the overwhelming majority of developing countries, in contrast, the two-fold Coronavirus and climate crises threaten to undo five to ten years of development successes, and thereby miss the opportunity to become an integral part of the world of the future. Already dramatic global inequality would further grow and thus open the door to new conflicts between and within countries. This would additionally fuel nationalism and populism, which have been on the rise since the 2010s, and thus weaken the global and multilateral capacity to deal with this and other crises.

The Coronavirus crisis discredits populists because they have no solutions to offer. If Europe, together with other countries like Canada and New Zealand put together a Green Marshall Plan that supported developing countries in areas like renewable energies, sustainable land and resource use, climate resilient infrastructure, health care, and digital networks and technologies, these countries will overcome the crisis more quickly. That will strengthen European partnerships, not only economically, and will take away the populists' support.

A Global Green Investment Fund could be created along the lines of the European Investment Fund advocated for by Edenhofer: Very long-term and cheap capital to fund projects in the Global South that support the Paris Agreement, SDGs, biodiversity, and marine protection. Such a fund would have to be open to contributions from foundations, private investors, and institutional lenders, all also coming from developing countries themselves. Cooperation with multilateral development banks could further strengthen the investment fund and result in a green Marshall Plan for the Global South. The initial capitalisation of the fund should be at least €100 billion. Similar to the Marshall Plan after World War II, the fund must leverage substantial private and public support in the Global South to increase the investment volume. Such a fund would be an important addition to the short-term aid, emergency credit and debt relief that may be critical to ensure the stability of societies and economies right now, but do little or nothing to make societies and economies more sustainable in the long term. A fund, however, would enable investments that are connected with longer-term goals, such as a reduction of subsidies for fossil fuels, a long-term strategy (LTS) for decarbonization, and a 100% renewable energy supply system, much like the 'double booster' strategy for Germany.

A green investment fund would also be an appropriate answer to the appeal of the UN general secretary, who reminded us that

[We have a responsibility to recover better than after the financial crisis in 2008. We have a framework for action – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We must keep our promises for people and planet.]

"European Green Deal with a total volume of €1 trillion over the next 10 years, combined with a massive program of the European Central Bank to purchase bonds of the same extent this year will give the European economy the necessary push to not only get out of the recession but also make great leaps toward carbon neutrality."

### The strengthening of (climate) resilience as a solid element of crisis response

COVID-19 has demonstrated the vulnerability of our globalized world, despite all the achievements of modernity. The consequences of the pandemic have made every economic empire tremble, have destroyed fortunes, and are threatening the sources of income of billions of people. In addition to the healthcare, economic, social and political consequences, the psychological ones will have lasting consequences. Until recently, the promise of an ever-improving future was taken for granted in many parts of the world. But this dream of development as a unidirectional stream toward progress and growth is being seriously threatened by the Coronavirus crisis. We are now experiencing what always has been and always will remain possible. At any time there could be a pandemic of this extent. And yet, this is all just a taste of the damage that the climate crisis will inflict. Both the pandemic and the climate crisis proceed in just the same way: by severing the connections that our complex system of global economic interdependencies live by. What that really means has never been more palpable than today.

To 'build back better' means to improve our resilience with respect to risks through preventative action so that future damages and expectable shocks can be absorbed. Health care systems must be improved by arming populations with emergency pharmaceuticals. Supply chains must be strengthened by taking down one-sided economic dependencies. To build resilience against the next pandemic is as important as building climate resilience.

Although emissions reductions promise long-term protection, a quick decarbonization will not be sufficient because many damages have already become unavoidable, even if we limit global warming to 1.5°C. That is the reason why the climate resilience of our critical infrastructure on the coasts and in the cities, but also in agriculture and water supply is crucial. These considerations must be reflected in recovery programs.

### The crisis is an opportunity for innovation

Crises change mindsets and generate the willingness to make radical steps. That is an opportunity. Even the International Energy Agency (IEA), which is not exactly famous for being a 'green' institution is calling on governments to take advantage of this 'historic opportunity' to aggressively accelerate the transition to clean energies through the stimulus programs that are being drawn up everywhere (Farand, 2020a). Mark Carney, the head of the Bank of England, calls the zero-emissions goal the greatest economic opportunity of our times, adding that 'We need fifty shades of green to catalyse and support all companies toward net zero' (Farand, 2020b). For example, support in the automotive industry should be made dependent on electrification efforts.

Digitalization will continue. Patterns of mobility will continue to change. We recognise the opportunities of remote working, and also recognize that our working habits will continue to change in innovating ways after the pandemic. We can expect more videoconferences and work from home, fewer business trips, more local and regional travel, a strengthening of shorter and more diversified supply chains, decentralised procurement strategies, a strengthening of circular economies, a prizing of flexibility as the foundation for resilience, a new perspective on what really are essential goods and services, and higher investments into healthcare, education, research, and food.

In order for the opportunities for innovation to be used effectively, however, the framework for transformation must be changed fundamentally. One-off stimulus packages do not suffice. For their effect to not dissipate after a few years, we need long-term structural reforms. That will lead to resistance from those whose business models are not future-proof. To achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050, we will have to work continuously until then to succeed in restructuring the electrical grid entirely. Storage capacity will have to be ramped up. A new regulatory framework will have to be created to accelerate the electrification of heating, transportation and industrial processes.



Unfortunately, this development will have to contend with a crash in the price of crude oil that will bring about a long-term depression of fossil fuel prices, which in turn will somewhat reduce incentives to switch to renewable and strive for efficiency. Initial funding will be critical, as well as improved conditions for investment, minimum prices for CO<sub>2</sub> across all sectors, and further measures to improve planning and investment security. That is the only way to accelerate the transition to a green economy and to avoid the rollback that fossil fuels executives are so fervently hoping for.

### **May a decade of transformation follow the lost decade of the 2010s**

The 2010s were characterized by a resurgence of nationalism that plunged multilateralism into a deep crisis. It saw the renaissance of populism to conspiracy theories that have tried to undermine the role of science and science-based politics; a growing level of social aggression at the price of tolerance, democracy, minorities, and human rights; a dramatic growth of economic inequality in favor of a few global superrich; and, finally, an amazing increase of climate risks resulting from a lost decade of weakening efforts to lower global emissions. The emissions gap has widened so far that, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C, we will have to have reduce emissions by 7% per year this decade, which is double the reductions that we would have had to make if we had started in earnest in 2010 (UNEP, 2020).

The Coronavirus crisis, however, could make it easier to tackle this challenge, but not because of the emissions reductions that accompany it. The reason is that it can alter our awareness of risk, and thus may heighten our willingness to make the greatest efforts possible to prevent the next catastrophe. It is not, however, a sure-fire success. It depends on our willingness to act transformationally. Let's do our part!

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## COVID-19 and its Socio-Economic Challenges in Bangladesh

*Dr. Hoimonti Barua* provides an overview on the COVID-19 induced socio-economic challenges in Bangladesh. She further explains the health care scenarios and COVID-19 management issues in the country.

### Summary

Pandemics are by and large outbreaks of diseases that become widespread due to human-to-human transmission of the contagion. Currently, the world is experiencing a global health emergency that is decimating lives and spreading agony. Existence of billions of people is upended by the coronavirus pandemic across the globe. It is a human, social and economic crisis; an onslaught on the fundamental essence of societies. The corona virus-related crisis pummeled on health, society, economy, and security of Bangladesh. The purpose of this paper is to highlight its impacts on Bangladesh which is more than a health crisis. The paper discusses the pandemic's effect on the economy of Bangladesh which has had collateral consequences on the social aspects and community living in this developing country. Bangladesh with steady economic growth was predicted to become a middle-income nation. This paper explores the limitations and challenges in the context of the current scenario. At a moment when there is no cure at hand, the crisis is most likely to continue for longer; hence it is essential to probe Bangladesh's status from every aspect.

### Background

Pandemics are by and large outbreaks of diseases that become widespread due to human-to-human transmission of the contagion. Co-evolution of humans and pathogens, within the same organic eco-system is like a corresponding evolutionary relation. Biological invasions have been a consistent aspect all through the history of humans and are associated firmly to human actions (Santini et al. 2017:647). Pandemics have been a part of the civilization for time immemorial. Whether it was the Antoine Plague in the Italian peninsula (165-180 A.D), the Black Death (1331-1353) in Western Europe and the Mediterranean or the Spanish Flu pandemic (1918-1920) decimating 50-100 million people and affecting 500 million population worldwide, pandemics have had a long history (Huremović, 2019), killing

thousands of lives every time. The more recent ones of the centuries, the Hong Kong Flu, SARS, H7N9, Ebola, etc. and the covid-19 being the most recent one and of utmost significance. Currently, the human race is experiencing a global health emergency that is mercilessly eliminating lives and spreading agony. Existence of billions of people is upended by the coronavirus pandemic across the globe not only by the direct pain from lives lost but also by the ripple effect caused by its detrimental results which are more than barely a health crisis. It is a human, social and economic crisis; an onslaught on the fundamental essence of societies.

In South Asia, infectious diseases (ID) have invariably been a common reason for death. Epidemics consistently returned in regular decennary intervals to cause mass destruction. Bangash (2020) argues the Indian-origin cholera epidemic in 1817-21 took 18 million lives in (undivided) India, followed by the Bubonic plague of 1896-1901 with more than 10 million population perished. Still, the coronavirus pandemic has engendered manifold reactions from around the world. It is of importance especially in this era because it is the first global epidemic of such a magnitude in the last hundred years since the influenza of 1918-19 that has decimated 50 million people at the time and still decimating thousands each year globally. Needless to say, after a century, an insufficient 'historical or institutional memory' is left to grapple with a global medical-emergency of such enormity.

The trepidations increased due to the rapid shift of the outbreak epicenter from China to Europe followed by the United States with maximal numbers of mortality. South Asia is home to one-fourth of the total population of the world with 1.9 billion people (Worldometer, 2020). Here the pandemics worst blow is impeding the region poorly. It has been more than six months since the outbreak in early March 2020 in South Asia with more than 5, 29,743 infected and 12,362 cases of death and the cases of morbidity has not been uniform throughout the region. Many South Asian countries, barring India have recorded lower death counts despite their poor healthcare system and high population and poverty rates. Specific numbers of cases during an ongoing phase is unattainable; however, as of September Bangladesh has 3, 57,000 cases with 5,093 deaths (Ibid.). The number of infected and mortalities may vary from region to region but the economic decline is a shared-shock felt across the globe by small and big nations alike.

History has established recurrently that pandemics indubitably have had long term bearings in people's lives and the novel corona virus is not an exception. The corona virus related crisis pummeled on health, society, economy, and security of communities both regionally and globally (Qiu et al., 2017:3), and this essay highlights those social and economic impacts of the disease in Bangladesh.

"An uncontrolled epidemic destroys the moral health of a nation and compromises national security. While it is pivotal to respond swiftly to a spreading pandemic, pushing people with unprepared, unplanned rules have unintentional yet ruinous consequences. The impacts are manifold which may be determined by various factors like income, hierarchies of life-style, employment or earning securities, mental health etc."

### **Social and Economic Effects of Covid-19 in Bangladesh**

At this juncture, the Covid-19 unsympathetically reminds us that pandemics are not only biological but political and global in nature and have reverberations on all. The unprecedented pandemic has overwhelmed the healthcare systems and devastated the economic solidities of the region. Massive detrimental effects, followed by the string of morbidity cases on the society, economy, well-being and productivity of the people of Bangladesh have been felt like any other countries in the world.

In the first place, the pandemic demands limitations on movements as a prerequisite to minimize the chain of contamination. Living or residing in close proximity of an affected individual pose maximum life threat. In the earlier times, plagued villages were sealed off to curtail proliferation to the rest of the societies. But, the spread of the recent infectious disease is more global, and, it





Photo credit: Reuters

reached rather swiftly in cities and other countries, economically debilitated even outlying regions that rely on urban markets. Qiu et al. (2017) refers that these are threatening infectious diseases, capable of cross-border movements as has been evinced by HIV, H1N1, H5N1, and SARS epidemics and now the Covid-19 which took the shape of a pandemic. Therefore to control the ongoing health quandary, World Health Organisation (WHO) firmly advocated ban on travel and strictly practice social distancing.

At the outset of a new type of ID epidemic, when the agencies of transmission are still unestablished, the safest measure adopted is isolation or quarantine (Malhotra, 2020; Rakesh, 2016). These are medical measures widely practiced for IDs. Interestingly, the age-old measures like 'isolation' and 'quarantine' gained a new momentum and have become the new buzzword along with two other terms 'lockdown' and 'social distancing'. With an aim to control the spread of the disease among communities, most nations, beginning with China, followed by the United States, United Kingdom, Europe and then the rest of the world, began to observe extensive lockdowns at international, regional and community levels.

An uncontrolled epidemic destroys the moral health of a nation and compromises national security. While it is pivotal to respond swiftly to a spreading pandemic, pushing people with unprepared, unplanned rules have unintentional yet ruinous consequences. Yet, to control its spread the government of Bangladesh declared a nationwide lockdown for two months from March 24 till May 30, 2020. So, what commenced as a health emergency became a matter of grave socio-economic concern. The impacts are manifold which may be determined by various factors like income, hierarchies of life-style, employment or earning securities, mental health etc. All these factors are so innate to each other that disturbance on one automatically pulls in the other aspects. South Asian countries whether agriculture, tourism or industry based have fallen victim to the global economic downturn. According to the World

Bank (2020), "every region is subject to substantial growth downgrades." The impact of this decline besides the economies will affect years of developmental achievements by pushing millions of people back to poverty and employment uncertainties. Past seven decades entailed construction, proliferation and consolidation of a global liberal international economic order, which appear to be in the midst of a questionable future.

Observing lockdown or social distancing, especially by the poor community becomes an additional challenge. Bangladesh is a small and extremely densely populated country of 169 million people with a population density of 1,179 people per square kilometers as of June 2020 (World Population Review, 2020). The infrastructure and healthcare facilities are substandard and unreliable which make the life in the region vulnerable, exposed and impuissant to this invisible enemy. According to the UNDP, number of urban poor in all urban centres is 9 million, of which 5 million are alone in Dhaka (Mamun, 2020). A perturbing headcount of 6, 50,000 people residing in 3,394 slums in the capital suggest they live in overcrowded slums with large families cramped in very tiny rooms (Dhaka Tribune, 2020). It is self-explanatory that concepts like social-distancing or isolation come across as ornamental popular jargons, infeasible to the settings of their residence or lifestyle.

Most of these people living in urban-slums are low-income professionals like day laborers, rickshaw pullers, construction and factory workers, house-helps, restaurant workers and shop assistants, transport workers, bhangari [plastic] workers, petty business owners etc. Kamruzzaman opines according to a joint study was conducted by Power and Participation Research Center (PPRC) and BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) on 5,471 slum households that suggested that since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus and imposition of lockdown the average income of these people reduced by 80 percent (Andalou Agency, 2020). The poorer constituents of the populace have taken a substantial impetus of the economic downfall with comparatively larger income shocks. Especially for the most necessitous and penurious ones, source of income has been destroyed entirely. For instance, the report generated by the PPRC and BIGD suggested a drop of 82 percent in per capita

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income that is BDT 27 (\$0.32) which was BDT 108 (\$1.30) before the pandemic hit the country (Ibid.). Inadequate income forced the vulnerable people to reduce food consumption to subsist through the crisis triggered by the pandemic.

Negative impact on one's source of earnings varies with the nature of occupation. The South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) model points out that a large division, i.e. 43 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture and food-related professions. Rural livelihood remains strongly dependent on agriculture, live-stock-rearing, and fish-cultivation. Food security of the country is analogous to rural livelihood. Urban food markets depend on farmers and farmers depend on the transfer of goods through the transport system. Decreased movement of goods increases the asymmetrical distribution of cost between the farmer and the vendor leaving the farmers more vulnerable in terms of financial gain. Restrictions on movements and 'basic aversion behavior' by workers have high chances of impeding farming. Quarantine measures limit access to market, and supply chain disruptions in food availability.

On the demand side, loss of purchasing power change people's eating patterns reduces capacity to purchase or panic purchases of food that can break the supply chain. Trepidations related to food security gave rise to inflation, limited access to items and food-riot; although no such food riot was noticed in Bangladesh As a result, countries with high levels of food insecurity are generally more susceptible to greater disparities.

The economic consequences of this disease could end up hurting more people than the disease itself", and this applies to Bangladesh to a great extent (Beltrami, 2020). Aforesaid, the country was brought under a lockdown for two months. Nevertheless, a shutdown in Bangladesh is very different from the shutdown of global north or the western nations. The disease led panic caused large-scale economic cost, disproportionate to the number of cases. Urban livelihood on the contrary is based on industrial sources. So, the other notable sections such as the garment factories (16 percent), retail business (11 percent), transportation (10 percent) and construction sector (7 percent) (Financial Express, 2020) were hit in various proportions. The ramifications of this setback have dreadfully affected Bangladesh in multiple ways.

The economy of Bangladesh is based fundamentally on the 2R's – remittance and ready-made garments (RMG). However, private sectors, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and leather and shrimp export dependent on the European Union (EU) are major contributors to the economy. The emergence and rapid proliferation of novel corona virus has affected the transmission channels of a progressive economy of Bangladesh. Brian Wong opines, "a global recession has hit which is likely to be worse than 2008 and it will bring about political uncertainties along with critical non-traditional security threats. The pandemic is going to end at its own course...far reaching for a country like Bangladesh" (WHO, 2020).

"Loss of purchasing power change people's eating patterns reduces capacity to purchase or panic purchases of food that can break the supply chain. Trepidations related to food security gave rise to inflation, limited access to items and food-riot; although no such food riot was noticed in Bangladesh As a result, countries with high levels of food insecurity are generally more susceptible to greater disparities."

Bangladesh, at present, a lower middle-income country had a steady economic growth rate until the end of 2019 (World Bank, 2020). Giménez et al. (2014) argued that the Vision 2021 and the associated Perspective Plan 2010-2021 adopted by Bangladeshi government outlined a series of developmental goals for 2021. The economy was expected to grow at 8 percent forecasted by the Asian Development Bank; now the predictions by International Monetary Fund and World Bank are at a pessimistic 2 percent (Global Times, 2020; International Monetary Fund, 2020). The country's recent economic growth trajectory exhibited every potential to rise as a Middle-Income country by 2024, until the whole world was brought to a standstill by the Covid-19 crisis.

The major economic players have been hit abominably, and Bangladesh began to experience the shockwaves since early March. The export outflow has stopped with the withdrawal of investment flows from the developing nations. Massive financial deprivation is experienced due to shutting factories. Many RMG factory owners lost several global orders, many forced to shut down. According to the report by the Centre for Global Workers' Right of Penn State University and the Worker Rights Consortium around 58 percent of clothing suppliers of Bangladesh have terminated operations. International buyers cancelled 72 percent orders, declined to pay the production cost of about 91 percent and repudiated to compensate the cost of raw material purchased by the suppliers. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) divulged about the product cancellation from Bangladeshi garment factories worth \$3 billion by the partner fashion companies. The BGMEA believe the actual figure would be higher than the current figure. Import inflow particularly of raw materials is facing hold-ups; principally because they are reliant on imported raw materials the supply of which has been acutely affected after non-functional ports. Closed borders, shipments and ports have created surfeit and financial losses for many businesses. Bangladesh earns a substantial amount from remittances sent by their diaspora. Earnings from remittance stood at \$18.32 billion at the end of 2019 (New Age Business, 2020). Remittances earnings are weighed down as the remittance senders are being sent back home. The aviation sector suffered a job loss by 9 per cent, salary and benefit cuts affecting more than five thousand employees. The International Air Transport Association foresees a net loss of \$39 billion in June 2020 (Bangladesh Monitor, 2020). The closedown of tourism and travel is likely to wipe out billions from the aviation operators; out-migration, tourist arrivals and departures are ceased; circulation of investments are facing growing precariousness and these are disintegrating the various other interconnected sectors.

The damage has been felt especially in terms of poverty. In 2019, poverty rate of Bangladesh was at 20.5 percent. According to SANEM's predictions now it is believed to increase to be 41 percent, what it was a decade back. This suggests Bangladesh's achievements of poverty reduction over the last decade will be completely lost (The Business Standards, 2020). To add to the woes, a percentage of salaried populations are among the sufferers. Many have encountered salary cuts, job loss, and termination of contracts, unpaid leaves, and job uncertainties and also halt in recruitments. So there are an increasing income insecurity Bangladeshi people encountering.

### Health-care Interventions in the Covid-19 Management

A timely health-care intervention is a pre-requisite during health related emergencies. Bangladeshi healthcare infrastructure is poor and its response to address the situation was exceedingly sluggish. It clearly shows their incapacities of tackling this gigantic disaster. Although the number of testing has increased than before, it is still relatively low. There is a huge gap in terms of testing, contact tracing and treating along with the evident resource constraints. It has become an impossible mission for the government of Bangladesh to implement a lockdown or encourage its citizens a 'social distancing'. In an over populated country with an outburst of urban slums, not only social distancing is a luxurious concept, so is washing hands and clothes continuously as a safety measure. Insufficient financial resources coupled with poor healthcare facilities and laggard preparedness to fight against Covid-19 has brought far-reaching challenges in front of the country. At the community level, a psycho-social crisis is building up like hopelessness, anxiety, fear, depression etc.

The pandemic has spread in Bangladesh and its end is uncertain. The ramifications of the corona virus have affected the poor, lower middle-class, middle-class and the rich simultaneously although in varying proportions. For the destitute the struggle is more



as they struggle between 'hunger vs. health'. The government will encounter continuous dilemma to choose between 'saving lives or saving livelihoods' because both are inseparable and the biggest challenge lies in balancing all these factors perfectly.

### Conclusion

Pandemics take human lives, affect societies deeply and have profound consequences due to its large-scale outbreak. At various levels, a laidback approach of the government of Bangladesh has raised critical questions about the methodology of their preparedness. A nonchalant approach of the lawmakers and confused attitude of healthcare ministers and experts to enforce early disaster management mechanisms has put the country at risk which is continuously experiencing numbers of death and infected. Their miscalculation and error are further lacerating Bangladeshi lives. Although enough time was in hand, to learn from the successful nations, prepare healthcare facilities with proper equipments, train the medical operatives, unfortunately may have been under-utilized. Corona virus has proved that outbreak of a pandemic do not essentially occur where health system are the weakest, e.g. the case of USA.

Despite a hyper-activity among the academics, there are uncertainties because epidemiologists and scientist have not been able to find a way out to cure the disease. The pandemic has divulged the disadvantages of expansive international integration, over-reliance on foreign sources, foreign travellers, and creating a condition to legitimise national restrictions on global movement of people and trade. Not only is the South Asian region vulnerable, in fact high levels of poverty, illiteracy, lack of seriousness of the citizens, dense population and gaps in healthcare facilities have made Bangladesh and South Asian countries like India, Pakistan susceptible to outbreaks. Since the end of lockdown and re-opening of the businesses rising numbers of affected and death tolls are already indicating that we are moving towards catastrophic outbreak.

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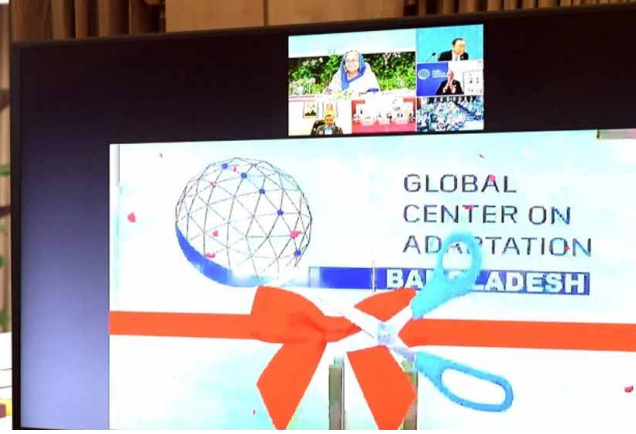
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## What's going on!



### The South Asian Regional Centre of the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) now in Bangladesh

On 08 September 2020, the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the South Asian Regional Center of the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) in Bangladesh. The prime minister along with GCA Chair and former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon jointly inaugurated the GCA regional center with a hope that the center will serve as a 'Centre of Excellence' and a solution-broker for climate adaptation measures in the South Asia region. Mr Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, also the Chair of the GCA, and Prof Dr Patrick V. Verkooijen, the Chief Executive Officer of GCA join the inauguration and delivered the in Rotterdam delivered their speech. The Dutch premier acknowledged Bangladesh's leadership on climate change adaptation and congratulated Bangladesh on being selected for the establishment of GCA regional center

Mr. Ban Ki-moon highly praised Bangladesh for combatting successfully the climate change effects and natural disasters. In doing so the Bangladesh has earned global reputation and people around the globe cite Bangladesh as the best example for successfully tackling climate change and natural calamities and that's the rationale of choosing Bangladesh for setting-up GCA's regional office, commented Ban Ki-moon.

Bangladesh's Prime Minister remarked South Asia as one of the most vulnerable regions to climate-induced natural disasters like cyclone, flood, tidal surge, drought, Glacial Lake Outburst Flood, landslides etc. and the GCA Bangladesh will facilitate and develop on-the-ground action in South Asia to accelerate adaptation and address climate change vulnerabilities across the entire region.

Along with adaptation, she also called upon all the all countries concerned to increase carbon emission reduction targets under their "Nationally Determined Contributions" coherent to the goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global average temperature rise

well below 2 Degree Centigrade, conveniently 1.5 degree Centigrade from the pre-industrial level. Even a 1.5-degree Celsius rise of temperature will have severe consequences for Bangladesh and the region, she commended.

Bangladesh's Prime Minister expects that the GCA Dhaka office would support the country during her Chairmanship to Climate Vulnerable Forum and Vulnerable-20, two climate-based important international bodies under the UNFCCC process – during the next two years. The premier simultaneously urged the GCA to explore the opportunity of supporting the Delta Coalition on a long-term basis.

Among others, Bangladesh Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin, as well as ministers concerned of South Asian countries including Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, spoke at the inaugural event. It is expected that the headquarters of the Global Center on Adaptation in Rotterdam will support GCA Bangladesh through a matrix structure, acting also as the Secretariat of CVF and V20, two climate-based important international organizations under the chairmanship of Bangladesh.

### Bangladesh has Initiated a Process for Developing its National Adaptation Plan

It's only in the last month Bangladesh formally started a process for developing its National Adaptation Plan with an aim to mainstream climate change adaptation in national levels, strengthen institutional arrangements for implementing mid-term and long-term adaptation actions. The requirement for developing a country specific NAP has been decided at COP 10 (10th Conference of Parties) in 2010 as a framework to facilitate effective climate change adaptation (CCA) planning in LDCs and other developing countries. Countries are required to follow a prescribed format and procedure so that NAP development follows a comprehensive,

participatory and bottom-up process. The Bangladesh NAP will be developed under the policy guidance of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (Department of Environment) and with the financing support from the Green Climate Fund through UNDP Bangladesh. Meantime, UNDP appointed consulting agencies where a number of national and international consultants are deployed to write different streams of the plan. An inception workshop has also been held recently to initiate the work.

According to the UNDP, NAP will gather and analyse information, develop risk scenario, generate experience and science-based adaptation strategies in line with Bangladesh's priorities outline in SDG, Delta Plan 2100, Perspective plan, five-year plan and its ambition to graduate from LDC to middle-income countries. Thus, the NAP undertakes two-fold objectives; a) formulate the Bangladesh National Adaptation Plan with a focus on medium to long term adaptation investment and, b) enhance national capacity for integration of climate change adaptation in planning, budgeting and financial tracking process. The outcomes of NAP are;

Outcome 1: Strengthened institutional coordination and climate change (CC) information and knowledge management for medium- to long-term planning

Outcome 2: Adaptation options appraised and prioritized, and the National Adaptation Plan formulated

Outcome 3: Climate risk-informed decision-making tools developed and piloted by planning and budget departments at national and sectoral levels

Outcome 4: Nationally appropriate adaptation investments tracking mechanism set up and financial plan for mid- and long-term CCA implementation prepared.

It is expected that NAP development will follow a rights-based approach while focusing adaptation needs of the most vulnerable hotspots and climate change affected communities.

## **Enhancement of Bangladesh's NDC: process is on!**

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has initiated an ambitious process of updating its Nationally Determined Contributions NDC, which to be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Under the scope of UPDP's global initiative 'Climate

Promise', UNDP Bangladesh is supporting NDC update to make the NDC more technically robust with renewed commitments towards fulfilling mitigation obligation coherent to the overarching goal of Paris Agreement. The NDC update will follow the UNFCCC defined guidelines so that enabling conditions are fostered to mainstream mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies.

Bangladesh prepared its Intended NDC in 2015 and prepared NDC roadmap and action in 2018. While the NDCs (especially the mitigation commitments of the UNFCCC's members states) builds the foundation on the Paris Agreement, however, the aggregated mitigation commitments made under the NDCs were far short towards limiting global average temperature rise well below 2 degree Centigrade from the pre industrial level by end on this century. Given the context, article-4(9) of the PA and the corresponding decision of the Conference of the Parties (decision 1/CP.21, para-24) requires the countries to revise and update their NDC by 2020.

Bangladesh, as a signatory to Paris Agreement, needs to comply the decision and undertakes reviewing and updating the existing NDC. While the current NDC considered three sectors e.g. power, transport, and industry, the updated NDC is supposed to include two more sectors e.g. Agriculture, Forestry and Land use (AFOLU) and Waste sectors. Hence, the scope of NDC update will enable Bangladesh to; a) provide the GoB with a robust baseline that incorporate all mitigation and adaptation related efforts undertaken by the country to date; b) prepare mitigation potential projections until 2030 using baseline information; c) support in drafting the technical language of the submission to the UNFCCC; and d) extract agreement of the key stakeholders on the elements of the ambitious NDC that will be submitted.

The updated NDC will deliver a range of outputs, which will include, a) baseline scenario of NDCs implementation, b) revision of targets, c) review of existing policies and legislations, and b) suggesting new targets for climate change mitigation, and adaptation by including progress achieved towards Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework and SDGs.

## Upcoming Conferences



### 7<sup>th</sup> Global Summit on Climate Change

Date : 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
Location : Lisbon, Portugal  
Type : Webinar

The 7<sup>th</sup> Global Summit on Climate Change 2020 will join world-class professors, scientists, researchers, students, environmentalist, to discuss the methodology to reduce global warming, climatic change and its effect, pollution and recycling. It is planned to give various information that will keep helpful scientists next to each other of the issues impacting the expectations, finding and solution for climatic change and its effect. The assembling of this event will be dealt with around the subject "Tackling Climate Change for a Sustainable Future". This international conference provides the opportunity for climate scientists, professors and researchers from all over the world to gather and learn the latest advances in the field of climate and environmental science and to exchange scientific ideas and experiences in a distinctive environment.

Web: <https://climatechange.global-summit.com/>

### International Conference on Climate Change in Complex Systems and Ecosystems

Date : 26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
Location : Jerusalem, Israel  
Type : Webinar

International Conference on Climate Change in Complex Systems and Ecosystems is dedicated to bringing together a significant number of diverse scholarly events for presentation within the conference program. International Conference on Climate Change in Complex Systems and Ecosystems aims to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of Climate Change in Complex Systems and Ecosystems. It also provides a premier interdisciplinary platform for researchers, practitioners and educators to present and discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of Climate Change in Complex

Systems and Ecosystems

Web: <https://waset.org/climate-change-in-complex-systems-and-ecosystems-conference-in-november-2020-in-jerusalem>

### 2020 International Conference on Climate Change, Green Energy and Environmental Sustainability (CCGEES 2020)

Date : 27<sup>th</sup>- 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
Location : Haikou, China  
Type : Digital

The impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly. The 2020 International Conference on Climate Change, Green Energy and Environmental Sustainability (CCGEES 2020) will be held during Nov. 27-28, 2020 in Haikou, China. CCGEES 2020 aims to bring together by a common concern for the science of, and social responses to, climate change, green energy and environmental sustainability and to provide a platform for scientists, engineers and scholars to share their latest research results and experiences.

Web: <http://www.event-ccgees.org/>

### International Conference on Ecosystems and Climate Change (CECC 2020)

Date : 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
Location : Sanya, China  
Type : Conference at Venue

International Conference on Ecosystems and Climate Change (CECC 2020) will be held during November 27-29, 2020 in Sanya, China. This Conference will cover issues on Arid lands and Desertification, Biodiversity and Biological Conservation, Disturbance Ecology and other related fields. It dedicates to creating a stage for exchanging the latest research results and sharing the advanced research methods.

Web: <https://www.novevents.org/conference/CECC2020/>

### **The Water, Megacities and Global Change Conference 2020**

Date : 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020  
 Location : France  
 Type : Conference at Venue

Along with experts and scientists, the Water, Megacities and Global Change conference will include civil society representatives and elected officials to highlight the symbolic and aesthetic dimensions of water management issues in megacities and their impact on global change. Youth will be given a voice to share their perspective on all topics covered by the conference. The conference will analyze the determinant issues to be addressed to maintain and strengthen the often-precarious balance of these mega-urban systems accelerating global change. It will also address the types of solutions (means, methods, tools) that can be implemented to support global change in megacities.

Web: <https://www.youthop.com/conferences/call-for-papers-the-water-megacities-and-global-change-conference-2020-in-france>

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### **World Summit on Climate Change and Global Warming**

Date : 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020  
 Type : Webinar

World Summit on Climate Change and Global Warming offers the analysts and researcher to investigate the advanced and maximum recent research upgrades inside the field of climate exchange changes which focuses on the gradual increase in floor temperatures on the earth. Most climate scientists agree the main cause of the current global warming trend is the human expansion of the greenhouse effect. Human activities are changing the natural greenhouse. Over the last century, the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil has increased the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Global warming is primarily a problem of too much carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere, which acts as a blanket, trapping heat and warming the planet. The issue may be that 'climate change' will be no more simply a scientific concern, but also includes economics, sociology, geopolitics, national and politics, law and health just to name an only some which is the main focus of the summit.

Web: <http://www.meetingfora.com/Conference/5/WSCCGW/>

### **The 5<sup>th</sup> International conference on climate change 2021**

Date : 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
 Location : Colombo, Sri Lanka  
 Type : Conference at Venue

The conference focuses on the theme "Sustainable Development and Climate Change in Developing and Least Developed Countries". The theme of ICCC 2021 covers the way in which we can address the risks and uncertainties of climate change by building societies, ecosystems and infrastructure that are resilient to environmental and socio-economic changes. It includes risk and uncertainty assessment, scenario development and planning, participatory modelling, and developing transformative adaptation pathways that can cope with a wide range of future conditions. ICCC 2021 aims to bring together leading academics, ecologists, chemists, physicists, biologists, material scientists, biomedical researchers, engineers, social workers, policy makers and other researchers around the world who are active at the frontiers of this diverse and multidisciplinary field.

Web: <https://climatechangeconferences.com/>

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### **Thirteenth International Conference on Climate Change: Impacts and Responses**

Date : 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
 Location : UBC Robson Square, Vancouver, Canada  
 Type : Conference at Venue

The Thirteenth International Conference on Climate Change: Impacts & Responses is brought together by a common concern for the science of, and social responses to, climate change. It seeks to make linkages across disciplinary, geographic, and cultural boundaries. The conferences main focus are the impacts of climate change on natural environments in particular and universal views, humans Impact and responsibility to climate change and scientists, technologies, policy makers, and community members respond to climate change. The conference is motivated to build strategies for action framed by the themes and tensions.

Web: <https://on-climate.com/2021-conference>



## CPRD Events



### Training on 'Implication of Climate Change Impacts to the Human Rights Obligations: Policy spaces and options for safeguarding human rights under the UNFCCC process'

Date: May 27, 2019

A two-day (from 26-27 May 2019) training program on "Implication of Climate Change Impacts to the Human Rights Obligations: Policy spaces and options for safeguarding human rights under the UNFCCC process" was organized by CPRD at PKSF Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

The training program included several key sessions



on human rights obligations, human rights violation by the impacts of climate change and safeguarding rights under the the UNFCCC process. The sessions were; i) fundamentals of human rights; ii) legal and institutional arrangements for ensuring human rights in Bangladesh context iii) Implications of climate induced L&D and forced migration to the human rights obligations; iv) nexus between climate justice and human rights; v) empirical experience on the localized impacts of climate change; vi) Scope of addressing human rights in the national development/climate plans and strategies and vii) human rights obligations to the Paris Agreement and to the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), act by the experts to build capacity among the government & NGO professionals, practitioners and relevant stakeholders in order to enhance their knowledge on climate change implications to the human rights obligations. Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Chairman PKSF. Dr. Md. Helal Uddin, Director NGO Affairs Bureau were present in the inaugeral ceremony of the training.

<https://cprdbd.org/training-on-climate-change-and-human-rights/>

### Human chain during Global climate strike

Date: September 20, 2019

In solidarity with the Global Climate Strike (held from 20 to 27 September 2019), the Center for Participatory Research and Development – CPRD, COAST Trust, Coastal Development Partnership (CDP), Network on Climate Change, Bangladesh (NCC-B) and Shariatpur Development Society (SDS) jointly organized a human chain on 20 September, 2019 in front of the National Press Club, Dhaka.



Speakers from the human chain called the historically responsible countries for Global Warming to GHGs emission without any further delay. They also argued the polluter countries to support the climate vulnerable countries with adequate finances for resilience building and compensating Loss and Damages causing by the climate change induced sudden and slow disaster events. The speakers urged full and timely implementation of the Paris Agreement with an aim to keep global average temperature rise at 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level to save planet Earth from the unavoidable and irreversible adversities of climate change. Mustafa Kamal Akanda Director Coast Trust, Atikul Islam Tipu, CDP and many others participated in the human chain.

<https://cprdbd.org/global-climate-strike-event-in-bangladesh/>

### Roundtable Discussion on: "Human Rights and Climate Justice Nexus: Global and National Policy Narratives"

Date: February 20, 2020

CPRD organized a roundtable discussion on 'Human Rights and Climate Justice Nexus: Global and National Policy Narratives' on February 20, 2020, at



PKSF Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

The discussion was followed by sharing some case studies on human rights violations by catastrophic climatic events. The speaker emphasized implementing national and global obligations on human rights so that rights of the climate change victims, especially of the climate induced migrants, are protected. They also demanded a global Protocol for ensuring rights of the climate migrants. Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Member National Human Rights Commission, Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Chairman PKSF, Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadek Ahmed, Director (Environment and Climate Change) of PKSF spoke in the seminar.

<https://cprdbd.org/human-rights-and-climate-justice/>

### **Round table discussion on “Loss and Damage Finance: Scopes and Options”**



*Date: February 29, 2020*

A roundtable discussion on “Loss and Damage Finance: Scopes and Options” was organized by CPRD on the 29th of February, 2020 at The Daily Star Centre, Dhaka.

The discussion was followed by a presentation on the approaches and loopholes of addressing Loss and Damage (L&D), the scopes and limitations of existing finances and major COP decisions on L&D finances. The speakers discussed the possible options of L&D financing, and how WIM could play a major role in identifying options for financing L&D and brings this discussion forward toward COP 26. Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Chairman of PKSF, Dr. Saleemul Huq, Director ICCCAD, Dr. Nurul Quadir, Additional Secretary MoEFCC spoke in the seminar.

<https://cprdbd.org/round-table-discussion-on-loss-and-damage-finance-scopes-and-options/>

### **Planning Meeting of CSOs for climate justice: Facilitation CSOs position in the Climate Negotiation at COP 26 in Glasgow, 2020**

*Date: February 20, 2020*

A CSOs planning meeting for climate justice towards COP 26 was organized by CPRD on 20 February at PKSF Bhaban, Dhaka.

CSOs and representative of different national and international organizations discussed the frustrating outcomes of COP 25 of the UNFCCC held in Madrid during 2-15 December 2019. They emphasized to develop a common understanding of the key debated issues emerged at COP 25 so that they could develop



an informed policy position. The meeting also intended to facilitate their active engagement with the national and global policy stakeholders so that the Glasgow COP (COP 26) fulfils its mandate and CSOs expectation of ensuring climate justice in the COP decisions.



*Image: Launching Global Campaign of Human Rights for Climate Justice.*

# Development Dialogue: Previous Issues



## Issue 1, February 2018

Troubled Journey towards Climate Justice  
*Md Shasuddoha*

Climate Risk Transfer by Insurance Mechanism  
*Muhammad Mizanur Rahman*

The Plight of Climate Migrants in Urban Settings  
*S.M. Saify Iqbal*

<https://cprdbd.org/dialogue-issue-01/>



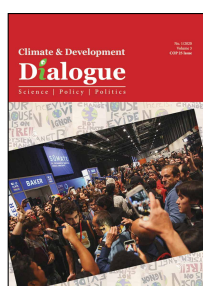
## Issue 02, August 2019

Climate Risk Insurance (CRI): Context and Readiness of Bangladesh  
*Muhammad Mizanur Rahman*

Climate Change Induced Loss and Damages: Evidence from the Salt Farming Practices in Kutubdia Island, Bangladesh  
*Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman Bijoy*

Assessing Climate Induced Non Economic Loss and Damage in the Coastal Fisher Folk Communities of Bangladesh  
*Habib Torikul*

<https://cprdbd.org/dialogue-issue-02/>



## Issue 03, February 2020

COP-25 ISSUE  
Chile/Madrid Climate Conference-a Bad COP: may the good builds on the bad towards COP 26.  
*Md Shamsuddoha*

Climate Denialism and Nationalism: making climate efforts little and late.  
*Rumana Sharmin*

It's Planetary Emergency: it's a warning, a call for urgent actions.  
*S. M. Saify Iqbal*

<https://cprdbd.org/dialogue-issue-3/>

## CALL FOR ARTICLE

Dialogue is pleased to invite submission of articles for its next issue. We encourage potential authors to submit their write-ups on the recurrent policy debate and research findings on the issues related to climate induced loss and damage, displacement & migration and violation of human rights.

We request the authors to submit their article to [jabed.akib@cprdbd.org](mailto:jabed.akib@cprdbd.org) or [dialogue@cprdbd.org](mailto:dialogue@cprdbd.org) by the end of December 2020 to get the article published in the next issue, due in February 2021.


## COVID-19: essentially demands a renewed development paradigm

### EDITOR'S PICK

COVID-19, the recent time unprecedented global pandemic, already become a greatest challenge of survival for many countries irrespective of their economic strength and geo-political influence. The pandemic is just not a concern of a robust healthcare system to deal with. It's more about applying systematic socio-cultural measures (safety measures) to prevent spread-out of the extremely contagious pathogen (SARS-CoV-2 virus). However, application of socio-economic imperatives for long has become a difficult political choice as this will cause a huge socio-economic consequence, which are nothing but an unwarranted addition to the impacts of other concurrent far-reaching crises, for instance the climate change.

In Bangladesh they are primarily the low-skilled informal sector workers, majority of them are disaster displaced and forced migrants. Hence, the policy response to COVID-19 should only be limited to reviving economic activities. Rather a long-term plan, aligned to achieving climate goals and SDGs, is required to make development activities benefitting the planet and its people.



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