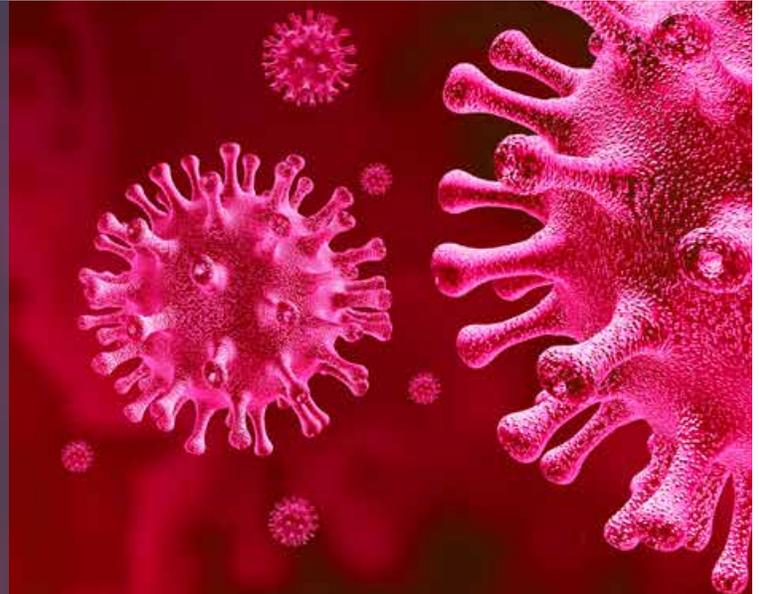


# UN COVID-19 RESPONSE IN ACTION

UN RESPONSE TO THE  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS  
OF COVID-19



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## GLOBAL SNAPSHOT



74 countries now have a national COVID-19 response in place, 93 countries have at least one socio-economic impact assessment and 127 countries have a response plan supported by the UN country teams.



### IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

93 countries now have at least one UN socio-economic impact assessment (SEIA). The total number of impact assessments recorded is 128.



### RESPONSE PLANS

109 out of 131 UNCTs socio-economic response plans (SERPs) are finalized, covering 127 countries. This includes sub-regional response plans from Barbados and Fiji covering 18 countries.



### FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

In 2020, the Joint SDG Fund approved 62 proposals to reinforce the SDG financing architecture at the country level, including through the support to countries on designing Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs).

Figures above were updated as of 28 October 2020.

# SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT INSIGHTS

Since the outbreak of the pandemic the UN system has supported over 128 socio-economic impact assessments across 93 countries. The picture emerging is one of a rapidly deteriorating fiscal space needed to deal effectively with the crisis, avoid a humanitarian crisis and a protracted economic crisis in the most vulnerable countries.

Issues of debt, domestic resource mobilization, expenditure switching, and increased levels of international financial assistance urgently need to be prioritized to avoid this, and to lay the foundation for building back better. These were also some of the main action points highlighted under the High-level meeting on “Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond.”

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE PLANS

UNCT socio-economic response plans (SERPs) reflect a comprehensive and a coordinated approach by the UNCTs working with international financial institutions (IFIs), bilateral donors, private sector and civil society actors to provide a joint response framework aligned with government plans and priorities. It is estimated that about 56% of SERPs received some input from the World Bank, 32% from the IMF.

The average funding gap of the costed SERPs amounts to \$130.2mn; totaling \$12.24bn. The significant funding gaps identified in these SERPs clearly pose significant constraints to the ability to deliver the envisioned results.

In various COVID-19 socio-economic response plans, a clear linkage with the INFF process is articulated as a tool to understand the national financing for development landscape. The following UNCTs are among those that integrate their support to countries to design INFFs in their SERPs (primarily as part of the UN Socio-economic Framework pillar 4): Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ecuador, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Maldives, Moldova, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Thailand, Togo, and Viet Nam.

## ISSUE IN FOCUS

### FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

Back in May, the UN Secretary-General, with Canada and Jamaica launched the initiative [\*“Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond”\*](#). Under this initiative, Heads of State and Government, international organizations, civil society and the private sector joined forces

to deliver an ambitious menu of policy options for financing development in the era of COVID-19 and beyond across six thematic issue-areas: (1) external finance and remittances, jobs and inclusive growth; (2) recovering better for sustainability; (3) global liquidity and financial stability; (4) debt vulnerability; (5) private sector creditors engagement; and (6) illicit financial flows.

On [29 September](#), Heads of State and Government called for urgent and bold multilateral action to prevent the looming humanitarian and development crisis to ensure access to *concessional financing* for vulnerable countries; address *liquidity constraints*; and provide debt relief. Further details of action points included *inter alia*:

- Providing *concessional finance* to developing countries in need, especially those in special situations, and adequately resource the [ACT-accelerator](#);
- Addressing *liquidity constraints* (e.g. through reallocation of unused special drawing rights/SDRs, or a *Liquidity and Sustainability Facility*);

- Ensuring *debt relief* (e.g. through extending the Debt Service Suspension Initiative), engaging private creditors, providing targeted debt relief, using innovative instruments such as debt swaps, and increasing transparency;
- *Building back better* by aligning finance with sustainable development (e.g. through mandatory reporting and reorienting the financial system); equitable digitalization; investment promotion and resilient infrastructure; and supporting remittances; and
- Tackling *illicit financial flows (IFFs)* and other measures to expand fiscal space (e.g. through a fairer and more transparent international tax regime).

# FINANCING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

## PROMOTING INFFS FOR A GREEN, EQUITABLE AND RESILIENT COVID-19 RECOVERY

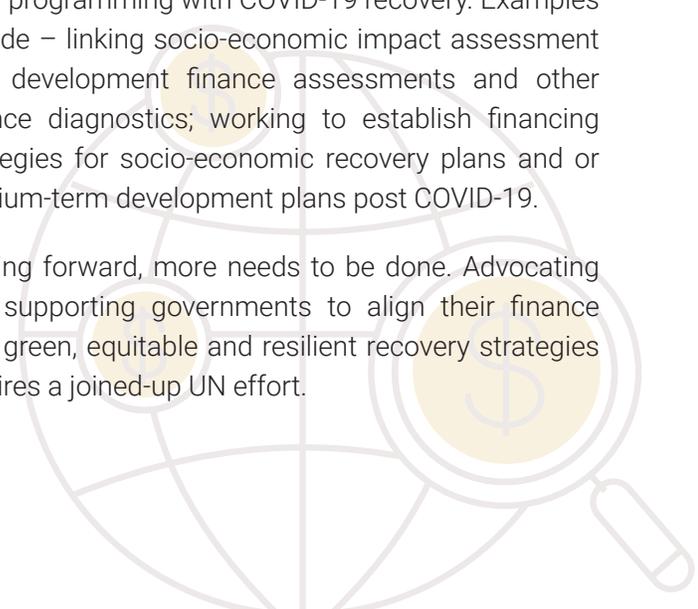
The UN Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted by Member States in 2015, calls upon countries to put in place cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies supported by integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs). Such country-owned financing frameworks look at the full range of financing sources and non-financial means of implementation that are available to countries, and lay out a financing strategy to raise resources, manage risks, and achieve sustainable development priorities.

The UN is leveraging its collective assets across agencies to support governments in developing INFFs that will enable them to facilitate financing for their COVID-19 recovery and a new generation of national Medium-Term Development Plans that ensure a green, equitable and resilient recovery. The Joint SDG Fund is investing \$60 million across 62 countries. More

than 15 agencies are working together towards this effort. UNDP and DESA have been partnering with the IMF and EU to strengthen the capacities available and deploy technical assistance support. UNDP is leading technical support for INFFs at the country level and is working together with RCOs and UNCTs to align support with financing the COVID-19 recovery.

Preliminary reporting suggests 41 out of 58 programmes have established a link between their INFF programming with COVID-19 recovery. Examples include – linking socio-economic impact assessment with development finance assessments and other finance diagnostics; working to establish financing strategies for socio-economic recovery plans and or medium-term development plans post COVID-19.

Moving forward, more needs to be done. Advocating and supporting governments to align their finance with green, equitable and resilient recovery strategies requires a joined-up UN effort.



# COVID-19 RESPONSE IN ACTION

## GHANA

### BOTTOM UP APPROACH TO THE INFF THROUGH THE DISTRICT COVID-19 RECOVERY PLANS

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance, and support from UNDP, a bottom up INFF approach is being piloted in 5 districts in Ghana, through the district recovery plans and linking to the national SDG financing process to promote a whole-of-government and whole-of-society integrated approach to financing and planning. The National Development Planning Commission is driving the District Recovery Plans, which in turn guide the scope of the financing strategies and their governance. Districts already have 'funding plans' and private sector engagement strategies in place. The aim is to turn funding plans to financing with mobilization of private sector investments and by strengthening the governance at local level.

The Vodafone Foundation, Access Bank, and Harvest Foundation are advocating for digital transformation targeting women to be part of the investments at the district level; and Jumia (an online marketplace) for digital access to markets. The COVID-19 Local Economies Tracker and the COVID-19 Business Tracker are key flagship initiatives that will be connected to this effort.

## MALDIVES

### BEYOND THE COVID-19 RECOVERY: LOOKING AT CLIMATE INVESTMENTS AND HUMAN CAPITAL

The Government of the Maldives is developing an integrated financing strategy for enabling recovery and transformation to sustainable development. The INFF strategy will explore the role of all types of financial flows including the national budget, international development assistance, private sector participation, capital market and innovative financing. While fiscal space is limited in the current context of the Maldives, an opportunity exists to make the right fiscal adjustments prioritizing inclusive and sustainable investments and incentivizing the private sector. In addition to a focus on financing the COVID-19 recovery, the INFF strategy also focuses on climate finance, including budget tagging to increase climate investment and institutionalizing climate change in the governance of the public financial management system.

The National Bureau of Statistics, with UNFPA, has just launched the [first National Transfer Account](#) where the analysis provides a snapshot of how the Maldives is utilizing its finances for its spending on health and education. Under the UN Joint SDG Fund programming, further analysis is underway to strengthen the human capital investment needs in the social sector.



# WHAT'S NEW?

## LATEST READINGS, DATA AND ANALYTICS

- **UNDP and UNWomen** – The [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#) monitors policy measures enacted by governments worldwide to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, and highlights responses that have integrated a gender lens.
- **UNEP, ILO, UNDP, UNIDO and UNITAR** – A new [COVID-19 Hub](#) has been developed by the [Partnership for Action on Green Economy \(PAGE\)](#) to connect policymakers and UN Country Teams in the [20 PAGE partner countries](#) with latest information on impacts of COVID, economic policy response, recovery measures, tools and services.
- **ECLAC** published its Special Report COVID-19, [Political and social compacts for equality and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean in the post-COVID-19 recovery](#), proposing political and social compacts with broad participation, and transformative leadership for a recovery with equality and sustainability
- **WFP** – [2020 Cost of a Plate of Food Report](#): The index looks at the cost of a basic plate of food to people in 33 developing countries, as a share of average daily income. It compares this ratio to a New York baseline to highlight underlying inequalities in global food affordability.
- **ILO, Asian Development Bank** – A [report finds](#) that in Asia and the Pacific half the young people between 15-24 years of age were employed in the hardest hit sectors by COVID-19 (wholesale and retail trade and repair; manufacturing; rental and business services; and accommodation and food services) and at risk of bearing higher longer-term economic and social costs.
- **UNICEF** – A [brief](#) outlines that the impact of school closures on students' learning varies over time. It highlights additional risks such as violence at home and in communities, and lack of access to free school meals. In Southeast Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF [predicts](#) that an additional 22 million children could fall into poverty in 2020 because of COVID-19.
- **FAO** – [Policy brief](#) 'National agrifood systems and COVID-19 in ECOWAS - Effects, policy responses, and long-term implications'.
- **FAO, African Union** – Report 'Empowering women to leave no one behind' - FAO and African Union launch [Regional Outlook on Gender and Agrifood Systems](#). As the number of people suffering from hunger increases, so does the challenge of achieving Zero Hunger target by 2030.
- **UN** SG Policy Briefs can be found [here](#).

### Have a question or want to share your experience?

[Contact our team](#)

The **UNSDG Knowledge Platform** (accessible to anyone with a UN-affiliated e-mail) can be found [here](#).

UNInfo - A monitoring framework has been prepared, which includes data on the number of beneficiaries reached via UN programming under the COVID-19 response. Results will be reported through the UN Info with the first data becoming available in Q4 2020 [on this page](#).



UNITED NATIONS

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