

# Media Update

28 April 2020

## United Nations

### PRESS RELEASE

## A new normal: UN lays out roadmap to lift economies and save jobs after COVID-19

There will be no return to the “old normal”, governments must act to create a new economy and more jobs.

*New York, 27 April 2020* – The urgent health crisis that is COVID-19 has created a historic recession with record levels of deprivation and unemployment, creating an unprecedented human crisis that is hitting the poorest hardest, especially women and children. In a new framework released today as a roadmap to support countries’ path to social and economic recovery, the United Nations calls for an extraordinary scale-up of international support and political commitment to ensure that people everywhere have access to essential services and social protection.

The “*United Nations Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19: Shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need*” calls for protecting jobs, businesses and livelihoods to set in motion a safe recovery of societies and economies as soon as possible for a more sustainable, gender-equal, and carbon-neutral path—better than the “old normal”.

“This is not only a health crisis but a human crisis; a jobs crisis; a humanitarian crisis and a development crisis. And it is not just about the most vulnerable. This pandemic shows that we are all at risk because we are only as strong as the weakest health system. Its unprecedented scale demands an unprecedented response,” said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, who presented his report on the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 “Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity” in March.

“Everything we do during and after this crisis must be with a strong focus on building more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies that are more resilient in the face of pandemics, climate change and the many other global challenges we face,” he said. This new framework released today sets the way United Nations entities will deliver this vision on the ground.

Decisions made in the next few months will be crucial for the progress towards the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), the UN’s framework for social and economic recovery stresses.

Noting that during the Ebola outbreak in 2014, more people died from the interruption of social services and the economic breakdown than from the virus itself, the framework focuses on protecting the needs and rights of those most affected by the pandemic, starting with the most vulnerable countries, groups, and those who risk being left behind.

Drawing lessons from the 2008-2009 global economic and financial crisis, the framework notes that countries with strong social protection systems and basic services suffered the least and recovered the fastest. To prevent billions of people from sliding into poverty, governments around the world will need to rapidly adapt, extend and scale-up safety ‘cushions’, such as cash transfers, food assistance, social insurance schemes and child benefits to support families.

For the impacts of COVID-19 to be reduced, the UN calls for an extraordinary scale-up of support to cope with the challenges ahead, including immediate social protection responses that consider differentiated impacts on vulnerable groups, children, women, men, and those in the informal sector. This is particularly urgent considering that 4 billion people, more than half of the world population—including two out of three children—have no or inadequate social protection.

## NOTES FOR THE EDITORS

The UN will focus on five key streams in its response, which places communities at the centre of recovery efforts: 1. protecting existing health services and strengthening health systems’ capacity to respond to COVID-19; 2. helping people cope with adversity, through social protection and basic services; 3. protecting jobs, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and informal sector workers through economic recovery programmes; 4.

guiding the necessary surge in fiscal and financial stimulus to make macroeconomic policies work for the most vulnerable and strengthening multilateral and regional responses; and 5. promoting social cohesion and investing in community-led resilience and response systems. These five streams are connected by action to meet the need for environmental sustainability, if countries are to recover and “build back better”, and be better prepared to address future shocks, including pandemics.

UN teams covering 162 countries and territories will rollout this recovery plan in the next 12 to 18 months, under the leadership of UN Resident Coordinators (RC), supported by a network of global and regional expertise. As the technical lead in the socio-economic recovery efforts, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) will support RCs, with UN teams working as one across all aspects of the response.

While a significant proportion of the existing US\$17.8 billion portfolio of sustainable development programmes across UN entities will be adjusted towards COVID-19 needs, given the scale and scope of the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, additional funds will be required. To support these efforts, the Secretary-General launched the [United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund](#), a UN inter-agency fund mechanism to help support low- and middle-income programme countries overcome the health and development crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and support people most vulnerable to economic hardship and social disruption. The financial requirements of the Fund are projected at \$1 billion in the first nine months and will be subsequently reviewed. The Secretary-General also called for a multilateral response that amounts to at least 10 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) to mount the most effective response to crisis the world has ever seen.

There will be no return to the “old normal”, the framework document states. The pandemic is a blow to developing and emerging economies that already face binding constraints of debt and limited fiscal space, with several developing countries needing urgent debt relief. Its impacts will be especially devastating for the most vulnerable countries – those in humanitarian or conflict settings. The UN also calls for a massive fiscal and financial repurposing in the next weeks and months, including the redirection of fossil fuel subsidies to aid the response. The UN stresses that the *status quo* and business-as-usual are policy choices, and they are not inevitable. For a

sustainable development that benefits more people, the choice must be for a recovery from COVID-19 that is fast, fair, green and inclusive.

**About the framework document :** The “United Nations Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19: Shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need”, released today puts in practice [the UN Secretary-General’s Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity report](#) on the same subject. It is one of three critical components of the UN’s efforts to save lives, protect people, and rebuild better, alongside the health response, led by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the humanitarian response, as detailed in the UN-led COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. Three funding mechanisms support the comprehensive response pillars: The [COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund](#), managed by the UN Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation for the immediate health needs; the [“Global Humanitarian Response Plan”](#) for the humanitarian appeal; and the [United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund](#) for the socio-economic recovery.

**About the UN Development System:** The United Nations development system is the world’s largest international actor on social protection and basic services. The UN System is present in 162 countries and territories and reaches tens of millions of people through basic services, social transfers and other forms of social protection. The UN Development System has extensive experience in supporting governments in developing social protection systems including social protection floors and delivery of quality social services and to support such services across humanitarian and development contexts. [unsdg.un.org](https://unsdg.un.org)

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## United Nations

### PRESS RELEASE

## Women leaders rise in solidarity to save lives and protect livelihoods

*“Rise for All” calls on all leaders to meet the human crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic*

and fully fund the UN Response and Recovery Trust Fund

New York, 27 April 2020 – Supporting the UN Secretary-General’s call for solidarity and urgent action in response to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, an initial group of prominent women today joined a global advocacy effort to save lives and protect livelihoods, urging leaders in all countries, across all sectors, to address the human crisis of the pandemic.

Convened by UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, *Rise for All* brings together women leaders to mobilize support for the UN roadmap to tackle the development emergency, as laid out in the *United Nations Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19: Shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need*, issued today.

“Like no other time in recent history, women are on the frontlines of COVID-19 and bearing the brunt of this human crisis,” said the UN Deputy Secretary-General. “It is time for us to rise as women leaders, taking action to conquer the pandemic and come out stronger so as to keep the world on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.”

The first to join this cohort today are the President of Ethiopia, **Sahle-Work Zewde**, the Prime Minister of Norway and Sustainable Development Goals Advocate of the Secretary-General, **Erna Solberg**, Sustainable Development Goals Advocate of the Secretary-General **Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser**, the Prime Minister of Barbados, **Mia Mottley**, Sustainable Development Goals Advocate of the Secretary-General **Dia Mirza**, UN Women Goodwill Ambassador of Pakistan **Muniba Mazari**, along with the Executive Directors of UNICEF, **Henrietta Fore**, of UN Women, **Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**, and of UNFPA, **Natalia Kanem**.

Together, the women are supporting the United Nations’ call for an extraordinary scale-up of international support and political commitment to “build back better” and ensure that people everywhere have access to essential services and social protection. This includes support for the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, an inter-agency mechanism designed to help those countries and people most exposed to the economic hardship and social disruption the pandemic has caused.

The Fund aims to mobilize US\$1 billion over the first nine months, and US\$2 billion over two years, to support low- and middle-income countries, including



Small Island Developing States and vulnerable groups such as women and children who are disproportionately bearing the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

The Netherlands today announced an initial contribution 15 million Euros (US\$16.6 million) to the Fund, following in the footsteps of Norway and Denmark, who have thus far pledged 150 million Norwegian Krone (US\$14.1 million) and 50 million Danish Krone (US\$7.3 million), respectively.

Over the coming weeks, more women leaders, including from the political, multilateral and business sectors, are expected to join *Rise for All*, adding their voices in support of the United Nations roadmap for social and economic recovery, and to advocate a fully funded COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.

#### NOTE TO EDITORS:

The *Rise for All* **video**, featuring the women leaders listed above, will be published at 12:15pm on 27 April. It will be available on the UN YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/unitednations](http://www.youtube.com/unitednations) and on UN WebTV at <http://webtv.un.org/watch/rise-for-all/6151978398001>

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For more information: [www.un.org/riseforall](http://www.un.org/riseforall)

**ILO**

PRESS RELEASE

## Protect workers both now and after lockdowns ease, says ILO

*The International Labour Organization warns that without adequate safeguards for returning workers there could be a second wave of the virus.*

GENEVA (ILO News) – As the pressure mounts on countries to ease their lockdown restrictions, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has urged Governments to take action to prevent and control COVID-19 in the workplace, with active involvement and dialogue with employers' and workers' organizations.

All employers need to carry out risk assessments and ensure their workplaces meet strict occupational safety and health criteria beforehand, to minimize the risk to workers of exposure to COVID-19, says the ILO.

Without such controls, countries face the very real risk of a resurgence of the virus. Putting in place the necessary measures will minimize the risk of a *second wave* of contagion contracted at the workplace.

“The safety and health of our entire workforce is paramount today. In the face of an infectious disease outbreak, how we protect our workers now clearly dictates how safe our communities are, and how resilient our businesses will be, as this pandemic evolves,” said the Director-General of the ILO, Guy Ryder.

“It is only by implementing occupational safety and health measures that we can protect the lives of workers, their families and the larger communities, ensure work continuity and economic survival,” Ryder added.

In particular, risk control measures should be specifically adapted to the needs of workers at the frontline of the pandemic. These include health workers, nurses, doctors and emergency workers, as well as those in food retail and cleaning services.

The ILO also highlighted the needs of the most vulnerable workers and businesses, in particular those in the informal economy, migrant and domestic workers. Measures to protect these workers should include - among others - education and training on safe and healthy work practices, free provision of PPE as needed, access to public health services and livelihood alternatives.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for strong national programmes to protect the health and safety of health workers, medical professionals, emergency responders, and the many other workers risking their lives on our behalf,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “On World Day for Safety and Health at Work, I call on all countries to assure well-defined, decent and safe working conditions for all health workers.”

To ensure a safe return to work and to avoid further work disruptions, the ILO recommends:

- Mapping hazards and assessing risks of contagion in relation to all work operations, and continuing to assess them following a return to work.
- Adopting risk control measures adapted to each sector and the specifics of each workplace and workforce. These may include:
  - Reducing physical interactions between workers, contractors, customers and visitors and respecting physical distancing when any interactions occur.
  - Improving ventilation in the work place.
  - Regularly cleaning surfaces, ensuring workplaces are clean and hygienic, and providing adequate facilities for handwashing and sanitization.
- Providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to workers where necessary and at no cost.
- Providing arrangements for isolating suspected cases and tracing every contact.
- Providing mental health support for staff.
- Providing training, education and informational material about health and safety at work, including proper hygiene practices and the use of any workplace controls (including PPE).