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**Talking points**

***Unprecedented and Unfinished – COVID-19 and Implications for National and Global Policy***

**Report Launch 17 May 2022**

**Top line messages**

**The Covid-19 pandemic is unprecedented and unfinished in its impacts on every aspect of society.**

* The pandemic is not only a health crisis but an inequality crisis, affecting economies, development, the environment and society.
* Governments have prolonged the pandemic by focusing on national crisis responses to a global emergency.
* A lack of integrated scientific input hindered the global response to the pandemic.

**Failure of the existing world order means Covid’s long echo will last at least another five years.**

* The multilateral system failed to coordinate effectively with the scientific community to minimise the long-term impact of the pandemic.
* The Global North failed to acknowledge and leverage science in the Global South.
* High-income countries were exposed by their complacency in preparing only for a flu pandemic.

**The most likely scenario in 2027 is an exacerbation of global inequalities.**

* Health systems in low income countries risk collapse through ongoing pressure and under-investment.
* Trillions in lifetime earnings will be lost because of missed education and the digital divide.
* Progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals will be set back by a decade.

**The world needs reinvigorated global cooperation by addressing the structural weaknesses in the UN that inhibit the integration of scientific evidence into the system, particularly around health and science.**

* A UN Science Advisory Board is needed to integrate scientific expertise across the UN system.
* Assessing risk to account for interconnected threats must be embedded into public policy.
* Strengthening diverse science advice systems would also help to build public trust and reduce disinformation.

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**Sector-specific messages**

Science

**The global scientific community needs a way of providing systematic input for the global policy community.**

* Mechanisms for scientific input across the UN system are currently too siloed.
* A new UN science advisory board was recommended in the UN Secretary General’s 2021 report, [Our Common Agenda](https://www.un.org/en/un75/common-agenda).
* Continuing the pandemic trend for “live reviews” of ongoing studies would foster partnerships and enhance transparency.

Education

**The pandemic impacted education in every country around the world.**

* One estimate suggests the educational impact of Covid-19 will be felt until the end of the century.
* Students today face losing out on as much as $17 trillion in reduced earnings over their lifetime from missed education.
* Students in low-income situations have faced the choice between education and supporting their families in whatever way they could.

Health

**Vaccine inequality continues to overburden health systems in low-income countries.**

* New variants are likely to still pose a threat over the next five years because of low vaccination levels in developing countries.
* Covid’s long echo will continue to worsen the mental health crisis, with an additional 53.2 million cases of major depressive disorder caused by the pandemic.
* Governments must adopt a “One Health” approach to account for interconnected risks from environmental factors.

Economy

**Covid’s long echo will mean the economic recovery will vary around the world.**

* The equivalent of 255 million full-time jobs were lost in 2020.
* High debt and inability to borrow will hamper the economic recovery in low-income countries.
* Stimulus packages, access to global capital markets and debt write-offs would help support economic recovery in low-income countries.

Development

**The emphasis on pandemic response and recovery has derailed progress towards sustainable development.**

* More than one in five people in Africa faced hunger, more than double the proportion in any other continent.
* The world has regressed on gender equality with more girls entering forced marriage during school closures.
* High-income countries should prioritise commitments to overseas development in the face of domestic pressures around the world.

Climate/environment

**Governments must resist temptation to undo climate targets and policies to support the short-term recovery.**

* The likely scenario in 2027 is a multiplication of hazards resulting from insufficient climate action.
* An integrated One Health approach would protect the environment, people and animals from the threat of disease spill overs.
* Improved biosecurity standards for livestock can help reduce the risk of future epidemics and pandemics.

Governance/policy

**Public policy and governance have the potential to prolong or curtail the pandemic’s impacts.**

* The International Health Regulations (IHR) were first developed in the 19th century and are no longer fit for purpose.
* Too many governments continue to react to the pandemic uniquely in crisis mode, focusing narrowly on health consequences.
* The UN’s multilateral system is ripe for renewal given structural weaknesses of bodies such as the WHO.

Ends