

Climate & Development

Dialogue

Science | Policy | Politics

No. 2/2020
Volume 4
COVID 19 Issue



Climate & Development

Dialogue

Issue 04, August 2020

www.cprdbd.org/dialogue-issue-4/

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Dialogue is published by the Center for Participatory
Research and Development-CPRD, with financial
support from the 'Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer
Entwicklungsdienst Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie
und Entwicklung e.V.' (i.e. Bread for the World-
Protestant Development Service), Germany. Financing
Project: N-BGD-2019-0037.

Views expressed here are of the authors and do not
necessarily reflect the views of CPRD and Bread for the
World-Protestant Development Service.

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Build back better! A call for a Green Deal and a green Marshall Plan for the Global South to tackle the two-fold Coronavirus and climate crises

Mr. Thomas gives a critical analysis on the combined effects of climate change and the ongoing pandemic on the Global South. He emphasized on the European Green Deal and Green Marshall Plan to tackle the ongoing global crises.

Summary

COVID-19 has thrown the world into an unprecedented crisis. Its public health and socioeconomic consequences will be painfully palpable for years. And so far, we have only experienced the tip of the iceberg. Whilst many nations of the Global South are still suffering from the first wave of infection, East Asia, Europe and North America are wisely bracing for a second wave due this fall, if not earlier. It would be foolish to count on the development of a vaccine before that, let alone in the quantities that would be required to lessen a second wave's impact. But even if a vaccine were to be developed in the next year, the social and economic devastations that the pandemic has already wrought across the world will have profound and long-lasting effects.

The rate of infection may be decreasing in most of Germany and Europe. The socioeconomic crisis, however, has only just begun. It will provoke a deep shift in the way the world is run. The world of tomorrow will no longer be the world that we knew before COVID-19. Many of our habits and approaches to solving problems will need to be rethought. The health care systems and supply chains that have focused on efficiency and cost-reduction so far will have to begin to prize flexibility and resilience. There is much to suggest that pandemics like the one caused by COVID-19 will reoccur in the future for many reasons, for example, because the habitats are shrinking of many of the wild animals that harbor zoonotic pathogens. Scientific projections suggest that by the end of this decade, the challenges that climate change will be confronting us with will dwarf those of the current COVID-19 crisis.



Photo credit: Reuters

Since the end of the Cold War, we in Germany and Europe—unlike in the developing world—have forgotten the extent to which our societies are in fact risk societies. This new Coronavirus threat, however, has returned to us a sense of risk in which the individual feels powerless. But that is not necessarily our fate. We can defeat it. And we need preventative action on the societal level, not collective denial. Changes, even painful ones, can be creative if they promise a new beginning.

COVID-19 is changing the world and undermining our societies in a way that parallels climate change. The difference, however, is that there is no end of climate change in sight, unlike of COVID-19, which eventually will subside when a vaccine is discovered or herd immunity is achieved. To deal with climate change, the only choice is containment at an early stage. But containment is precisely what the world, with a few positive exceptions like Taiwan, failed to do with COVID-19 because the vast majority of countries did not take the threat seriously soon enough. How much human suffering, and what economic damages and financial costs would humanity have been spared if the world had succeeded in containing COVID-19 as quickly and effectively as Taiwan had?

We must learn from our mistakes in our response to COVID-19 if we are to mitigate climate change. We must decisively limit global warming to 1.5°C. We have ten years for it, which is approximately the period that it will take us to fully process the economic and financial consequences of COVID-19. Our only choice is to link our strategies in dealing with the Coronavirus and climate crises. Any attempt to deal only with the former by relying on established approaches to monetary, fiscal, industrial, and economic policy, and thereby ignore the imperative for transformation in the face of climate change will inexorably end in defeat. Firstly, every further delay in undertaking ambitious climate action further diminishes the small window of time in which containment (that is, the limitation of global warming to 1.5°C) is at all possible. Secondly, the global costs involved in a recovery strategy for COVID-19 will be so high and will lead to so much debt that it will scarcely be possible to make similar or higher investments into climate change mitigation soon. And thirdly, conventional stimulus programs that ignore climate policy unavoidably will lead to stranded assets and bankruptcies due to no longer viable business models, to unemployment, social disintegration, poverty, and further political polarization.

"To deal with climate change, the only choice is containment at an early stage."

Conversely, we can overcome both the Coronavirus and the climate crises if we start on the right path today. We must create stimulus packages that focus on promoting sustainable, future-proof business models. We must raise instead of lower the ambition of our climate policies, and accelerate instead of delay the transformation of the energy, transportation, and agricultural sectors, as well as of our buildings and cities. Finally, we must couple these stimulus programs

with short-term emergency packages and long-term structural reform. This crucial decade could become a decade of transformation. We could contain the crisis of biodiversity, protect the planetary boundaries, and put an end to the harrowing increases in global inequality. If this opportunity is taken advantage of right now, humanity will one day be able to look back at the Coronavirus and climate crises, strengthened. Our success, however, depends on designing the right strategy, the characteristics of which will be expanded upon in the following.

Global challenges know no borders: We must act together, not as individual nations

‘Diese Krise kann kein Land alleine lösen’—‘This crisis cannot be solved by any one country’ declared the German chancellor Angela Merkel at the start of this year’s World Health Assembly in May. According to a poll by Forsa in mid-April 2020, three quarters of all Germans concur with her sentiment, and believe that a higher level of international collaboration will make the management of this crisis more successful.

The Coronavirus crisis has made plain the vulnerability of our societies, and the global economic system. No nation can deal with a crisis of this magnitude by itself, neither the public health, nor economic aspects of it. The world economy is too interdependent for any one country to be able extricate itself from its fabric. International cooperation must become qualitatively better, and strong dependencies in key sectors like health, energy, and food must be reassessed and diminished.

The same holds for dealing with climate change. No country is immune to the consequences of climate change, no country is by itself capable of withstanding the climate crisis. From that realization follows the need for far greater multilateral cooperation, and the Paris Agreement has created an effective and fair framework for all. Whoever undermines its integrity, resists its policies and bets on independent national approaches, is blind to the challenge of climate change, damages itself and others in the process, and is doomed to fail.

Science-based solutions instead of propaganda and lies

The enlightenment ideal and hallmark of modernity that not made-up truths, but evidence-based facts should determine political decisions and inform the handling of risk is being seriously questioned by our responses to climate change and COVID-19. In both cases, false information and conspiracies are being spread and quickly multiplied across social media to discredit the authority of experts. These

disinformation campaigns are being fueled by power and short-term profit seekers. They must be fought decisively to ensure that political solutions are based on science. That is a prerequisite both to fight the pandemic, as well as to contain climate change.

Prevention as a head start

The prevention of a catastrophe prevents untold suffering and is, by orders of magnitude, safer and cheaper than dealing with it and its consequences after the fact. In Taiwan, consistent preventative measures succeeded in dodging a wave of COVID-19 infections that would have strained the health care system for weeks in much the same way as those of Wuhan or New York which could not avoid already tens of thousands of deaths. In much the same way, to avoid uncontrollable and relentless climate change with unforeseeable consequences spanning all continents and many generations, it is imperative to do everything possible to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

No stronger than the weakest link in the chain

A society is as resistant and safe as its most vulnerable members. The same is true in a globalized world society. Risk groups bear the highest health risk, the poorest bear the highest economic risk. When for the latter neglecting social distancing becomes inevitable for economic reasons, the pandemic will become unstoppable. In much the same way, people will stop at no border when their only choice is to flee from the consequences of climate change. Whether we want it or not: we are all in the same boat. We can make the best of it and act in solidarity with each other, whether from a sense of altruism or naked self-preservation—or we will go down together. Whether it’s a pandemic or climate change: only with solidarity will make progress reliably.

The poorest are the worst affected. They deserve our utmost solidarity

UNDP, the United Nations Development Program projects the losses in income caused by lockdowns in developing countries to be at least \$220 billion. The pandemic risks developing into an economic and humanitarian crisis of unprecedented global extent. More than half of all jobs on the African continent could be lost. The world’s poorest could be thrown back by five to ten years of development progress. Climate change makes the same threats, but incomparably more gravely and on a far longer term.

Both crises immediately and existentially affect many billion people. In both cases, famines of biblical

proportions are to be feared. In the case of COVID-19, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) has warned that up to 130 million people in three dozen countries could die of starvation. In ten of these countries, a million people each are already acutely threatened by starvation because they lost the basis of their existence. This number could increase greatly as a result of a deep economic recession.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has counted five global recessions since World War II in 1975, 1982, 1991, and 2009. Of these, the last was by far the worst, with a decrease of 2.9% of world GDP in 2009. The recession caused by COVID-19, however, will dwarf that figure. As early as late March 2020, the Center for Economics and Business Research in Britain projected a decrease of world GDP of at least 4% as a result of this crisis. Even China, although already on its way to economic recovery, may perhaps achieve only very modest growth at all for 2020. As a result, in April, the Chinese government declined to set a growth target for this year for the first time in decades. In May, the head of the Federal Reserve warned of a recession in the U.S. deeper than ever experienced before in modern history if the country experiences a second wave of infection this fall.

It is to be expected that the overwhelming majority of developing nations will end lockdown measures by June 2020 at the latest to prevent an economic catastrophe, all at the cost of hundreds of thousands of deaths. The world will be divided into those countries that can afford to contain the pandemic and those that, out of economic necessity, will have to accept a premature opening. The situation of the climate crisis is comparable. Particularly those that have to invest in climate resilience because they are exposed to the highest risks can often not afford to take precautions against climate risks. Without enormous amounts of international support, in both cases, they risk a deadly spiral that will affect the poorest most severely.

Global challenges both required and possible systemic change

COVID-19 is a global threat more encompassing and immediate than anything else the world has experienced since World War II. The almost global lockdown has suddenly shut down large parts of public life. The personal habit changes that it precipitated are far-reaching. The predictable socioeconomic consequences that result from the lockdown and persistent changes will be disruptive. To enable something positive to grow out of this shock, all of our energies must be focused on a recovery that is future-proof, and, crucially, climate-proof. The required mobilization and effective realization of the transformational measures—from the short-term emergency aid to the mid-term stimulus programs to the long-term structural reforms—is only achievable in times of crises like this one. It requires strong and effective governance, a broad societal consensus, and a willingness to change individual behaviors. All of these conditions are present in the current Coronavirus crisis. They can be used creatively for a transformation that overcomes not only the Coronavirus, but also the climate crisis.

Fossil fuels will not survive COVID-19

In 2020, CO₂ emissions are projected to fall by 5-11%, possibly even more because of the pandemic. The reason is history's greatest single drop in demand for fossil fuels. The negative prices for crude oil achieved in the short term as a result of collapsing futures contracts demonstrate the extent of the dreadful economic state fossil fuel corporations are in, whose business model is also being undercut by competitive renewable energies. In the fight to maintain competitiveness, many fossil fuel companies have accepted high risks and ever-growing new rounds of debt. That is especially the case for the U.S. fracking industry. The industry's 27 largest producers alone have had to service \$26

"We must decisively limit global warming to 1.5°C. We have ten years for it, which is approximately the period that it will take us to fully process the economic and financial consequences of COVID-19."

billion in credits.

Meanwhile, the industry's total debt exceeds \$100 billion (Ross, 2020). But the U.S. coal industry is likewise financially pinned to the wall, so to speak. It is beset by a free fall in demand, especially from its largest industrial customers and persistent resistance to spending from consumers as a result of skyrocketing mass unemployment. Investment markets are witnessing massive losses of capital. Institutional investors are making divestment decisions, seemingly a never-ending stream of them. Debts, the competitiveness of renewables, significant investments flowing into hydrogen fuel technologies, and rising prices on CO₂ emissions all are additionally contributing to a lasting dampening of the industry's demand for coal.

The oil industry is similarly plagued, but it also suffers from a collapse in demand from the industrial sector as well as all branches of the transport sector. Although fuel stores are full to the brim and tankers everywhere are becoming floating fuel stores, it is not currently expected that economic recovery will be quick or that air and marine travel will rise to their pre-crisis levels of activity anytime soon. In the face of a foreseeable longer-term recession, the fossil fuel industry is fighting for its very survival. Without enormous bail-outs, which in the U.S., for example, would come at the price of a no less dramatic further ballooning of national debt, they cannot survive. And even then, the fossil fuel industry's capacity to return to its previous highs is questionable. Most fossil fuel corporations will not survive the Coronavirus crisis.

In order to fill the emerging gap in energy supply quickly, security, and cheaply, it is crucial to design proper stimulus packages. With strategic investments

into technologies for the future in energy production, efficiency, mobility, and infrastructure, we can bring the economy back onto its feet, but also create future-proof jobs and accelerate the transformation into a carbon-neutral world.

A green stimulus package is the motor of an economic transformation into a carbon-free and climate-resistant future. It must be national, European, and global

Without the largest economic stimulus program in history, an unfathomable number of companies will go bankrupt, hundreds of millions of jobs will be lost, and millions of human fates will worsen all over the world, but especially in those place where lockdowns were not enforced long enough. The hardest-hit are countries in the Global South, where almost all jobs are in the informal sector, where social safety nets are at best rudimentary, where people have either no savings at all or only insufficient ones, where supply chains, for example in the textiles industry, are the first links to break. To support those economies with stimulus packages is not only an ethical imperative of global solidarity. It also helps the economies of the Global North that otherwise risks losing their supply chains as well, resulting in inevitable economic damages.

But only if the economic and financial measures taken to fight the Coronavirus crisis are coupled with a transformation of our economies into a carbon-neutral and climate-resistant ones will the jobs that may be generated by the stimulus program be sustainable. The agricultural sector must be reformed, biodiversity protected, cities made more resilient and livable. Digitalization must be pushed



Photo credit: United News Bangladesh



Photo credit: US News

forward and critical infrastructure sectors such as the healthcare must be made more resistant to crises. If the largest aid package in history—as of April 15, 2020, \$8 trillion have been earmarked—is not made to ultimately focus on achieving carbon neutrality, there will be a rollback to the dirty technologies that have precipitated our predicament. The window in which we can still contain global warming to 1.5°C will be forever closed.

In the following weeks, the world will be deciding whether the COVID-19 aid and stimulus packages are supporting or undermining the goals of the Paris Agreement's climate targets. The head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva, decided that the IMF by the end of May will have made decisions on over 50 of the over 100 financial aid applications at the meeting of the G20's finance and central bank ministers in early May. Soon it will be clear how dozens of nations that have been granted freezes in debt payments choose to invest the money. In the face of further measures of the IMF, Georgieva cautioned that

[We will need to step up even more. As you know, we project a deep recession in 2020 and only a partial recovery in 2021. To help countries steer through the depth of the recession and support their recovery, we are prepared to use our full toolbox and \$ 1 trillion firepower [...]. Second, to assist our low-income countries, we plan to triple our concessional lending. [...] Third, we will concentrate both lending and policy support to reduce the scarring of the economy caused by bankruptcies and unemployment, in order to support a speedy recovery. And, [...] to help our members steer through this crisis and come out of it more resilient.]

At the Petersberg Climate Dialogue, Georgieva stressed that these measures must additionally serve the fight against climate change:

[It would be a mistake to 'pause' action on climate change while responding to coronavirus. We are about to deploy enormous, gigantic fiscal stimulus and we can do it in a way that we tackle both crises at the same time... If our world is to come out of this [coronavirus] crisis more resilient, we must do everything in our power to make it a green recovery.]

Likewise, in April the World Bank began to steer investment decisions in the context of recovery programs toward, on the one hand, strengthening resilience and climate-relevant adaptation capacity, as well as decarbonisation efforts, and on the other, on sustainable development. They developed a checklist to evaluate the projects based on the following criteria:

- Is the intervention consistent with and supportive of existing long-term decarbonization targets and strategies? (If such targets and strategies do not exist, does the intervention contribute to the respective government's

‘Nationally Determined Contribution’ and the eventual decarbonization of the economic system?)

- Does the intervention create or amplify a lock-in of carbon or energy-intensive development patterns, or does it represent a future stranded asset risk due to decarbonization, technology change or other market trends?
- Does the intervention remove or reduce financial market, tax, and regulatory obstacles to decarbonization?
- Does the intervention contribute to developing or piloting low-carbon technologies, making them more widely available, or reducing their cost?
- Does the intervention provide the technical means to better integrate or employ low-carbon technologies or strategies?
- Does the intervention increase local or national energy security?

If these criteria are applied to all investments—backed up with measurable indicators of progress, this stimulus round could well accelerate decarbonisation efforts. Moreover, the IMF’s criteria make sound economic sense, as IRENA, the International Renewable Energy Agency, has shown in their Global Renewables Outlook in April 2020 (IRENA, 2020). They projected that, although full decarbonisation would cost \$120 trillion by 2050 in the energy sector alone, it would also create millions of new jobs and would increase world GDP by \$98 trillion versus a ‘business as usual’ scenario.

If the international community can invest over \$10 trillion of tax payers’ money to deal with COVID-19 and thereby accept unimaginable amounts of debt—debt that, moreover, will seriously restrict governments’ investment options over the next two decades—, it is more than legitimate to demand that these investments be made in such a way that not only fights the Coronavirus crisis, but also the climate crisis, which will present a far larger problem for current millennials and future generations. From this principle, two criteria in fact suffice to ensure an appropriate recovery plan:

1. Accordance with the climate targets of the Paris Agreement, including the halving of global emissions by 2030 to give us a fair shot at avoiding global warming above 1.5°C. That implies that a carbon budget must be determined for each country. At the very least, the G20 countries that produce four fifths of global emissions, as well as all other OECD countries and upper middle income countries must make absolute and not just relative deep cuts to their emissions across all sectors. The Climate Action

Tracker (CAT) has put forward good guidelines in this respect (Climate Action Tracker, 2020).

The areas of activity that would come into question include a ramping up of renewable energy production and storage, improvements in efficiency of buildings and industry, scaling of the use of green hydrogen technology, smart energy systems, transformation of cities, climate-friendly transportation for both people and goods, and improving the sustainability of agricultural practices. Many of the requisite technologies are almost ready to enter the market. They require, however, the planning security that a level economic playing field guarantees, as well as some initial funding to achieve a quick breakthrough. Stimulus programs that set clear and strategic goals make such projects more interesting to private investors.

2. Internationally coordinated stimulus packages must also take into account the needs of the Global South, especially those on the African continent that has the youngest and fastest-growing, but also poorest population. Multilateral development banks, but also governmental and private donors are called upon to make available the necessary capital at fair conditions in the form of subsidies or very cheap, long-term credits for investment in resilience infrastructure, and the industries of the future. In this respect, the experiences from the Marshall Plan can be learned from. Then as much as today, it has become essential to see the big picture and leave nobody behind.

A forward-looking design of the German stimulus program would secure jobs, modernize our economy, and be good for our international partners

No country in Europe and hardly any country elsewhere is protecting its economy to an extent similar that Germany is. That is why Germany’s response measures are being very closely watched, both in Germany and in the rest of the world. Are they forward-looking? Are they socially balanced? Are the burdens shared fairly? Do they support Germany’s cooperation with European and other global partners?

‘Der Doppelte Booster’ (‘the double booster’), a study by the think tanks Agora Energiewende and Agora Verkehrswende has shown how a stimulus program of over €100 billion could be made to achieve relief from the Coronavirus crisis at the same time as working toward climate targets (Agora, 2020). The ‘double booster’ would proceed by a reformation

BOX 1: 'European Green Deal'

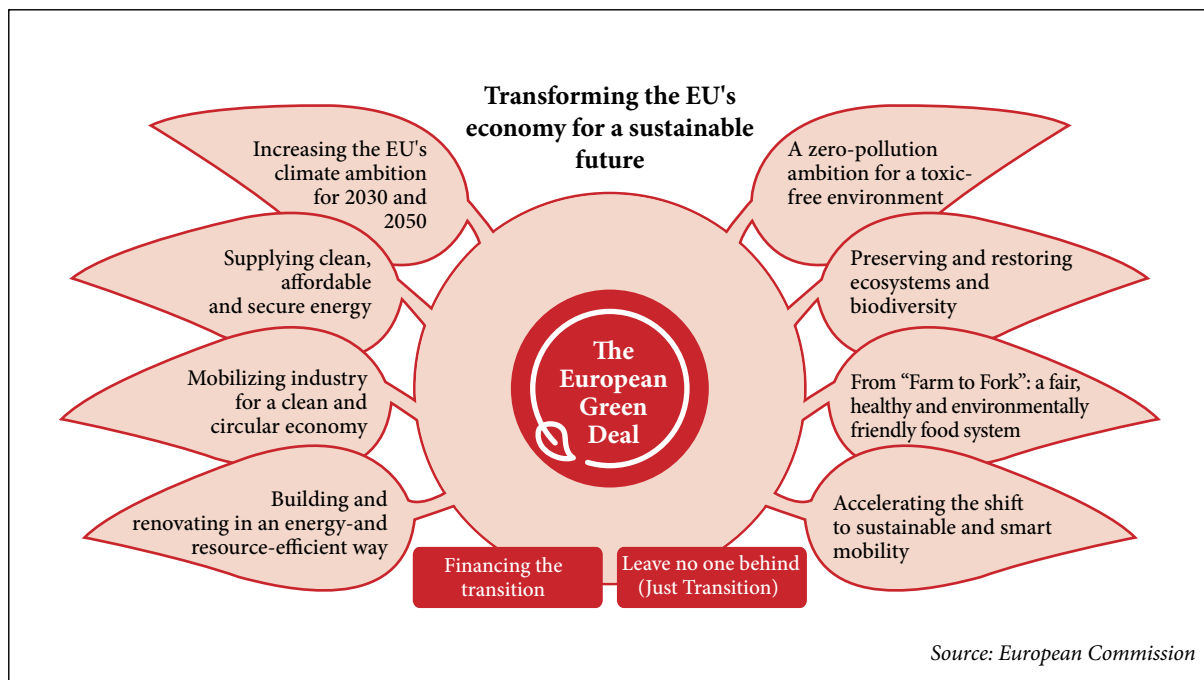
Aim/Goal	Policy Areas/ Specific Proposals	Significance	Impacts	Limitations
• Make European Union 'climate neutral' by 2050. • To make EU's economy sustainable; • Boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy; • Stop climate change; • Regress biodiversity loss; • Cut pollution; reductions in carbon emissions.	○ Circular Economy ○ Building Renovation ○ Zero Pollution ○ Ecosystem & Biodiversity ○ Farm to fork strategy ○ Transport ○ Money ○ R&D innovation	- Stimulates an eco-innovation - Makes sustainable economy for European economy - Aims to turn climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas - Creates scope for green and inclusive economy	Economic Impact- provide scope for economic recovery and transform EU's economic model; promote sustainable development Environmental Impact- reduce carbon footprint; help to achieve carbon neutrality; promote low carbon technologies; phase down climate-warming.	Legal Limitations- Lack of consensus from EU member states regarding climate law, target's adjustment and the agenda of the goal. Financial Limitations- financial allocation of the Deal is unclear; possibility of 'greenwashing' of the allocated funds; in absence of sustained international cooperation, introduction of carbon border tax may hinder exports from the Global South and cause 'tariff wars' with other major economies.

of the law on renewable energies (Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz (EEG)); a step, moreover, which has already been recommended by the environmental ministry (Bundesumweltamt) and promoted by various business associations (Handelsblatt, 2020). It would strengthen the purchasing power and lower the prices for small and mid-size firms, would change the regulations surrounding building renovations to encourage them to more easily be updated to higher efficiency standards. Industrial sectors would receive investment support to improve their energy efficiency. Green hydrogen would be pushed as the fuel of the future, along with an electrification of all forms of mobility. A European investment program, accelerated environmental licensing and qualification programs, as well as many other elements would be promoted. Only by taking such steps will the currently unfolding bailout avoid locking into place industries and business models that are irreconcilable with plans to achieve decarbonisation by 2050. Such an investment program would be designed for long-term effect and would be calculated to be compatible with the European Green Deal. But for it to become trendsetting, it must happen fast. Fresh capital must be made available quickly.

"Diese Krise kann kein Land alleine lösen"—'This crisis cannot be solved by any one country' declared the German chancellor Angela Merkel at the start of this year's World Health Assembly in May."

—Angela Merkel
German Chancellor

Many corporations support a green stimulus program. They demand that climate targets be not ignored during the crisis, but conversely that reforms be accelerated. If governments' investments are not coupled with the European Green Deal and the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, stranded assets will be the consequence. 5'000 members of the Entrepreneurs4Future have advocated the creation of a Transformation Fund for climate investments, an acceleration of the deployment of renewable energies, an increase and expansion of CO₂ charges, minimum prices for emissions trading, and other measures in the sectors of transportation, efficiency, and automation, all complemented with further support for developing countries.



The solution must be European

A quick and sustainable economic recovery can only succeed if the effort proceeds across Europe and is built on European solidarity and cooperation. That requires its member states to prioritize the big picture over national interests. On the short term, the economically more powerful countries will have to make larger contributions. The economically poorer countries, however, will have to accept that these investments are targeted very specifically on greening their economies. A powerful start of the European Green Deal with a total volume of €1 trillion over the next 10 years, combined with a massive program of the European Central Bank to purchase bonds of the same extent this year will give the European economy the necessary push to not only get out of the recession but also make great leaps toward carbon neutrality.

Ottmar Edenhofer, the director of the Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung (PIK) is to be applauded for demanding, as part of the recovery program, the creation of a European investment Fund which would be both extremely long-term (some fifty years) as well as low in interest (e.g. 1%) to make available high-risk capital for investments in sustainable, climate-protecting projects. The European Union is at its most critical moment in history. It must decide to either concentrate all its efforts and make it out of the crisis, or else fall apart. If the wrong decisions are taken now, the European Union could become history within a year, or become weakened to the point of no return. In that case, everybody would end up losing out, including the solvent member states. Not even the

economically most powerful of them all, Germany, could compete in a global economy by itself, especially as the U.S. and China wrestle to become the world's preeminent superpower. In this situation, Europe is more dependent than ever on cooperation to not lose independence in this global power struggle. The Coronavirus crisis is an accelerator in this respect.

A plea for a green Marshall Plan for the Global South

China has begun making massive investments into the technologies of the future such as 5G networks and charging infrastructure for electric mobility. If China continues along these lines, it will become the market leader by 2030 in these and other areas such as AI, biotech and renewable energies.

For the overwhelming majority of developing countries, in contrast, the two-fold Coronavirus and climate crises threaten to undo five to ten years of development successes, and thereby miss the opportunity to become an integral part of the world of the future. Already dramatic global inequality would further grow and thus open the door to new conflicts between and within countries. This would additionally fuel nationalism and populism, which have been on the rise since the 2010s, and thus weaken the global and multilateral capacity to deal with this and other crises.

The Coronavirus crisis discredits populists because they have no solutions to offer. If Europe, together with other countries like Canada and New Zealand put together a Green Marshall Plan that supported

developing countries in areas like renewable energies, sustainable land and resource use, climate resilient infrastructure, health care, and digital networks and technologies, these countries will overcome the crisis more quickly. That will strengthen European partnerships, not only economically, and will take away the populists' support.

A Global Green Investment Fund could be created along the lines of the European Investment Fund advocated for by Edenhofer: Very long-term and cheap capital to fund projects in the Global South that support the Paris Agreement, SDGs, biodiversity, and marine protection. Such a fund would have to be open to contributions from foundations, private investors, and institutional lenders, all also coming from developing countries themselves. Cooperation with multilateral development banks could further strengthen the investment fund and result in a green Marshall Plan for the Global South. The initial capitalisation of the fund should be at least €100 billion. Similar to the Marshall Plan after World War II, the fund must leverage substantial private and public support in the Global South to increase the investment volume. Such a fund would be an important addition to the short-term aid, emergency credit and debt relief that may be critical to ensure the stability of societies and economies right now, but do little or nothing to make societies and economies more sustainable in the long term. A fund, however, would enable investments that are connected with longer-term goals, such as a reduction of subsidies for fossil fuels, a long-term strategy (LTS) for decarbonization, and a 100% renewable energy supply system, much like the 'double booster' strategy for Germany.

A green investment fund would also be an appropriate answer to the appeal of the UN general secretary, who reminded us that

[We have a responsibility to recover better than after the financial crisis in 2008. We have a framework for action – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We must keep our promises for people and planet.]

The strengthening of (climate) resilience as a solid element of crisis response

COVID-19 has demonstrated the vulnerability of our globalized world, despite all the achievements of modernity. The consequences of the pandemic have made every economic empire tremble, have destroyed fortunes, and are threatening the sources of income of billions of people. In addition to the healthcare, economic, social and political consequences, the psychological ones will have lasting consequences. Until recently, the promise of an ever-improving future was taken for granted in many parts of the world. But this dream of development as a unidirectional stream toward progress and growth is being seriously threatened by the Coronavirus crisis. We are now experiencing what always has been and always will remain possible. At any time there could be a pandemic of this extent. And yet, this is all just a taste of the damage that the climate crisis will inflict. Both the pandemic and the climate crisis proceed in just the same way: by severing the connections that our complex system of global economic interdependencies live by. What that really means has never been more palpable than today.

To 'build back better' means to improve our resilience with respect to risks through preventative action so that future damages and expectable shocks can be absorbed. Health care systems must be improved by arming populations with emergency pharmaceuticals. Supply chains must be strengthened by taking down one-sided economic dependencies. To build resilience against the next pandemic is as important as building climate resilience.



Photo credit: carbonbrief.org

Although emissions reductions promise long-term protection, a quick decarbonization will not be sufficient because many damages have already become unavoidable, even if we limit global warming to 1.5°C. That is the reason why the climate resilience of our critical infrastructure on the coasts and in the cities, but also in agriculture and water supply is crucial. These considerations must be reflected in recovery programs.

The crisis is an opportunity for innovation

Crises change mindsets and generate the willingness to make radical steps. That is an opportunity. Even the International Energy Agency (IEA), which is not exactly famous for being a 'green' institution is calling on governments to take advantage of this 'historic opportunity' to aggressively accelerate the transition to clean energies through the stimulus programs that are being drawn up everywhere (Farand, 2020a). Mark Carney, the head of the Bank of England, calls the zero-emissions goal the greatest economic opportunity of our times, adding that 'We need fifty shades of green to catalyse and support all companies toward net zero' (Farand, 2020b). For example, support in the automotive industry should be made dependent on electrification efforts.

Digitalization will continue. Patterns of mobility will continue to change. We recognise the opportunities of remote working, and also recognize that our working habits will continue to change in innovating ways after the pandemic. We can expect more videoconferences and work from home, fewer business trips, more local and regional travel, a strengthening of shorter and more diversified supply chains, decentralised procurement strategies, a strengthening of circular economies, a prizing of flexibility as the foundation for resilience, a new perspective on what really are essential goods and services, and higher investments into healthcare, education, research, and food.

In order for the opportunities for innovation to be used effectively, however, the framework

for transformation must be changed fundamentally. One-off stimulus packages do not suffice. For their effect to not dissipate after a few years, we need long-term structural reforms. That will lead to resistance from those whose business models are not future-proof. To achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050, we will have to work continuously until then to succeed in restructuring the electrical grid entirely. Storage capacity will have to be ramped up. A new regulatory framework will have to be created to accelerate the electrification of heating, transportation

and industrial processes. Unfortunately, this development will have to contend with a crash in the price of crude oil that will bring about a long-term depression of fossil fuel prices, which in turn will somewhat reduce incentives to switch to renewable and strive for efficiency. Initial funding will be critical, as well as improved conditions for investment, minimum prices for CO₂ across all sectors, and further measures to improve planning and investment security. That is the only way to accelerate the transition to a green economy and to avoid the rollback that fossil fuels executives are so fervently hoping for.

May a decade of transformation follow the lost decade of the 2010s

The 2010s were characterized by a resurgence of nationalism that plunged multilateralism into a deep crisis. It saw the renaissance of populism to conspiracy theories that have tried to undermine the role of science and science-based politics; a growing level of social aggression at the price of tolerance, democracy, minorities, and human rights; a dramatic growth of economic inequality in favor of a few global superrich; and, finally, an amazing increase of climate risks resulting from a lost decade of weakening efforts to lower global emissions. The emissions gap has widened so far that, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C, we will have to have reduce emissions by 7% per year this decade, which is double the reductions that we would have had to make if we had started in earnest in 2010 (UNEP, 2020).

The Coronavirus crisis, however, could make it easier to tackle this challenge, but not because of the emissions reductions that accompany it. The reason is that it can alter our awareness of risk, and thus may heighten our willingness to make the greatest efforts possible to prevent the next catastrophe. It is not, however, a sure-fire success. It depends on our willingness to act transformationally. Let's do our part!

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About the Author

"The hardest-hit are countries in the Global South, where almost all jobs are in the informal sector, where social safety nets are at best rudimentary, where people have either no savings at all or only insufficient ones, where supply chains, for example in the textiles industry, are the first links to break."

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COVID-19 and its Socio-Economic Challenges in Bangladesh

Dr. Hoimonti Barua provides an overview on the COVID-19 induced socio-economic challenges in Bangladesh. She further explains the health care scenarios and COVID-19 management issues in the country.

Summary

Pandemics are by and large outbreaks of diseases that become widespread due to human-to-human transmission of the contagion. Currently, the world is experiencing a global health emergency that is decimating lives and spreading agony. Existence of billions of people is upended by the coronavirus pandemic across the globe. It is a human, social and economic crisis; an onslaught on the fundamental essence of societies. The corona virus-related crisis pummeled on health, society, economy, and security of Bangladesh. The purpose of this paper is to highlight its impacts on Bangladesh which is more than a health crisis. The paper discusses the pandemic's effect on the economy of Bangladesh which has had collateral consequences on the social aspects and community living in this developing country. Bangladesh with steady economic growth was predicted to become a middle-income nation. This paper explores the limitations and challenges in the context of the current scenario. At a moment when there is no cure at hand, the crisis is most likely to continue for longer; hence it is essential to probe Bangladesh's status from every aspect.

Background

Pandemics are by and large outbreaks of diseases that become widespread due to human-to-human transmission of the contagion. Co-evolution of humans and pathogens, within the same organic ecosystem is like a corresponding evolutionary relation. Biological invasions have been a consistent aspect all through the history of humans and are associated firmly to human actions (Santini et al. 2017:647). Pandemics have been a part of the civilization for time immemorial. Whether it was the Antoine Plague in the Italian peninsula (165-180 A.D), the Black Death (1331-1353) in Western Europe and the Mediterranean or the Spanish Flu pandemic (1918-1920) decimating 50-100 million people and affecting 500 million population worldwide, pandemics have had a long history (Huremović, 2019), killing thousands of lives every time. The more recent ones of the centuries, the Hong Kong Flu, SARS, H7N9, Ebola, etc. and the covid-19 being the most recent one and of utmost significance. Currently, the human race is experiencing a global health emergency that is mercilessly eliminating lives and spreading agony. Existence of billions of people is upended by the coronavirus pandemic across the globe not only by the direct pain from lives lost but also by the ripple effect caused by its detrimental results which are more than barely a health crisis. It is a human, social and economic crisis; an onslaught on the fundamental essence of societies.

In South Asia, infectious diseases (ID) have invariably been a common reason for death. Epidemics consistently returned in regular decennary intervals to cause mass destruction. Bangash (2020) argues the Indian-origin cholera epidemic in 1817-21 took 18 million lives in (undivided) India, followed

by the Bubonic plague of 1896-1901 with more than 10 million population perished. Still, the coronavirus pandemic has engendered manifold reactions from around the world. It is of importance especially in this era because it is the first global epidemic of such a magnitude in the last hundred years since the influenza of 1918-19 that has decimated 50 million people at the time and still decimating thousands each year globally. Needless to say, after a century, an insufficient 'historical or institutional memory' is left to grapple with a global medical-emergency of such enormity.

The Covid-19 or the Novel Corona Virus, a highly infectious disease originated from Wuhan, in Hubei province of China came to light in November 2019. The trepidations increased due to the rapid shift of the outbreak epicenter from China to Europe followed by the United States with maximal numbers of mortality. South Asia is home to one-fourth of the total population of the world with 1.9 billion people (Worldometer, 2020). Here the pandemics worst blow is impeding the region poorly. It has been more than six months since the outbreak in early March 2020 in South Asia with more than 5, 29,743 infected and 12,362 cases of death and the cases of morbidity has not been uniform throughout the region. Many South Asian countries, barring India have recorded lower death counts despite their poor healthcare system and high population and poverty rates. Specific numbers of cases during an ongoing phase is unattainable; however, as of September Bangladesh has 3, 57,000 cases with 5,093 deaths (Ibid.). The number of infected and mortalities may vary from region to region but the economic decline is a shared-shock felt across the globe by small and big nations alike.

History has established recurrently that pandemics indubitably have had long term bearings in people's lives and the novel corona virus is not an exception. The corona virus related crisis pummeled on health, society, economy, and security of communities both regionally and globally (Qiu et al., 2017:3), and this essay highlights those social and economic impacts of the disease in Bangladesh.

Social and Economic Effects of Covid-19 in Bangladesh

At this juncture, the Covid-19 unsympathetically reminds us that pandemics are not only biological but political and global in nature and have reverberations on all. The unprecedented pandemic has overwhelmed the healthcare systems and devastated the economic solidities of the region. Massive detrimental effects, followed by the string of morbidity cases on the society, economy, well-being and productivity of the people of Bangladesh have been felt

like any other countries in the world.

In the first place, the pandemic demands limitations on movements as a prerequisite to minimize the chain of contamination. Living or residing in close proximity of an affected individual pose maximum life threat. In the earlier times, plagued villages were sealed off to curtail proliferation to the rest of the societies. But, the spread of the recent infectious disease is more global, and, it reached rather swiftly in cities and other countries, economically debilitated even outlying regions that rely on urban markets. Qiu et al. (2017) refers that these are threatening infectious diseases, capable of cross-border movements as has been evinced by HIV, H1N1, H5N1, and SARS epidemics and now the Covid-19 which took the shape of a pandemic. Therefore to control the ongoing health quandary, World Health Organisation (WHO) firmly advocated ban on travel and strictly practice social distancing.

At the outset of a new type of ID epidemic, when the agencies of transmission are still unestablished, the safest measure adopted is isolation or quarantine (Malhotra, 2020; Rakesh, 2016). These are medical measures widely practiced for IDs. Interestingly, the age-old measures like 'isolation' and 'quarantine' gained a new momentum and have become the new buzzword along with two other terms 'lockdown' and 'social distancing'. With an aim to control the spread of the disease among communities, most nations, beginning with China, followed by the United States, United Kingdom, Europe and then the rest of the world, began to observe extensive lockdowns at international, regional and community levels.

An uncontrolled epidemic destroys the moral health of a nation and compromises national security. While it is pivotal to respond swiftly to a spreading pandemic, pushing people with unprepared, unplanned rules have unintentional yet ruinous consequences. Yet, to control its spread the government of Bangladesh declared a nationwide lockdown for two months from March 24 till May 30, 2020. So, what commenced as a health emergency became a matter of grave socio-economic concern. The effects of pandemics on a society and its economies are complex and interrelated in nature. The impacts are manifold which may be determined by various factors like income, hierarchies of life-style, employment or earning securities, mental health etc. All these factors are so innate to each other that disturbance on one automatically pulls in the other aspects. South Asian countries whether agriculture, tourism or industry based have fallen victim to the global economic downturn. According to the World Bank (2020), *"every region is subject to substantial growth downgrades."* The impact of this decline besides the economies will affect years of developmental achievements by pushing millions of people back to poverty and employment uncertainties. Past



Photo credit: Reuters

seven decades entailed construction, proliferation and consolidation of a global liberal international economic order, which appear to be in the midst of a questionable future.

For the underprivileged category of population, maintaining continuous socio-economic security is a life-long challenge. Observing lockdown or social distancing, especially by the poor community becomes an additional challenge. Bangladesh is a small and extremely densely populated country of 169 million people with a population density of 1,179 people per square kilometers as of June 2020 (World Population Review, 2020). The infrastructure and healthcare facilities are substandard and unreliable which make the life in the region vulnerable, exposed and impuissant to this invisible enemy. According to the UNDP, number of urban poor in all urban centres is 9 million, of which 5 million are alone in Dhaka (Mamun, 2020). A perturbing headcount of 6, 50,000 people residing in 3,394 slums in the capital suggest they live in overcrowded slums with large families cramped in very tiny rooms (Dhaka Tribune, 2020). It is self-explanatory that concepts like social-distancing or isolation come across as ornamental popular jargons, infeasible to the settings of their residence or lifestyle.

Most of these people living in urban-slums are low-income professionals like day laborers, rickshaw pullers, construction and factory workers, house-helps, restaurant workers and shop assistants, transport workers, bhangari [plastic] workers, petty business owners etc. Kamruzzaman opines according to a joint study was conducted by Power and Participation Research Center (PPRC) and BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) on 5,471 slum households that suggested that since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus and imposition of lockdown the average income of these people reduced by 80 percent (Andalou Agency, 2020). The poorer constituents of the populace have taken a substantial impetus of the economic downfall with comparatively larger income shocks. Especially for the most necessitous

and penurious ones, source of income has been destroyed entirely. For instance, the report generated by the PPRC and BIGD suggested a drop of 82 percent in per capita income that is BDT 27 (\$0.32) which was BDT 108 (\$1.30) before the pandemic hit the country (Ibid.). Inadequate income forced the vulnerable people to reduce food consumption to subsist through the crisis triggered by the pandemic.

Negative impact on one's source of earnings varies with the nature of occupation. The South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) model points out that a large division, i.e. 43 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture and food-related professions. Rural livelihood remains strongly dependent on agriculture, live-stock-rearing, and fish-cultivation. Food security of the country is analogous to rural livelihood. Urban food markets depend on farmers and farmers depend on the transfer of goods through the transport system. Decreased movement of goods increases the asymmetrical distribution of cost between the farmer and the vendor leaving the farmers more vulnerable in terms of financial gain. Restrictions on movements and 'basic aversion behavior' by workers have high chances of impeding farming. Quarantine measures limit access to market, and supply chain disruptions in food availability.

On the demand side, loss of purchasing power change people's eating patterns reduces capacity to purchase or panic purchases of food that can break the supply chain. Trepidations related to food security gave rise to inflation, limited access to items and food-riot; although no such food riot was noticed in Bangladesh. As a result, countries with high levels of food insecurity are generally more susceptible to greater disparities.

According to Dr. Arif Hussain, Chief Economist and Director of Food Security Analysis and Trends Service at United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Rome, in some contexts, "the economic consequences of this disease could end up hurting more people than the disease itself", and this applies to Bangladesh to a great extent (Beltrami, 2020). Aforesaid, the country was brought under a lockdown for two months. Nevertheless, a shutdown in Bangladesh is very different from the shutdown of global north or the western nations. The disease led panic caused large-scale economic cost, disproportionate to the number of cases. Urban livelihood on the contrary is based

on industrial sources. So, the other notable sections such as the garment factories (16 percent), retail business (11 percent), transportation (10 percent) and construction sector (7 percent) (Financial Express, 2020) were hit in various proportions. The ramifications of this setback have dreadfully affected Bangladesh in multiple ways.

The economy of Bangladesh is based fundamentally on the 2Rs – remittance and ready-made garments (RMG). However, private sectors, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and leather and shrimp export dependent on the European Union (EU) are major contributors to the economy. The emergence and rapid proliferation of novel corona virus has affected the transmission channels of a progressive economy of Bangladesh. Brian Wong opines, “a global recession has hit which is likely to be worse than 2008 and it will bring about political uncertainties along with critical non-traditional security threats. The pandemic is going to end at its own course...far reaching for a country like Bangladesh” (WHO, 2020).

Bangladesh, at present, a lower middle-income country had a steady economic growth rate until the end of 2019 (World Bank, 2020). Giménez et al. (2014) argued that the Vision 2021 and the associated Perspective Plan 2010-2021 adopted by Bangladeshi government outlined a series of developmental goals for 2021. The economy was expected to grow at 8 percent forecasted by the Asian Development Bank; now the predictions by International Monetary Fund and World Bank are at a pessimistic 2 percent (Global Times, 2020; International Monetary Fund, 2020). The country's recent economic growth trajectory exhibited every potential to rise as a Middle-Income country by 2024, until the whole world was brought to a standstill by the Covid-19 crisis.

The major economic players have been hit abominably, and Bangladesh began to experience the shockwaves since early March. The export outflow has stopped with the withdrawal of investment flows from the developing nations. Massive financial deprivation is experienced due to shutting factories. Many RMG factory owners lost several global orders, many forced to shut down. According to the report by the Centre for Global Workers' Right of Penn State University and the Worker Rights Consortium around 58 percent of clothing suppliers of Bangladesh have terminated operations. International buyers cancelled 72 percent orders, declined to pay the production cost of about 91 percent and repudiated to compensate the cost of raw material purchased by the suppliers. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) divulged about the product cancellation from Bangladeshi garment factories worth \$3 billion by the partner fashion companies. The BGMEA believe the actual figure would be higher than the current figure. Import inflow particularly of raw materials is facing hold-ups; principally because they are reliant on imported raw materials the supply of which has been acutely affected after non-functional ports. Closed borders, shipments and ports have created surfeit and financial losses for many businesses. Bangladesh earns a substantial amount from remittances sent by their diaspora. Earnings from remittance stood at \$18.32 billion at the end of 2019 (New Age Business, 2020). Remittances earnings are weighed down as the remittance senders are being sent back home. The aviation sector suffered a job loss by 9 per cent, salary and benefit cuts affecting more than five thousand employees. The International Air Transport Association foresees a net loss of \$39 billion in June 2020 (Bangladesh Monitor, 2020). The closedown of tourism and travel is likely to wipe out billions from the aviation operators; out-migration, tourist arrivals and departures are ceased; circulation of investments are facing growing precariousness and these are disintegrating the various other interconnected sectors.

"History has established recurrently that pandemics indubitably have had long term bearings in people's lives and the novel corona virus is not an exception."

The damage has been felt especially in terms of poverty. In 2019, poverty rate of Bangladesh was at 20.5 percent. According to SANEM's predictions now it is believed to increase to be 41 percent, what it was a decade back. This suggests Bangladesh's achievements of poverty reduction over the last decade will be completely lost (The Business Standards, 2020). To add to the woes, a percentage of salaried populations are among the sufferers. Many have encountered salary cuts, job loss, and termination of contracts, unpaid leaves, and job uncertainties and also halt in recruitments. So there are an increasing income insecurity Bangladeshi people encountering.

Health-care Interventions in the Covid-19 Management

A timely health-care intervention is a pre-requisite during health related emergencies. Bangladeshi healthcare infrastructure is poor and its response to address the situation was exceedingly sluggish. It clearly shows their incapacities of tackling this gigantic disaster. Although the number of testing has increased than before, it is still relatively low. There is a huge gap in terms of testing, contact tracing and treating along with the evident resource constraints. It has become an impossible mission for the government of Bangladesh to implement a lockdown or encourage its citizens a 'social distancing'. In an over populated country with an outburst of urban slums, not only social distancing is a luxurious concept, so is washing hands and clothes continuously as a safety measure. Insufficient financial resources coupled with poor healthcare facilities and laggard preparedness to fight against Covid-19 has brought far-reaching challenges in front of the country. At the community level, a psycho-social crisis is building up like hopelessness, anxiety, fear, depression etc.

The pandemic has spread in Bangladesh and its end is uncertain. The ramifications of the corona virus have affected the poor, lower middle-class, middle-class and the rich simultaneously although in varying proportions. For the destitute the struggle is more

as they struggle between 'hunger vs. health'. The government will encounter continuous dilemma to choose between 'saving lives or saving livelihoods' because both are inseparable and the biggest challenge lies in balancing all these factors perfectly.

Conclusion

Pandemics take human lives, affect societies deeply and have profound consequences due to its large-scale outbreak. At various levels, a laidback approach of the government of Bangladesh has raised critical questions about the methodology of their preparedness. A nonchalant approach of the lawmakers and confused attitude of healthcare ministers and experts to enforce early disaster management mechanisms has put the country at risk which is continuously experiencing numbers of death and infected. Their miscalculation and error are further lacerating Bangladeshi lives. Although enough time was in hand, to learn from the successful nations, prepare healthcare facilities with proper equipments, train the medical operatives, unfortunately may have been under-utilized. Corona virus has proved that outbreak of a pandemic do not essentially occur where health system are the weakest, e.g. the case of USA.

Despite a hyper-activity among the academics, there are uncertainties because epidemiologists and scientist have not been able to find a way out to cure the disease. The pandemic has divulged the disadvantages of expansive international integration, over-reliance on foreign sources, foreign travellers, and creating a condition to legitimise national restrictions on global movement of people and trade. Not only is the South Asian region vulnerable, in fact high levels of poverty, illiteracy, lack of seriousness of the citizens, dense population and gaps in healthcare facilities have made Bangladesh and South Asian countries like India, Pakistan susceptible to outbreaks. Since the end of lockdown and re-opening of the businesses rising numbers of affected and death tolls are already indicating that we are moving towards catastrophic outbreak.



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"For the underprivileged category of population, maintaining continuous socio-economic security is a life-long challenge."

What's going on!

Global Center on Adaptation

The Global Centre of Excellence on Climate Adaptation (GCECA) was founded by the Government of the Netherlands with United Nations Environment, NIES Japan and the Philippines. The Global Center on Excellence in Climate Adaptation is now known as the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA). Patrick V. Verkooijen is the CEO of Global Center on Adaptation. (Acclimatise News, 2018).

The Global Center on Adaptation is collaborating with a range of partners from across the public and private sectors, including multilateral institutions to identify how to focus greater attention on climate risks and Adaptation solutions. Through this evolving network of offices and global and regional GCA teams, the organization engages in high-level policy activities, new research contributions, communications, and technical assistance to governments and the private sector. (Global center on Adaptation, 2020)

The Prime Minister launched the Regional Global Centre on Adaptation in Bangladesh on the 8th September 2020. The new Dhaka based GCA Centre will aim to be a global center of excellence on locally led adaptation. The other area of special focus will be on ensuring that future development, particularly that of infrastructure, is based on Nature Based Solutions (NBS) (Huq, 2020). Another major focus of the new center will be to assist the countries in the region to ensure that their cities and towns, which are already having to host an increasing numbers of climate induced migrants, are able to ensure adequate housing, water and protection from heat stress and other health hazards, which are becoming bigger issues in the region quite rapidly.

The new regional center in Dhaka will be to partner with governments, private sector, development partners, civil society and media in each country, as well as across the region, and then link to the global level on adaptation to climate change and the collective journey towards resilience. The fact that Bangladesh currently chairs the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and that the GCA is the managing partner of the CVF will enable the Dhaka office to support the sharing of knowledge and collective advocacy across the nearly 50 CVF countries as

well. This will be particularly important as we approach the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021, as well as the Climate Adaptation Summit (CAS) to be held on January 25, 2021 (Huq, 2020).

Finally, the GCA will be making a major effort to galvanize the world's youth through a global Youth Adaptation Network (YAN), which will have chapters at the regional as well as national levels around the world (Huq, 2020). It will start by having a series of consultations with youth based in every region, starting in South Asia and Bangladesh as the future success in the battle against human induced climate change over the next decade will need to be fought by the youth of today, who will become the leaders of tomorrow.

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Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are national climate plans highlighting climate actions, including climate related targets, policies

and measures, governments aim to implement in response to climate change and as a contribution to global climate action. In 2015, 196 Parties came together under the Paris Agreement to transform their development trajectories so that they can achieve sustainable development, reduce national emissions and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, aiming at limiting warming to 1.5 to 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels (UNFCCC, 2020).

The Paris Agreement (Article 4, paragraph 2) requires each country to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve. The Paris Agreement requests each country to outline and communicate their post 2020 climate actions, known as their NDCs. In total, 192 countries submitted NDCs, making up 96% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Climate action, 2020). These nations pledged, as part of the Paris Agreement, to update their NDCs every 5 years. To date, 106 countries have indicated their intent to enhance their NDCs, but only seven have submitted new NDC policies so far in 2020. This represents just 2.8% of total global emissions (Climate Action, 2020). As the peaking of emissions will take longer for developing country Parties, and that emission reductions are undertaken on the basis of equity, and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, which are critical development priorities for many developing countries. (UNFCCC, 2020).

Bangladesh is a highly climate vulnerable country whose emissions are less than 0.35% of global emissions. Strong attention should be given to limit greenhouse gases internationally, otherwise the future costs of adapting to climate change will be much higher than they are today. If the world fails to take ambitious action, the costs to Bangladesh of climate change could amount to an annual loss of 2% of GDP by 2050 and 9.4% of GDP by 2100. (MOEF, 2015).

Bangladesh is focusing on increasing our resilience to the impacts of climate change. Extreme temperatures, erratic rainfall, floods, drought, tropical cyclones, rising sea levels, tidal surges, salinity intrusion and ocean acidification are causing serious negative impacts on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in Bangladesh. The socio-economic development and Future economic growth are hampered. Bangladesh is also working to achieve lower carbon as well as more resilient development. With this in mind, this INDC aims to put forth mitigation actions that Bangladesh can take to tackle its growing emissions and to play its role in global efforts to limit temperature rise to two degrees or

preferably 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels (ibid).

The INDC includes both unconditional and conditional emissions reduction goals for the power, transport, and industry sectors, alongside further mitigation actions in other sectors, which Bangladesh intends to carry out. Bangladesh intends to implement its conditional emissions reduction goal subject to appropriate international support in the form of finance, investment, technology development and transfer, and capacity building. As a focus on Mitigation Contribution Bangladesh focuses on reducing 15% in GHG emissions from BAU levels by 2030 in the power, transport, and industry sectors, subject to appropriate international support in the form of finance, investment, technology development and transfer, and capacity building (MOEF, 2015). Proposals for governance and coordination of INDC implementation and an outline of key next steps. A qualitative description of Bangladesh's support needs and an outline of plans to further quantify this, along with some examples of indicative costs of taking action on mitigation and adaptation

References:

- MOEF (2015) Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), Ministry of Environment and Forests Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2020) Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): The Paris Agreement and NDCs. Retrieved from: [https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs#:~:text=Nationally%20determined%20contributions%20\(NDCs\)%20are,the%20impacts%20of%20climate%20change](https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs#:~:text=Nationally%20determined%20contributions%20(NDCs)%20are,the%20impacts%20of%20climate%20change) (Accessed: 4 October, 2020).
- Watkiss, C. (2020). 'Seven countries submit new 2020 national climate plans (NDCs)' Climate action, 20 April 2020. Retrieved from: <http://www.climateaction.org/news/seven-countries-submit-new-2020-national-climate-plans-ndcs> (Accessed: 4 October, 2020).

National Adaptation Plan (NAP)

Over the last decade, Bangladesh has been able to implement the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) in 2005 which was known for identifying and prioritizing immediate and urgent projects to address the threats and impacts of climate change. NAPA initially identified 15 projects focused on general awareness raising, capacity building, and project implementation in vulnerable regions, with special focus on agriculture and water

resources. Since then Bangladesh has been able to develop country-invested mid-term and long-term adaptation plans such as BCCSAP in 2009 and intended Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2015 and successfully implement community-based adaptation (CBA) projects and actions becoming a global pioneer. The after-math of these plans are yet to take place and be published.

To mainstream climate change adaptation in national levels, more institutional arrangements and coordinated mid-term and long-term strategies are urgent. Based on this gap the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the national adaptation plan (NAP) process in 2010 as a way to facilitate effective climate change adaptation (CCA) planning in LDCs and other developing countries.

The Department of Environment will execute and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) will finance NAP which will allow Bangladesh to identify country-specific adaptation needs; develop and implement strategies to address the adaptation needs as well as help her decide on actions to protect vulnerable communities.

Objectives:

NAP has targeted mainstreaming adaptation actions and strategies on climate change in Bangladesh's priorities outlined in SDG, Delta Plan 2100, Perspective plan, five-year plan and its ambition to graduate from LDC to middle-income countries. Based on this, two key objectives were set:

- To formulate the Bangladesh National Adaptation Plan with a focus on medium to long term adaptation investment
- To enhance national capacity for integration of climate change adaptation in planning, budgeting and financial tracking process

Current Status:

A three year project titled, "Formulation and Advancement of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process in Bangladesh" was initiated jointly by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with financial support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in May 2019.

The main beneficiaries of this project are the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and key personnel working on climate change adaptation relevant programming in water resources, agriculture and food security, coastal zones, and urban habitation (the "priority sectors").

Expected Outcomes:

The expected outcomes from these projects are-

- Outcome 1: Strengthened institutional coordination and climate change information and knowledge management for medium- to long-term planning
- Outcome 2: Adaptation options appraised and prioritized and National Adaptation Plan formulated
- Outcome 3: Climate risk informed decision making tools developed and piloted by planning and budget departments at national and sectoral levels
- Outcome 4: Nationally appropriate participatory adaptation investments tracking mechanism and financial plan for mid- and long-term CCA implementation set up

(Source: UNDP, 2020)

Reference

UNDP (2020). National Adaptation Plan. <https://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/projects/national-adaptation-plan--nap-.html>



Upcoming Conferences

7th Global Summit on Climate Change

Date : 18th - 19th November 2020
Location : Lisbon, Portugal
Type : Webinar

The 7th Global Summit on Climate Change 2020 will join world-class professors, scientists, researchers, students, environmentalist, to discuss the methodology to reduce global warming, climatic change and its effect, pollution and recycling. It is planned to give various information that will keep helpful scientists next to each other of the issues impacting the expectations, finding and solution for climatic change and its effect. The assembling of this event will be dealt with around the subject "Tackling Climate Change for a Sustainable Future". This international conference provides the opportunity for climate scientists, professors and researchers from all over the world to gather and learn the latest advances in the field of climate and environmental science and to exchange scientific ideas and experiences in a distinctive environment.

Web: <https://climatechange.global-summit.com/>

International Conference on Climate Change in Complex Systems and Ecosystems

Date : 26th - 27th November 2020
Location : Jerusalem, Israel
Type : Webinar

International Conference on Climate Change in Complex Systems and Ecosystems is dedicated to bringing together a significant number of diverse scholarly events for presentation within the conference program. International Conference on Climate Change in Complex Systems and Ecosystems aims to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of Climate Change in Complex Systems and Ecosystems. It also provides a premier interdisciplinary platform for researchers, practitioners and educators to present and discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of Climate Change in Complex

Systems and Ecosystems

Web: <https://waset.org/climate-change-in-complex-systems-and-ecosystems-conference-in-november-2020-in-jerusalem>

2020 International Conference on Climate Change, Green Energy and Environmental Sustainability (CCGEES 2020)

Date : 27th - 28th November 2020
Location : Haikou, China
Type : Digital

The impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly. The 2020 International Conference on Climate Change, Green Energy and Environmental Sustainability (CCGEES 2020) will be held during Nov. 27-28, 2020 in Haikou, China. CCGEES 2020 aims to bring together by a common concern for the science of, and social responses to, climate change, green energy and environmental sustainability and to provide a platform for scientists, engineers and scholars to share their latest research results and experiences.

Web: <http://www.event-ccgees.org/>

International Conference on Ecosystems and Climate Change (CECC 2020)

Date : 27th-29th November 2020
Location : Sanya, China
Type : Conference at Venue

International Conference on Ecosystems and Climate Change (CECC 2020) will be held during November 27-29, 2020 in Sanya, China. This Conference will cover issues on Arid lands and Desertification, Biodiversity and Biological Conservation, Disturbance Ecology and other related fields. It dedicates to creating a stage for exchanging the latest research results and sharing the advanced research methods.

Web: <https://www.novevents.org/conference/CECC2020/>

The Water, Megacities and Global Change Conference 2020

Date : 1st - 4th December, 2020
 Location : France
 Type : Conference at Venue

Along with experts and scientists, the Water, Megacities and Global Change conference will include civil society representatives and elected officials to highlight the symbolic and aesthetic dimensions of water management issues in megacities and their impact on global change. Youth will be given a voice to share their perspective on all topics covered by the conference. The conference will analyze the determinant issues to be addressed to maintain and strengthen the often-precarious balance of these mega-urban systems accelerating global change. It will also address the types of solutions (means, methods, tools) that can be implemented to support global change in megacities.

Web: <https://www.youthop.com/conferences/call-for-papers-the-water-megacities-and-global-change-conference-2020-in-france>

World Summit on Climate Change and Global Warming

Date : 14th-15th Dec 2020
 Type : Webinar

World Summit on Climate Change and Global Warming offers the analysts and researcher to investigate the advanced and maximum recent research upgrades inside the field of climate exchange changes which focuses on the gradual increase in floor temperatures on the earth. Most climate scientists agree the main cause of the current global warming trend is the human expansion of the greenhouse effect. Human activities are changing the natural greenhouse. Over the last century, the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil has increased the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂). Global warming is primarily a problem of too much carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere, which acts as a blanket, trapping heat and warming the planet. The issue may be that 'climate change' will be no more simply a scientific concern, but also includes economics, sociology, geopolitics, national and politics, law and health just to name an only some which is the main focus of the summit.

Web: <http://www.meetingfora.com/Conference/5/WSCCGW/>

The 5th International conference on climate change 2021

Date : 17th-18th February 2021
 Location : Colombo, Sri Lanka
 Type : Conference at Venue

The conference focuses on the theme "Sustainable Development and Climate Change in Developing and Least Developed Countries". The theme of ICCC 2021 covers the way in which we can address the risks and uncertainties of climate change by building societies, ecosystems and infrastructure that are resilient to environmental and socio-economic changes. It includes risk and uncertainty assessment, scenario development and planning, participatory modelling, and developing transformative adaptation pathways that can cope with a wide range of future conditions. ICCC 2021 aims to bring together leading academics, ecologists, chemists, physicists, biologists, material scientists, biomedical researchers, engineers, social workers, policy makers and other researchers around the world who are active at the frontiers of this diverse and multidisciplinary field.

Web: <https://climatechangeconferences.com/>

Thirteenth International Conference on Climate Change: Impacts and Responses

Date : 8th-9th April 2021
 Location : UBC Robson Square, Vancouver, Canada
 Type : Conference at Venue

The Thirteenth International Conference on Climate Change: Impacts & Responses is brought together by a common concern for the science of, and social responses to, climate change. It seeks to make linkages across disciplinary, geographic, and cultural boundaries. The conferences main focus are the impacts of climate change on natural environments in particular and universal views, humans Impact and responsibility to climate change and scientists, technologies, policy makers, and community members respond to climate change. The conference is motivated to build strategies for action framed by the themes and tensions.

Web: <https://on-climate.com/2021-conference>

CPRD Events

Training on ‘Implication of Climate Change Impacts to the Human Rights Obligations: Policy spaces and options for safeguarding human rights under the UNFCCC process’

Date: May 27, 2019

A two day (from 26-27 May 2019) training program on “Implication of Climate Change Impacts to the Human Rights Obligations: Policy spaces and options for safeguarding human rights under the UNFCCC process” was organized by Center for Participatory Research and Development-CPRD at PKSF Seminar Hall.



Sessions on several key issues such as i) fundamentals of Human Rights; ii) legal and institutional arrangements for ensuring human rights in the context of Bangladesh context iii) Implications of climate induced loss & damage and forced displacement to the human Rights obligations; iv) nexus between climate justice and human rights; v) empirical experience on the localized impacts of climate change; vi) Scope of addressing human rights in the national development/climate plans and strategies and vii) Human rights obligations to the Paris Agreement and to the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), were held by the experts to build capacity among the government & NGO professionals, practitioners and relevant stakeholders in order to enhance their knowledge on climate change implications to the human rights obligations.

<https://cprdbd.org/training-on-climate-change-and-human-rights/>

Bangladeshi CSOs urged to limit Global Warming to 1.5°C

Date: September 20, 2019

Center for Participatory Research and Development – CPRD, COAST Trust, Coastal Development Partnership (CDP), Network on Climate Change – Bangladesh (NCC-B) and Shariatpur Development Society (SDS) jointly organized a human chain in solidarity with the Global Climate Strike (held from



20 to 27 September 2019) in front of National Press Club Dhaka on 20 September, 2019.

According to the participants, the countries that are historically responsible for Global Warming should focus now on emission reduction and should provide adequate finances to save the communities and countries that are exposed to the climate-induced risks and vulnerabilities by demanding climate justice from the countries responsible for climate change. The speakers agreed to urge for keeping the temperature below 1.50C above the pre-industrial level to save planet Earth from the unavoidable and irreversible adversities of climate change.

<https://cprdbd.org/global-climate-strike-event-in-bangladesh/>

Roundtable Discussion on: “Human Rights and Climate Justice Nexus: Global and National Policy Narratives”

Date: February 20, 2020

A roundtable discussion titled ‘Human Rights and Climate Justice Nexus: Global and National Policy Narratives’ was held by Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD) on February 20, 2020, at PKSF Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

The main highlights of the event were several



sessions on violation of human rights encompassed by climate change, dreadful impacts of climate change, and climate-induced displacement and migration in the context of global and national policies, and presentations on some case studies on human rights violations by catastrophic climatic events and the loopholes of global and national policies to show how human rights predicament with climate change. Emphasis on addressing human rights perspectives to the national and global policy discourses on climate justice established during the event.

<https://cprdbd.org/human-rights-and-climate-justice/>

Round table discussion on “Loss and Damage Finance: Scopes and Options”

Date: February 29, 2020

A roundtable discussion on “Loss and Damage Finance: Scopes and Options” was hosted by Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD) on the 29th of February, 2020 at The Daily Star Centre.



Discussions on the approaches and loopholes of addressing Loss and Damage (L&D) that include the scopes and limitations of existing finances and major COP decisions on L&D from the beginning of UNFCCC negotiation and sessions on the innovative sources of financing and how WIM and SCF could play a major role in identifying options for financing L&D and brings this discussion forward at the forum of SCF and COP 26 in front of global leaders and relevant stakeholders came up through this event.

<https://cprdbd.org/round-table-discussion-on-loss-and-damage-finance-scopes-and-options/>

Planning Meeting of CSOs for climate justice: Facilitation CSOs position in the Climate Negotiation at COP 26 in Glasgow, 2020

Date: February 20, 2020

A planning meeting of Civil Society Organizations took place on 20th February 2020 that was organized by Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD). The program was held at PKSf Bhaban, Dhaka.



The participants of the meeting talked about different issues of COP 25 of the UNFCCC negotiation held in Madrid during 2-15 December 2019. COP 25 started with the high hopes of resolving debated issues of the previous COPs so that operational details of the Paris Agreement (the so called Paris Agreement Work Programme-PAWP) are agreed upon and decided, however, the outcome of the conference could not satisfy the participating countries. This CSOs meeting at PKSf Bhavan raised those limitations and talked about the outcomes of COPs. The meeting also intended to facilitate their active engagement with the national and global policy stakeholders so that the Glasgow COP (COP 26) fulfils its mandate and CSOs expectation of ensuring climate justice in the COP decisions.

Previous Issues of Dialogue



Issue 1, February 2018

Troubled Journey towards Climate Justice

Md Shasuddoha

Climate Risk Transfer by Insurance Mechanism

Muhammad Mizanur Rahman

The Plight of Climate Migrants in Urban Settings

S.M. Saify Iqbal

<https://cprdbd.org/dialogue-issue-01/>



Issue 02, August 2019

Climate Risk Insurance (CRI): Context and Readiness of Bangladesh

Muhammad Mizanur

Climate Change Induced Loss and Damages: Evidence from the Salt Farming Practices in Kutubdia Island, Bangladesh

Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman Bijoy

Assessing Climate Induced NonEconomic Loss and Damage in the Coastal Fisher Folk Communities of Bangladesh

Habib Torikul

<https://cprdbd.org/dialogue-issue-02/>



Issue 03, February 2020

COP-25 ISSUE

Chile/Madrid Climate Conference-a Bad COP: may the good builds on the bad towards COP 26.

Md. Shamsuddoha

Climate Denialism and Nationalism: making climate efforts little and late.

Rumana Sharmin

It's Planetary Emergency: it's a warning, a call for urgent actions.

S. M. Saify Iqbal

<https://cprdbd.org/dialogue-issue-3/>

CALL FOR ARTICLE

Dialogue is pleased to invite submission of articles for its next issue. We encourage potential authors to submit their write-ups on the recurrent policy debate and research findings on the issues related to climate induced loss and damage, displacement & migration and violation of human rights.

We request the authors to submit their article to jabed.akib@cprdbd.org or dialogue@cprdbd.org by the end of December 2020 to get the article published in the next issue, due in February 2021.

It's too

EDITOR'S
PICK

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