



UNDP

**RAPID RESPONSES TO MITIGATE THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON
PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOODS**

BACKGROUND GUIDE

SAIMUN 2022

Honourable Delegates, Greetings!

We are grateful to be welcoming you to the United Nations Development Programme Committee, of this session of the annual Sub-Saharan Africa International Model United Nations conference, held here in Nairobi, Kenya. As you may already know, if you are individuals interested in the practice of diplomacy, international affairs, international politics and multilateralism, you are in the right place. This conference is fertile ground for all delegates to hone and harness their debating skills as they cogitate about effective solutions to pressing global matters. We encourage you to participate as much as possible and to take this opportunity with the utmost importance it deserves. Over the next couple of days, we will seek to deduce rapid responses aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of COVID-19 on people's livelihoods.

The members of the dais for this session are:

1. Joshua Kiboi – Chair
2. Nicole Koech – Chair

This document is an informative guide on the fundamentals of the discourse. However, we firmly urge you to investigate further on the reading sections of the topic, and research your deeply on the Member State you will be representing and their position on the matter. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact either the SAIMUN Secretariat through their email or us through our committee email. Our joy and hope are that this becomes a memorable experience for you, and that you gain as much as possible in the process! Here's to fruitful debate! All the best,

Kindest Regards,

UNDP Dais.

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UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a specialized UN agency with the aim of eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities and exclusion, and building resilience in order for states to achieve sustainable development and growth. As the UN's development agency, UNDP plays a fundamental role in helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which are:¹

1. [No Poverty](#)
2. [Zero Hunger](#)
3. [Good Health and Well-being](#)
4. [Quality Education](#)
5. [Gender Equality](#)
6. [Clean Water and Sanitation](#)
7. [Affordable and Clean Energy](#)
8. [Decent Work and Economic Growth](#)
9. [Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure](#)
10. [Reduced Inequality](#)
11. [Sustainable Cities and Communities](#)
12. [Responsible Consumption and Production](#)
13. [Climate Action](#)
14. [Life Below Water](#)
15. [Life on Land](#)
16. [Peace and Justice Strong Institutions](#)
17. [Partnerships to achieve the Goals](#)²

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html> ²



Established in 1966 by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA), UNDP draws its core principles, foundations and mandate from the merged United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (UNEPTA), created in 1949, and the United Nations Special Fund (UNSF), established in 1958.

The UNDP's mandate as mentioned earlier is to eradicate poverty, strengthen democracy, promote rule of law, and establish robust institutional frameworks that can assist in this cause. The UNDP is a proponent for change through connecting states to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.



RAPID RESPONSES TO MITIGATE THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOOD

1. INTRODUCTION

The UN's Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the COVID-19 Crisis warns that; *"The COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic varies from country to country, it will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at global scale, making achievement of SDGs even*

more urgent.”²The pandemic therefore necessitated the need and rapid response from Governments to ensure that the negative effects of the crisis on their citizen’s livelihoods are indeed mitigated.

The main function of the United Nations Developments Programme is to help achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion and thus aid countries in developing policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and building resilience in order to sustain development results.³ With possibilities of a drastic decline in the socio economic livelihoods of citizens in the world following the COVID-19 pandemic, a need to create innovative measures to accommodate and remedy the issue became governments, regions and even country blocks top discussion.

The UNDP therefore has a dual imperative.⁴ In as much as it responds to the pandemic, it ought to also respond urgently in assisting governments to counter the socio-economic effects of the pandemic in a way that would build a better future. The 2030 Agenda’s central promise on Sustainable Development is *leave no one behind*. With already pre-existing issues on poverty and inequality, the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic would create a radical rise in the very things being avoided. Therefore an essence of speed in how the UNDP mitigates the effects becomes predominant.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

The Secretary-General’s report on the Socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis provides a global framework and blueprint for the urgent socio-economic response. The report highlights that;

*“The COVID-19 crisis risks reversing decades of progress in the fight against poverty and exacerbating already high levels of inequality within and between countries. Volatility, combined in some countries with market tampering and stockpiling is starting to impact the prices of food with deleterious effects on nutrition of the most vulnerable. Unless measures are promptly out in place, the disruptions imposed by the pandemic and the measures adopted to suppress the virus will dramatically worsen the situation.”*⁵

With sectors such as Education being affected as schools and universities have closed to curb the spread of the pandemic, children have then been gravely affected as learning has stopped and even social interactions essential for social and behavioral development have been banned. With schools being closed, issues that had been mitigated such as child marriages, child labour and even child

2 <https://www.undp.org/coronavirus/socio-economic-impact-covid-19> accessed on 10th March 2022.

3 <https://www.undp.org/coronavirus/socio-economic-impact-covid-19> accessed on 10th March 2022.

4 <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-toCOVID-19.pdf> accessed on 10th March 2022.

5 https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_report_socio-economic_impact_of_covid19.pdf accessed on 10th March 2022.

abuse in developing countries are being reignited. Businesses that depended on physical interactions have suffered their fair share of loss and disappointment as countries have issued bans on every social and physical interactions. Banks and financial institutions lowered their expectations for GDP in the coming months due to the pandemic. Interest rates rose in response to consumer price inflation raising in vast countries across the world.

Joint statement by UN;

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year.

Millions of enterprises face an existential threat. Nearly half of the world's 3.3 billion global workforce are at risk of losing their livelihoods. Informal economy workers are particularly vulnerable because the majority lack social protection and access to quality health care and have lost access to productive assets. Without the means to earn an income during lockdowns, many are unable to feed themselves and their families. For most, no income means no food, or, at best, less food and less nutritious food.

The pandemic has been affecting the entire food system and has laid bare its fragility. Border closures, trade restrictions and confinement measures have been preventing farmers from accessing markets, including for buying inputs and selling their produce, and agricultural workers from harvesting crops, thus disrupting domestic and international food supply chains and reducing access to healthy, safe and diverse diets. The pandemic has decimated jobs and placed millions of livelihoods at risk. As breadwinners lose jobs, fall ill and die, the food security and nutrition of millions of women and men are under threat, with those in low-income countries, particularly the most marginalized populations, which include small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples, being hardest hit.

Millions of agricultural workers – waged and self-employed – while feeding the world, regularly face high levels of working poverty, malnutrition and poor health, and suffer from a lack of safety and labour protection as well as other types of abuse. With low and irregular incomes and a lack of social support, many of them are spurred to continue working, often in unsafe conditions, thus exposing themselves and their families to additional risks. Further, when experiencing income losses, they may resort to negative coping strategies, such as distress sale of assets, predatory loans or child labour. Migrant agricultural workers are particularly vulnerable, because they face risks in their transport, working and living conditions and struggle to access support measures put in place by governments. Guaranteeing the safety and health of all agri-food workers – from primary producers to those involved in food processing, transport and retail, including street food vendors – as well as better incomes and protection, will be critical to saving lives and protecting public health, people's livelihoods and food security.

In the COVID-19 crisis food security, public health, and employment and labour issues, in particular workers' health and safety, converge. Adhering to workplace safety and health practices and ensuring access to decent work and the protection of labour rights in all industries will be crucial in addressing the human dimension of the crisis. Immediate and purposeful action to save lives and livelihoods should include extending social protection towards universal health coverage and income support for those most affected. These include workers in the informal economy and in poorly protected and low-paid jobs, including youth, older workers, and migrants. Particular attention must be paid to the situation of women, who are over-represented in low-paid jobs and care roles. Different forms of support are key, including cash transfers, child allowances and healthy school meals, shelter and food relief initiatives, support for employment retention and recovery, and financial relief for businesses, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. In designing and implementing such measures it is essential that governments work closely with employers and workers.

The COVID-19 global recession was termed as the deepest since World War II. According to the Economic outlook Report published by the IMF, every country covered by the IMF posted a negative growth in 2020 and the downturn was more pronounced in the poorest parts of the world. As financial institutions are positive of a steady rise in the subsequent years, The IMF still projects that most countries will remain below the baseline of what was initially projected for 2021 without a COVID scenario.

The UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID- 19 did seem to be the Holy Grail in finding solutions to maneuverer through the negative effects of COVID -19. Nonetheless, we cannot ignore the slow response in countries, governments and regional blocks adopting and implementing the same. Digital technology proved to be on the best ways to mitigate the negative effect of COVID-19. Schools steadily resumed. Businesses, social interactions went online. However, this was limited. Without access to proper wireless networks or internet this proved impossible in developing countries, remote areas. The issue of loss of jobs during the pandemic has not been fully remedied. Businesses, markets or even firms in the service sector thrive on social skills. The economic sector is still sceptical in raising demand for jobs.

One of the major problems that caused a slow response to the mitigating the negative effects of COVID-19 was corruption. The UN framework as mentioned above gives a blueprint. However, corruption posed to negate and frustrate the goals and remedies outline in the framework. Corruption in this context included the embezzlement of emergency funds as well as manipulation of procurement processes for crucial health sector resources with little to almost no transparency or accountability. Corruption was and is not only detrimental to the crisis response and recovery but also it aggravates a negative impact on peace and security. As it threatens the people's livelihood at large. Corruption during the period brought about inequality and discrimination. Funds that were sent to provide sufficient resources to communities never reached the targeted audience.

Now is the time for global solidarity and support, especially with the most vulnerable in our societies, particularly in the emerging and developing world. Only together can we overcome the intertwined health and social and economic impacts of the pandemic and prevent its escalation into a protracted humanitarian and food security catastrophe, with the potential loss of already achieved development gains.

We must recognize this opportunity to build back better, as noted in the Policy Brief issued by the United Nations Secretary-General. We are committed to pooling our expertise and experience to support countries in their crisis response measures and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We need to develop long-term sustainable strategies to address the challenges facing the health and agri-food sectors. Priority should be given to addressing underlying food security and malnutrition challenges, tackling rural poverty, in particular through more and better jobs in the rural economy, extending social protection to all, facilitating safe migration pathways and promoting the formalization of the informal economy.

We must rethink the future of our environment and tackle climate change and environmental degradation with ambition and urgency. Only then can we protect the health, livelihoods, food security and nutrition of all people, and ensure that our ‘new normal’ is a better one.

3. QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST HAVE

1. What are the Responses that have mitigated the effects of COVID-19 on people’s livelihood?
2. Have the Responses appealed to the very goal of the UNDP?
3. What are some of the outcomes of having implemented this Responses?
4. Have the Responses worked?
5. What are some of the Responses that need to be implemented and adopted by States and haven’t yet been adopted?
6. Are the Responses inclusive and considerate of all types of countries in the world?

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