

[Advanced Search \(/en/advanced-search\)](#)[SUBSCRIBE](#)[AUDIO HUB](#)

UN launches COVID-19 plan that could 'defeat the virus and build a better world'



UN Photo/Mark Garten | UN Secretary-General António Guterres briefs the media on the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

31 March 2020 | [Health \(/en/news/topic/health\)](#)

The UN chief launched on Tuesday a new plan to counter the potentially devastating socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, calling on everyone to “act together to lessen the blow to people”.



United Nations
@UN

Watch live as [@antonioguterres](#) launches report on the socio-economic impacts of [#COVID19](#). pscp.tv/w/cVIPCzU1MDE5...

UN Web TV @UNWebTV

Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 | Launching of the report by UN chief (31 March 2020).

pscp.tv

407 10:03 AM - Mar 31, 2020

[228 people are talking about this](#)

"The new coronavirus (<https://www.un.org/coronavirus>) disease is attacking societies at their core, claiming lives and people's livelihoods", said (<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2020-03-31/transcript-of-un-secretary-general%E2%80%99s-virtual-press-encounter-launch-the-report-the-socio-economic-impacts-of-covid-19>) Secretary-General António Guterres (<https://www.un.org/sg/>), pointing out that the potential longer-term effects on the global economy and individual countries are "dire".

The new report, "Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 (<https://www.un.org/coronavirus>)", describes the speed and scale of the outbreak, the severity of cases, and the societal and economic disruption of the coronavirus.

"COVID-19 is the greatest test that we have faced together since the formation of the United Nations," underscored the UN chief.

"This human crisis demands coordinated, decisive, inclusive and innovative policy action from the world's leading economies – and maximum financial and technical support for the poorest and most vulnerable people and countries."

As strong as weakest health system

Mr. Guterres called for "an immediate coordinated health response to suppress transmission and end the pandemic" that "scales up health capacity for testing, tracing, quarantine and treatment, while keeping first responders safe, combined with measures to restrict movement and contact."

He underscored that developed countries must assist those less developed, or potentially “face the nightmare of the disease spreading like wildfire in the global South with millions of deaths and the prospect of the disease re-emerging where it was previously suppressed”.

“Let us remember that we are only as strong as the weakest health system in our interconnected world”, he stressed.

Focus on most vulnerable

In tackling the devastating social and economic dimensions of the crisis, the UN chief pushed for a focus on the most vulnerable by designing policies that, among other things, support providing health and unemployment insurance and social protections while also bolstering businesses to prevent bankruptcies and job losses.

Debt alleviation must also be a priority he said, noting that the UN is “fully mobilized” and is establishing a new multi-partner Trust Fund for COVID19 Response and Recovery to respond to the emergency and recover from the socio-economic shock.

“When we get past this crisis, which we will, we will face a choice”, said the UN chief, “we can go back to the world as it was before or deal decisively with those issues that make us all unnecessarily vulnerable to crises”.

Referencing the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>) (SDGs), he maintained that in recover from the COVID-19 (<https://www.un.org/coronavirus>) crisis must lead to an economy focused on building inclusive and sustainable economies that are more resilient in facing pandemics, climate change, and the many other global challenges.

Measures to cope with coronavirus impacts

- Global actions must include a stimulus package reaching double-digit percentage points of the world's GDP, with explicit actions to boost the economies of developing countries.
- Regional mobilization must examine impacts, monetary coordination, fiscal and social measures, while engaging with private financial sector to support businesses and addressing structural challenges.
- National solidarity needs to prioritize social cohesion and provide fiscal stimulus for the most vulnerable along with support to small- and medium-sized enterprises, decent work and education.

“What the world needs now is solidarity,” stressed the Secretary-General. “With solidarity we can defeat the virus and build a better world”.

Grim 2020 socio-economic estimates

The report includes estimates from a host of UN agencies.

According to the UN International Labour Organization (ILO (<http://www.ilo.org>)), five to 25 million jobs will be eradicated, and the world will lose \$860 billion to \$3.4 trillion in labor income.

Coronavirus Portal & News Updates

Readers can find information and guidance on the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) from the UN, World Health Organization and UN agencies here.

(<https://www.un.org/coronavirus>)

For daily news updates from UN News, click here. (<https://news.un.org/en/events/un-news-coverage-coronavirus-outbreak>)

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD (<http://unctad.org/en/Pages/Home.aspx>)) projected a 30 to 40 per cent downward pressure on global foreign direct investment flows while the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO (<https://www.unwto.org/>)) saw a 20–30 per cent decline in international arrivals.

Meanwhile, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) anticipated that 3.6 billion people will be offline and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO (<https://en.unesco.org/>)) forecast that 1.5 billion students out of school.

The report calls for a large-scale, coordinated, comprehensive multilateral response that amounts to at least 10 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) and warns that there is no time to lose in mounting the most robust, cooperative health response the world has ever seen.

In closing, Mr. Guterres called the pandemic “a defining moment for modern society”, saying the “history will judge the efficacy of the response not by the actions of any single set of government actors taken in isolation, but by the degree to which the response is coordinated globally across all sectors for the benefit of our human family”.

“With the right actions, the COVID-19 (<https://www.un.org/coronavirus>) pandemic can mark the beginning of a new type of global and societal cooperation”, concluded the Secretary-General.

UN urges global solidarity in responding to COVID - 19



◆ Receive daily updates directly in your inbox - **Subscribe here** (https://news.un.org/en/content/un-newsletter-subscribe?utm_source=UNNews&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=un_news_newsletter) to a topic.

◆ Download the UN News app for your **iOS** (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/un-news-reader/id496893005?mt=8>) or **Android** (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.un.mobile.news&hl=en>) devices.

[COVID-19 \(/EN/TAGS/COVID-19\)](/EN/TAGS/COVID-19) | [CORONAVIRUS \(/EN/TAGS/CORONAVIRUS\)](/EN/TAGS/CORONAVIRUS)

RELATED STORIES



(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059542>)

COVID-19: Mental health in the age of coronavirus
(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059542>)



(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059672>)

Swift policy action, strong leadership can save millions of jobs, 'avert the worst' amid COVID-19 pandemic
(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059672>)



(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1060502>)

Protect 'healthcare heroes' from COVID-19, urges UN rights expert
(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1060502>)

NEWS TRACKER: PAST STORIES ON THIS ISSUE



(/en/story/2020/03/1060662)

Coronavirus necessitates global increase in protective equipment, medical supplies: UN health chief (/en/story/2020/03/1060662)

30 March 2020 | Health (/en/news/topic/health)

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO (<https://www.who.int/>)) is calling for stepped-up production of medical equipment and supplies as health facilities and health workers in many countries struggle with increasing and urgent demands brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.



(/en/story/2020/03/1060142)

G-20 summit provides chance to rally strongly against coronavirus threat: UN chief (/en/story/2020/03/1060142)

24 March 2020 | Health (/en/news/topic/health)

The COVID-19 crisis presents an "extraordinary opportunity" for the world's leading economic forum to respond to the numerous threats the disease poses to people everywhere, the UN Secretary-General (<https://www.un.org/sg/en>) has said.