

This report sets out the framework for the United Nations' urgent socio-economic support to countries and societies in the face of COVID-19, putting 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.

During the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014, more people died from the interruption of social services and economic breakdown than from the virus itself. This should not have happened, and the world cannot let it happen again. As the world enters the deepest global recession since the Great Depression, we need to connect health needs to social, economic and environmental well-being, linking the present to the future.

We are all interconnected and need borderless solidarity. People everywhere must have access to social services and social protection; jobs, businesses and livelihoods must be protected; and a safe and equitable recovery of societies and economies must be set in motion as soon as possible, with the long-term goal of directing economies along a sustainable,

gender-equal, and carbon-neutral trajectory. Failure to do so will multiply and prolong suffering amongst the world's most vulnerable people.

This socio-economic response framework consists of five streams of work – an integrated support package offered by the United Nations Development System (UNDS) to protect the needs and rights of people living under the duress of the pandemic, with particular focus on the most vulnerable countries, groups, and people who risk being left behind.

The five streams of work that constitute this package include: 1. ensuring that essential health services are still available and protecting health systems; 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 response and 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 a strong environmental sustainability and gender equality imperative to build back better.

The UN development system is placing all of its relevant assets in support of an immediate development response to complement the humanitarian and emergency health interventions. These assets include:

The UN development footprint spans 162 countries and territories, supported by a global

The UN development system can make use of several funding modalities to quickly channel funds to programmatic interventions. New ones, such as pooled funds, can be established within days, notably at the country level, using globally agreed standards and procedures.

Beyond its own expertise and resources, the UN can use its significant reach to help mobilize the vast network of partnerships required for a whole of society, whole of world response. The UN has extensive connections with civil society organizations, women's groups and volunteer groups. Many of these organizations are facing their own challenges and the UN will work to address their specific fragility. But many often play an indispensable leadership role in the response, notably in reaching out to vulnerable people, and in getting to remote places. They can amplify responses.

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The UNDS is helping countries within the coming 12-18 months to shore up health systems, prevent a breakdown of food systems, restore and build back better their basic social services and other measures to minimize the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable populations. At the same time, the UNDS continues to advise Member States on the impact of the pandemic on their economies and to assist them in developing and implementing policies to address the economic challenges. The UNDS is also providing technical assistance to Member States in the areas of health, social protection, and economic recovery.

Countries need to make difficult decisions to

PROTECTING HEALTH SERVICES AND SYSTEMS DURING THE CRISIS

. When health systems collapse, deaths from the outbreak itself can quickly be exceeded by deaths from preventable or treatable conditions, no longer managed by a failing health system. It is therefore crucial to

even while addressing the pandemic.

Specific areas of response by the UNDS to assist Governments in maintaining essential health services and systems will include:

These services encompass a range of fields including: health services and systems assessments; data systems and tools for rapid assessments; essential health services from primary care level to hospital.

These also include delivery platforms, workforce management, medications, supplies, as well as reducing financial barriers and enhancing the quality of services data. These also include guidance on: maintaining essential preventive outreach services, covering

SDG3 Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Wellbeing for All. The infrastructure that was developed as part of these efforts will focus on ensuring essential services are maintained and health systems strengthened to prepare for recovery. In summary, the UNDS is ready to repurpose a significant proportion of its current portfolio to address the essential health needs of hundreds of millions of people in 100 priority countries struggling to meet the health challenges alongside the COVID-19 response.

Health systems are being overwhelmed by demand for services generated by the COVID-19 outbreak. When health systems collapse, both direct mortality from the outbreak and avertable mortality from other conditions increase dramatically. We propose three priority mitigating actions to Governments:

About 90 percent of the total number of school children in the world have been directly affected by school closures, with an estimated 370 million school children missing out on school meals. The UNDS will work with national education authorities and private sector education service providers to support preschools and schools that can safely remain open, while assisting governments to scale up digital and other forms of remote learning. Several UNDS agencies are working with multiple partners to scale up innovative approaches to continue learning at all levels during the crisis, via parenting programmes, tv, radio, various digital platforms and other delivery mechanisms. Furthermore, support will be provided to allow for a safe and quick return of children to schools. This includes re-instating school meals, for the estimated 370 million school children missing out on school meals and offering “back to school” packages. For example, some UN entities are currently providing school meals to 17 million children in 61 countries and technical assistance to 70 governments. Others offer back to school packages, which include cash transfers and other interventions to incentivize and support the return of vulnerable children, particularly girls, as schools reopen. Furthermore, given the critical role of education

PROTECTING JOBS, SMALL AND MEDIUM- SIZED ENTERPRISES, AND VULNERABLE WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

The crisis could lead to a decline in 195 million full-time equivalent workers in the second quarter of 2020 alone. Hence, this pandemic is also a jobs and livelihoods crisis that threatens the SDG progress. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), farm workers, the self-employed, daily wage earners, refugees and migrant workers are hit the hardest. Jobs in the service industries are affected, including in culture and tourism. A global economic recession will impact global population movements and hence affect countries with high levels of migration and high remittance flows compared to their GDP.

, nor do they have the economic security to take sick leave, get treated if required, or cope with lockdown. New business models, such as the platform and gig economy with non-standard employment relationships, also tend to reduce benefits and protection for workers. This has created the risk of growing informality, which underscores the need to redefine social protection systems to guarantee universal coverage of the basic elements associated to decent work.

The UN's response in the field of economic recovery will focus on protecting and improving the productive sectors, protecting jobs and promoting decent work. The UNDS response will include:

Integrated, country-specific policy advice and

Focussing on protecting workers and sectors who are most impacted by the crisis

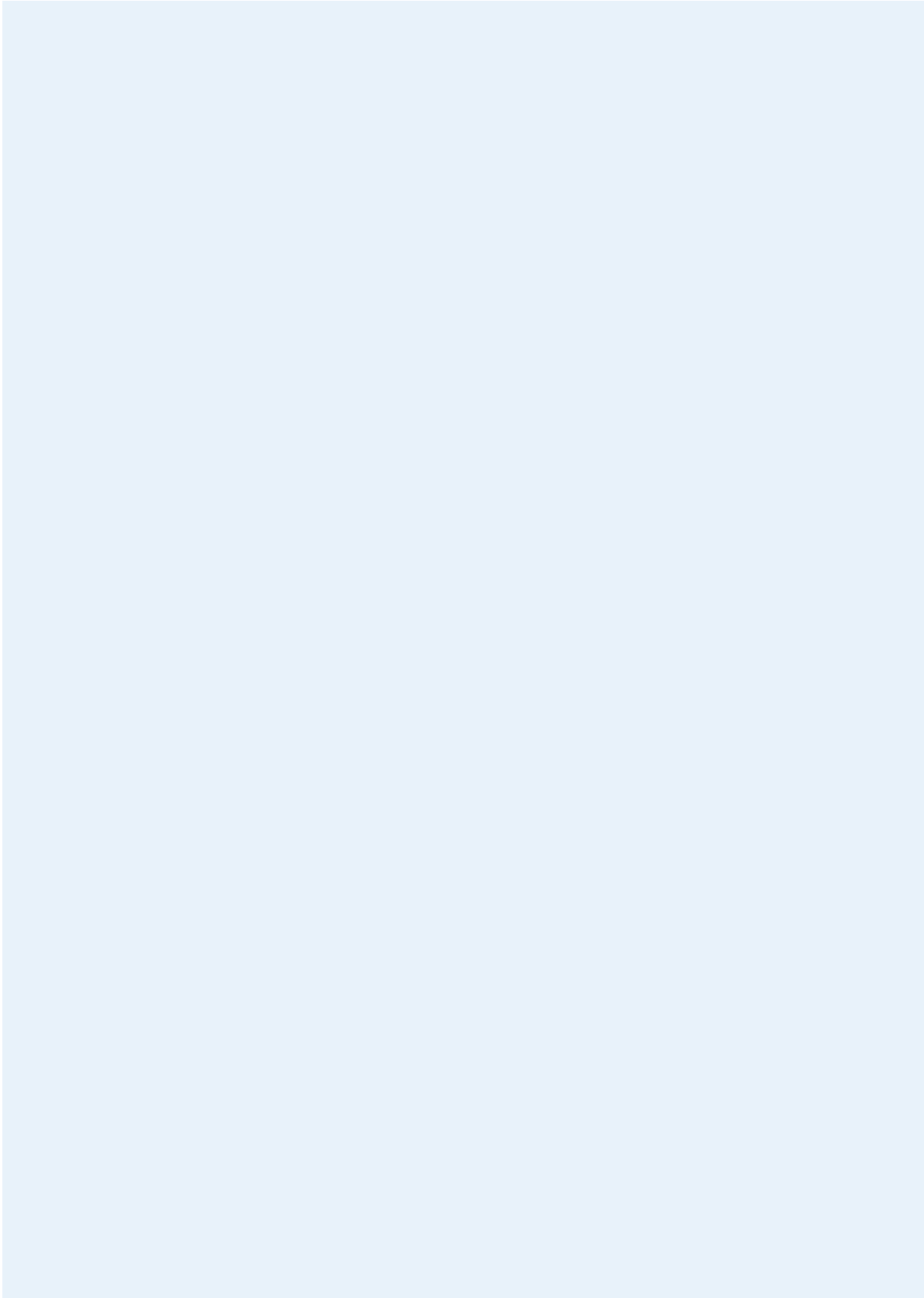
The COVID-19 crisis will engulf some of the world's poorest and most malnourished populations, in a context of scarce public resources, weak public

, building on its support to countries to access over \$1 billion grant from vertical funds in 2018-2019, which leveraged an additional \$1.2 billion for 91 countries from the IFIs, United Nations entities, the private sector and Governments. Funds mobilized in 2019 from the Global Environment

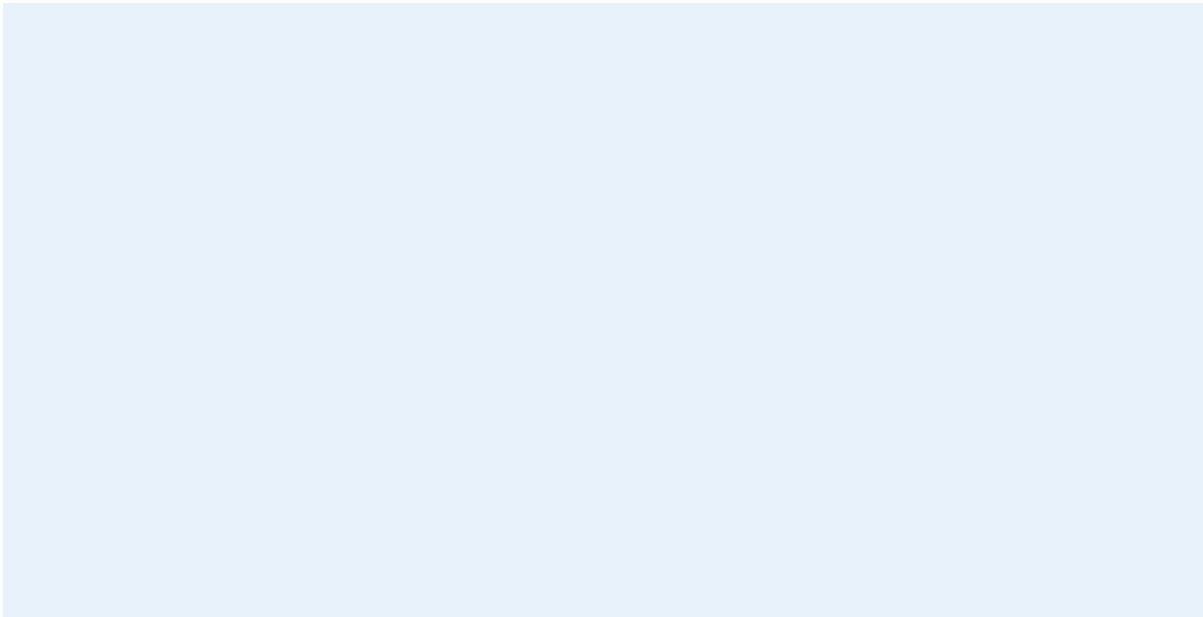
Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Adaptation Fund are expected to benefit 37 million people through integrated initiatives.

that has proved to be particularly effective and impactful in the agricultural and tourism sectors, helping subsistence farmers and small tourism operators

Business linkages between large enterprises, such as transnational corporations (TNCs) and local suppliers can be a channel for the transfer of technology, knowledge and skills to host economies.
<https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DIAE/Enterprise%20Development/Business-Linkage-Programme.aspx>



to confronting the effects of the Pandemic. On the one hand, this means having the capacity to use fiscal policy both as a tool to maintain livelihoods in the current conditions and as a linchpin for recovery. This entails access to debt relief, debt re-structuring mechanisms and debt condonation as rising public debt will be inevitable. At the same time MICs must maintain external stability. Internal expansion and external stability are interdependent goals. Maintaining external stability means having the legitimacy to implement capital controls to avoid capital outflows. It also means having acci



countries that request forbearance. Private creditors should join this moratorium on comparable terms to avoid the public sector bailing out private creditors, and national legislation should be extended to include safeguard against non-cooperative creditors. Debt to international financial institutions should also be included, though IFIs will likely need support from their shareholders to do so, in order not to threaten their AAA ratings and curtail their ability to provide fresh financing during the crisis. In parallel, developing countries should be able to access hard currencies easily, which would provide them with the ability to buy emergency supplies. This could include increased use of bilateral swap lines, or new issuance of Special Drawing Rights.

Beyond the immediate crisis response and moratorium, a new debt relief programme will be needed, considering high debt levels and unmet financing needs for the SDGs even before the pandemic hit. The IMF has already cancelled debt service payments in 25 of the most vulnerable countries for next six months, through its Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust. Much more will be needed.

In the medium term, a comprehensive and faster mechanism to restructure debt will be needed to facilitate economic recovery and SDG achievement in developing countries. This will involve

As the UN Secretary-General has noted, “a large scale, coordinated and comprehensive multilateral response is needed now more than ever”. COVID-19 is a global problem and confronting the effects of the pandemic will require global and coordinated efforts supported by regional initiatives and regional institutions.

While the level and intensity of the i0 9.5 81 596i0 () J8C8(i)-ETEMCnoH'2t10\$'F0Uj1.1E@6abv5v50r7U5j0P\$M4Dino8.9 (s)

the scope and shape of the response to the epidemic are taken, and also act as a bridge between excluded populations and the state. In many countries, the UNDS supports digital engagement platforms which can be a useful tool to mobilize community engagement under conditions of social distancing.^{8.3 2035 a}

To ensure a development response of unprecedented speed, these principles will guide our actions:

Transaction costs must be minimized to the extent possible, by using existing platforms, capacities, institutions and systems.

Flexibility must be enhanced, by drawing on programming and operational modalities usually reserved for high risk / conflict / humanitarian responses.

Risks must be taken and managed, by making full use of entity specific and joint risk management tools, and by speeding up the sharing of information on what work and what doesn't all at all levels.

Coherence and discipline must be everyone's focus, by working with and through collective initiatives and frameworks, including when it comes to resource mobilization.

The heart of the response lies at the national and sub-national level, using existing structures. It is undertaken under the leadership of the Resident Coordinators, with support from UNDP as tech-



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WORK FOR THE

UN development system will also make full use of existing adaptive and remote programming

The current pandemic and previous zoonotic

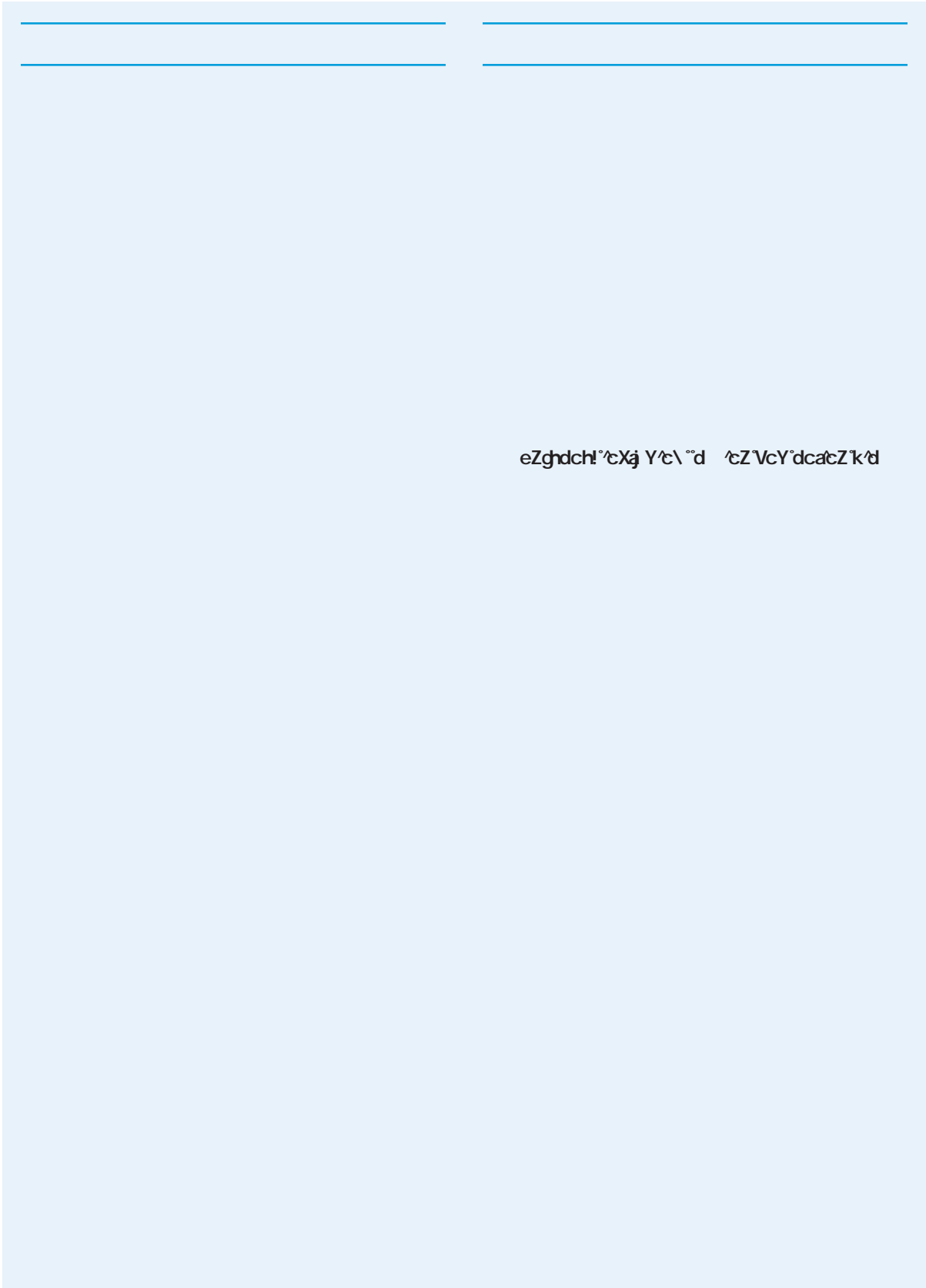
crisis preparedness, while directing the economic recovery along a significantly more sustainable and carbon-neutral trajectory and closing the digital divide. In recovering better, multilateral and regional collaboration will be critical on issues including data; technology innovation and transfer, closing the digital divide, sustainable finance, debt management, and crisis preparedness. For example, a coordinated push towards the suspension of debt repayments from those countries that need it will be critical.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has many human rights implications for civil, economic, political, social and cultural rights. Responses to the pandemic should be consistent with international human rights standards and address key human rights concerns. The following list of 10 thematic indicators has been developed to support national and international efforts towards a human rights-based policy response to the crisis, as well as an early warning tool. A few complementary indicators are suggested as well.

Ensure access to accurate and timely information at all stages of the crisis, and allow meaningful participation of the affected populations in decisions on COVID-19 related policy responses



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Complementary indicator:

Adoption/implementation of public information campaigns, including statements by political and civil leaders,

