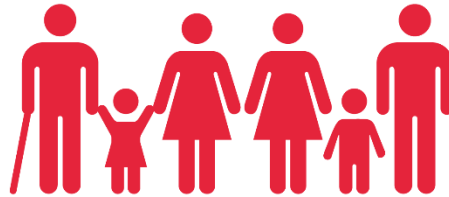




1 NO POVERTY



MODERATORS

Gargee Ghosh and Homi Kharas

November 2020

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Background

For the first time in our lifetime, global poverty (defined as those living under \$1.90 per day) is likely to increase substantially and the goal of ending poverty seems to be receding. Growth may recover in 2021 but will likely be unable to restore the level of household income to its pre-COVID path.

Developing countries and, more specifically, the poorest households, will be hardest hit and least able to respond. Current [IMF forecasts](#) suggest that advanced economies will increase public debt levels by 26.5 percentage points of GDP in 2020 (half in higher fiscal deficits, half in below-the-line loans and guarantees to the private sector); emerging economies will expand debt by 6.8 percentage points (5.5 percentage points higher fiscal deficits), while low income developing countries will only expand public spending by 3 percentage points (2 percentage points higher in fiscal deficits).

The distress being caused requires urgent action by the international community and a major effort to mobilize more funds to expand the fiscal space for developing countries to respond.

Accordingly, the main policy drivers for poverty over the next ten years will likely be: (i) the magnitude of public assistance available to protect livelihoods and necessary social and infrastructure spending (including social assistance and digital transformations); and (ii) the effectiveness of this spending, including its targeting.

What is needed by the end of 2021?

A global understanding of the “build back better” agenda is needed by the end of 2021, encompassing the financial parameters (domestic and international) for public “recovery” towards strong, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development investments, along with priority areas for such spending.

At the macro level, 2021 will be a decisive year for finance for development. We anticipate that there will be considerable debate about the volume and mechanisms of further support to developing countries.

New financing needs to be globally coordinated, affordable with limited conditionality, preserving of access to private markets, and fair in burden sharing.

It will need to align with SDG-related needs and build resilience. The theme of focusing on poor people in poor countries (never fully implemented in practice) needs to be completely reviewed in 2021, from the perspective of recipient countries and the politics of providers of development assistance.

What can we do from now to September 2021?

We will support action in three areas:

- a) An African Digital Transformation to connect all of Africa to the internet by 2030;
- b) A liquidity and sustainability facility to supply foreign exchange credit for private enterprises in developing countries at affordable rates;
- c) A Last Mile Alliance to build a coalition to keep poverty reduction at the top of the agenda.

The African Digital Transformation

This program, initially proposed by the Broadband Commission, has 4 pillars: (i) digital infrastructure; (ii) education building skills; (iii) regulatory reforms and private investments and engagement; and (iv) digital platforms for services: e.g., financial inclusion, e-government, cash transfers. It would have a modest cost, [estimated at \\$8-10 billion per year for 10 years](#), split between public and private sectors. The program has strong political endorsement from the African Union, with responsibility assigned to the AU commissioner for infrastructure and energy.

There is considerable interest, but equally bottlenecks to implementation that members of our Room can help overcome:

- a) Overcome resistance amongst donors worried that tech investments could divert funds from priority poverty investments—research and advocacy can emphasize links between digitization and poverty reduction.

- b) Research on lessons of managing the political economy of transformation (there will be winners and losers).
- c) Build dialogue with other Rooms, especially Room 4 (education) and Room 9 (infrastructure and industrialization).
- d) Identify ways to support the AU and Smart Africa, and drive delivery over the decade with private sector and civil society stakeholder outreach.

The Liquidity and Sustainability Facility

This program, originated by UNECA, seeks to stand up a repo facility for developing country debt. The goal would be to provide greater liquidity to these instruments and, by so doing, reduce the interest rate that is charged. African countries have expressed strong support for the proposal, whose technical elements are being developed by PIMCO. The facility is not designed for countries that are in debt distress or at high risk, but for the other half of African countries that are rated as having moderate or low risk of debt distress.

The facility would need to be backstopped by a provider of an internationally convertible currency, and that provider, in turn, may require guarantees from a strong fiscal agent.

The members of our Room can help socialize the proposal, especially among donor country officials and other potential guarantors, as well as among private financial institutions. We could show how the facility would overlap and complement existing ideas around SDG bonds, climate bonds, and other financing facilities; and show how a new SDR allocation could be deployed to support the facility.

The Last Mile Alliance (working title)

We agreed to explore the creation of a high-powered coalition to keep poverty reduction at the top of the political agenda (complementing the Nigeria-led friends group, the Alliance for Poverty Eradication). The coalition should have the political clout to help keep the focus on poverty reduction amidst competing claims for development assistance in the COVID era, and to ensure that a high impact platform exists to serve as an idea-generating platform and promote learning on what works and needs doing in these contexts (potentially including a Leave No One Behind tracker); and advocacy on follow-through and accountability for last mile and remote local delivery.

It would deliberately target the hardest challenges for which our current poverty-reduction handbook offers few answers, including countries that have the highest levels of extreme poverty, those facing overlapping challenges with fragility, equity, and/or environmental risks, and local and subnational pockets in middle and even high-income countries. It would do so by bringing together a targeted set of these countries and subnational areas as well as high-level representatives from donor countries and the multilateral system, philanthropy, civil society, and the private sector. The Alliance would provide actors a space to develop a collective voice to define and advocate for their multi-faceted needs and frame principles and expectations for engagement. It would create a platform for planning, solutions-testing, and peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange between actors, while also highlighting financing and policy gaps including on digital cash transfers; national employment guarantee schemes; support for SMEs; and local delivery and financing. It would bring in stakeholders that have the deepest expertise on drivers of fragility and climate vulnerability to better inform plans, solutions, and learning and build on existing work spearheaded by cities, civil society, and other multi-stakeholder actors. *Currently, there is no space for this cross-section of actors –national governments, sub-national actors, the private sector, and civil society groups – to come together around the last mile of extreme poverty.*

The Last Mile Alliance (LMA) should build on modern polling techniques to create a stronger political narrative in an era of populism. It should include as a basic principle the importance of the local agenda, inclusive multilateralism responses, bring us back to the basics on the “politics of selfishness,” and go beyond growth as the sole driver of poverty reduction.

The LMA would track developments on major macroeconomic financing proposals, including those advanced by the UN's High-Level Financing for Development process and advocate they be designed with last mile delivery in mind. Inter alia, these are likely to include (i) Debt relief -- expand DSSI to end 2021; include private creditors; shift eligibility from income-basis to vulnerability basis; limit conditionality; debt for health/nature/SDG swaps; (ii) a new SDR issuance (and reallocation of existing SDRs); (iii) accelerating the IDA replenishment to a two-year cycle from three years, more generally expanding the ambitions of the MDBs, including through capital increases; (iv) proposals to establish other concessional funds; (v) the liquidity and sustainability facility to provide affordable debt to private companies in Africa (see above); and (vi) further measures to stem tax evasion, illicit capital flight, and strengthen public financial management. We will support these measures but demand they demonstrate design and delivery for the last mile.

A Leave No One Behind Tracker should be developed as a key element of the LMA, both in better understanding who and where these populations are, as well as, more ambitiously, an Action-oriented Tracker to strengthen monitoring and accountability efforts on response and delivery. The Climate Action Tracker provides a model of how tracker mechanisms can help whole constituencies self-organize around its tools and data. *There is no equivalent in the poverty reduction space.*



2 ZERO HUNGER



MODERATORS

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November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 2 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

The problem

The World Food Programme has warned that COVID-19 could [double the people who suffer from acute hunger](#) by the end of 2020 and presents a major challenge to the realization of each SDG. COVID-19 has, in particular, laid bare myriad challenges affecting our food systems - its inequity, the fragility of its supply chains, its lack of resilience to shocks (public health, economic, climatic, environmental, or pandemic-related), and the toll it elicits on the planet. If the piece of meat that [likely](#) sparked the pandemic were priced to account for its cataclysmic economic and health impacts, that would surely be the world's most expensive meal. COVID-19, with all of its impacts, may just be the first among a new wave of profoundly negative effects linked to the Anthropocene.

The opportunity

2021 is an urgent landmark year for actors who care about food systems given the watershed UN Food System Summit. Yet, it is not a given that the global platform it presents will be used to reconcile the competing needs and interests that must be aligned if food, agriculture, and health practices are to promote biodiversity, crop diversity, regenerate the environment, mitigate climate change, reset the water cycle, promote sustainable consumption patterns which enhance human health and universal food and nutrition security, as well as restore human dignity, equity, and cultural connection.

Room 2 agrees that to bend the curve of diet-related disease and hunger and food and nutrition security, we need to 1) recognize the role of and restore the livelihoods of small scale farmers - especially women - in a dignified way as a positive force for healthy diets and a sustainable planet, 2) advance the adoption of regenerative and ecological farming practices and secure sustainable food systems, and 3) utilize the power and potential of True Cost Accounting (TCA).

Priorities

Over the next 12 -18 months to this end, this group - together with other interested parties – aspires to formulate new narratives, elucidating case studies, and establishing clear targets taking into consideration of all relevant actors including farmers, governments, multi-laterals, private sector, civil society, and others:

1. Contribute to a new public narrative that influences decision-makers to reassign resources (such as government subsidies and taxation policies) toward advancing nutrient-rich diets that are underpinned by diversified agriculture and adapted to local microclimates and sociocultural contexts. Recognizing that the dominant political and corporate interests shaping the global narrative on food do not advocate for these approaches, a new, compelling, fresh narrative is a critical component in the fight to reframe the global food and agriculture discourse including communicating to non-traditional influencers.
2. Collect, share, and promote case studies that demonstrate how True Cost Accounting (TCA) can be applied at the corporate and national levels, recognizing it is unlikely we will shift the method of food/agriculture production toward regenerative and ecological approaches without the evidence needed to make a compelling economic policy argument, which TCA affords. These case studies could include an overview of a new type of food financing institution - a World Bank for Food - that enables the financing of TCA and supports countries' shifts to agro-ecological and regenerative approaches. Ultimately, if we don't endogenize externalities we don't pay for/contend with them sufficiently. If we do endogenize them, we empower farmers and businesses that adopt sustainable practices and incentivize others to follow suit.
3. Establish ambitious and meaningful targets for the adoption of regenerative and ecological agricultural practices globally. Targets might take the form of a percentage of cultivated land for which the prevailing practice is either regenerative or agro-ecological (see [European example](#)). These could be strategically aligned with targets being developed under other processes, such as the biodiversity targets and post-2020 agenda under the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#). Additionally, a target for a number of companies and countries that apply TCA under an appropriate oversight board could also be established (example: x # countries apply TCA by xxxx year; y # companies apply TCA by yyyy year) related to the SDGs and inclusive of a plan for collaborative advocacy and communications of TCA.



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



MODERATORS

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The problem

Pandemics are existential threats where *every human being is impacted, yet each of us can make a difference*. The current COVID-19 crisis has made the world keenly aware that we were not prepared for a pandemic. With changes in trade, travel, climate, and land use, infectious disease threats are increasing and require collective action to address this reality.

The capacity to collect, analyze, and put to use reliable and consistent data must exist in all countries for true global health security from epidemic and pandemic disease. Health officials can't stop what they can't see. Timely data and insights are critical to making effective decisions, particularly in the face of uncertainty. Unfortunately, enormous gaps exist in our global capacity to apply outbreak science to decision making, from early in an outbreak through the course of a pandemic. Whether data is needed for risk assessment, timely response, or improved modeling and forecasting, we are decades behind where we could be given the advances in science and technology. As the COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrates, inequities in data insights are delaying the application of the best science across the spectrum of prediction, prevention, detection, and response. The human, animal and environmental sectors are far from integrated into the One Health approach essential to deal with new and re-emerging infectious diseases.

The opportunity

Novel data sources, innovations in disease surveillance, advances in mathematical modeling and machine learning, combined with tools such as geospatial mapping and next generation genomic sequencing can transform how we predict, prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats. We need robust and aligned efforts to advance the science and practice of disease prevention and control; leverage effective collaborations among the public, academic, and private sectors; and develop scalable tools that can be used by health officials and individuals across the world. The existence of regional organizations, such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance (CORDS) with common borders also present great opportunities for rapid detection, reporting, and mutual response to these threats.

Our solutions

We call for an increase in the global capacity to collect reliable and consistent data, analyze it quickly, and convey critical information to the 'front lines' for precision response. This will require us to catalyze innovative financing and governance structures to transform local, national, and global epidemic intelligence. We must utilize health professionals' expertise within each country to be part of the process, provide locally informed opinions, and share their experience and knowledge to be more anticipatory and proactive. Accelerating detection and sharing of information of threats within regional blocs increase the speed for contextualized and effective response. Our proposed solutions revolve around improving three core aims: data access, data insights, and data use.

Data access

Data quality and access are huge challenges. The transaction costs to sharing data are often high for both data owners and data users. We need to generate and improve access to real-time data in a safe and secure way, with an emphasis on quality, timeliness, and transparency.

- Establish 21st century Sentinel Data and Analytic Networks that continuously focus on new and emerging pathogens. Coordinating and connecting the many existing diseases monitoring and forecasting entities to capture and exploit information may be more efficient than creating a new entity. To this end, it will be critical to collectively determine and leverage best practices between the different entities, while providing assistance to build new infrastructure where needed, modeled on regional examples for success.
- Support data sharing platforms, such as datapartnership.org run by the World Bank and IMF, that - facilitate the safe and secure sharing of a wide variety of data (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Cubeiq, and Mapbox). Sharing data as a public good has tremendous value for advanced analytics and complements rather than overrides data sharing mechanisms and guidelines at the national level.

Data insights

Outbreak analytics are fragmented and underfunded, resulting in tremendous untapped potential. We only have a nascent understanding of how data analytics can answer key questions in an epidemic, hindering our capacity to better predict, prevent, detect, and respond to emerging threats.

- Capitalize a new funding collaborative to push the boundaries of outbreak analytics innovation and deliver data-driven intelligence to the front lines. Such a fund can connect governments, academia, tech companies, and donors to provide sustained support to incentivize and rapidly accelerate the development, testing, and scaling of outbreak analytics. The fund could serve both as an analytics accelerator, sponsoring challenges and building cross-sector collaboratives, and an investor in new tools and platforms.

Data use

We need transformational capabilities in how we collect, clean, and analyze data to capture insights and make policy decisions. Such capacity is needed along the complete pipeline of information required to predict, prevent, detect, and respond to emerging threats.

- Create National Infectious Disease Analytics and Forecasting Centers to rapidly advance early detection, adaptive and precision response, and modeling and forecasting capabilities. These Centers could gather reliable and trusted information from local, national, and regional providers on a) causative agents, b) affected populations, and c) overall context of occurrence. This repository is a virtual place where risk assessments are stored and shared discussions and interactions among experts are enabled.
- Support local and national accelerator programs by nurturing effective partnerships on the ground to facilitate successful training programs, strengthened and sustained by a train-the-trainer approach.

Critical points and principles for all solutions

Start with the end user. Give due consideration to what decisions are being addressed and who is making them. Examine the types of decisions and determine the metrics needed to gauge how they can best be realized. Connect frontline healthcare workers with hospitals, laboratories, and public health institutions to allow for coordination, data sharing, and real-time analytics.

Be smarter about investments. More money and more data will not lead to better performance on its own. Better management skills, effective governance, shared risk management structures, and incentives for the collection and timely sharing of information are required to make the best use of any funds allocated for data acquisition and analytics. Create mechanisms to reward and incentivize collaboration.

Distinguish insight vs. data. Data on its own without the useful insights driven by local knowledge is not as helpful. Data paralysis can occur from too much information and not enough understanding of how to use it to plan or take appropriate action. Contextual information is needed to assess the risk in relation to an event and define potential actions.

Ensure equity and inclusivity. Leverage and support local organizations, women and minority groups, NGOs, and community and tribal leaders to build trust in how and what data need to be collected and analyzed for the benefit of all. Ensure equity for citizen-facing tools such as mobile applications, informational materials for health safety, education programs, etc. Developing systems that preemptively identify high-risk populations, determine major vulnerability factors, and address the additional socioeconomic and health-related factors is our best bet.



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



MODERATORS

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Diagnosis

The last decade's progress in access to education and closing the learning gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students may be lost due to COVID-19. Education is emerging as a silent crisis because unlike health, where the deaths are obvious, the impact on life chances, wellbeing (socioemotional development of children and people), and economic productivity are not immediately visible, but still equally devastating. Unless this silent crisis in education is addressed, it could lead to an estimated [\\$10-15 trillion in lost global productivity](#) and a [7-25 percent loss in lifetime earnings](#) for today's cohorts of students. School closures have increased the risk of many more students dropping out of school, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. For young people not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET), COVID-19 has worsened their prospects. Girls are at a greater risk with [reported increases](#) in teenage pregnancy in some African countries.

Equally challenging is the pressure on education budgets during and after COVID-19. Before COVID-19, at least 35 countries spent less than 4 percent of GDP and less than 15 percent of their total government expenditure on [education](#). For most low-and middle-level income countries, rebuilding their education systems to provide equitable quality education and address learning loss will require increasing and smarter investment in education with benefits extending to other SDG goals. For example, increased access to quality [education increases economic growth](#), [delays marriage among the most vulnerable girls](#), and [improves access to decent work](#).

Unless education is prioritized, government recovery plans will be harder and take longer to achieve, and any future recovery will not benefit millions of disadvantaged and marginalized groups who have been most affected by COVID-19 school closures.

Response

COVID-19 has raised the urgency of scaling up investment in public education as the provider of last resort especially for the poor and marginalized students in society. However, given the constraints on national budgets, improving efficiency and equity of increased education financing must be a top priority. Globally, governments will have to focus on "catch-up" learning which means investing in teacher professional development to deliver effective remedial education has to be an important first step.

Potential next steps for 2021

Engage key stakeholders, policy makers and especially Ministers of Education and Finance in dialogue about restructuring education budgets and financing of 'catch-up' learning to reach children and young people in and out of school. This dialogue should include cost-effective approaches to rebuilding education systems to address learning loss and the role of technologies in improving access and quality learning for disadvantaged students. This can be achieved through regional, sub-regional, and national 'rebuilding education systems better and stronger' events. It will be important to produce evidence to guide governments especially in LIC/LMICs on how to invest more efficiently and equitably to accelerate learning for those furthest left behind. [#SaveOurFuture](#), a global campaign to raise awareness of the deep and silent crisis in education as a result of COVID-19 and the global consequences if this crisis is not given urgent attention, is underway. The proposed activities complement this effort by providing evidence-based, actionable guidance and tools for decision-makers to ensure that those most likely to be left behind may have quality educational opportunities during and after COVID-19.



5 GENDER EQUALITY



MODERATORS

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November 2020

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To accelerate SDG 5, and all 17 SDGs, we need more women leaders practicing feminist leadership with greater connections to one another. We also need to broadest possible constituency to embrace the message that gender equality matters. These are some of the challenges we must address:

We need more women leading institutions and countries. Currently, women make up nearly [70 percent of non-profit employees](#) but hold [less than 30 percent of top leadership positions](#). Even when women reach the top, they earn only [66 percent of what their male peers earn](#). Women of color are the most underrepresented, as people of color account for only [14 percent of non-profit board members](#). In short, institutions with a stronger ratio of women in leadership, management, and the workforce [outperform those with fewer women](#). And this is true for countries as well – countries with the highest gender equality scores are also the top performers in terms of the human development index.

We need to connect women leaders across age, race, and geography. The challenges faced by young women leaders are unique because of their age and gender. The compounding effects of intergenerational gatekeeping, ageism, sexism, racism, and other prejudices often prevent young women from realizing their potential as leaders. And in a world of rapidly changing norms, technology, and practices, mature leaders are finding themselves challenged to operate differently. To increase the effectiveness and impact of women leaders (of all ages), and to expand the leadership pipeline, we need to match skills and experiences of leaders across generations, race, and geographies.

We need more connective tissue between siloed SDG 5 efforts. In reflecting upon SDG 5, we realize that there is lots of activity happening, but there is a lack of convergence. We should not aspire to create a singular movement, but to increase connections and synergies among the organic and divergent leadership and initiatives around the world. We note that there are leadership incubators and coalitions for young African leaders, assemblies of North American and European elders, assemblies of movement leaders from Latin America or Asia, but there is not enough intersectionality. One way of creating greater coherence is to simply better connect women leaders.

We need the general public to understand and get excited about gender equality. One of the key gaps preventing the acceleration of gender equality is a lack of widespread engagement on the issue. Despite the popularization of gender equality communications and programming in the development, non-profit and philanthropy sectors—messaging about gender equality is still failing to reach a larger audience. Conversations about gender equality tend to be echoes that reverberate within spaces of the converted. Outside the development sector, there tend to be sharp divisions about what gender equality really means, and a lack of engagement from men in gender equality initiatives.

Proposal 1: Promoting networked and inclusive leadership for gender equality

As one way of achieving these goals, Room 5 proposes the creation of an “inclusive and inter- generational leadership incubator.” This could mean a variety of things. We might identify an organization willing to build out a leadership incubator within its portfolio of programs. Or we might ask existing leadership initiatives or incubators to adopt cross- generational elements as part of their programming. For instance, Rockefeller could incorporate a pairing of next generation and current feminist leaders in their upcoming Bellagio programs. Or we might more broadly catalyze a “campaign” challenging or inviting women leaders to join with someone across generations and geographies to learn from one another over the course of the coming year. We could create milestones or virtual gatherings leading into the twenty-fifth anniversary of Beijing – in which we capture and tell the stories of cross- generational leadership pairings that are making a difference.

One immediate action has been the formation of the “[five4five](#)” challenge stewarded by five members of the room and announced at the Horasis Extraordinary meeting. The goal of this grassroots social media campaign is to galvanize women supporting women to ensure full and effective leadership and participation at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.

In addition, we are working on a platform for action to drive networked and inclusive leadership across gender equality convening spaces. This platform will consist of a core set of accountabilities in order to provide

pathways for grassroots, indigenous, and young gender equality advocates to engage in traditionally 'elite' spaces; pair leaders across generations and geographies to learn from one another; and build new relationships grounded in meaningful partnership, not paternalism. We are planning to enact this platform in spaces where Room 5 networks are convening, beginning with Committed Women Leaders, Women Political Leaders, and at CARE. We invite all room members to join us in helping to develop this platform, to discuss inclusive leadership and incorporate a gender equality lens into the recommendations of all rooms.

These actions will contribute to SDG 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.

Proposal 2: A creative competition to advance breakthrough messaging on gender equality

Room 5 also conceptualized a global competition¹ that could advance creative breakthrough messaging for SDG 5. COVID-19 threatens to overwhelm gender equality messaging given news coverage and global rhetoric focused on the pandemic, but it has also meant that more people are online and seeking to engage with entertaining and creative content. Moreover, the #BlackLivesMatter movement has pushed the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion to the forefront of global consciousness. The competition would invite the general public to submit content that will inspire innovative and inclusive conversations around gender equality. Submissions could include poetry, photographs, essays, film/TV pitches, music, memes, and more.

The barrier to entry for this competition should be low. The competition should welcome formal creatives and non-creatives alike to participate. It should also encourage submissions from diverse people, including men/non-binary people, people of color, people with disabilities, and people without a lot of financial or technological resources. Submission instructions should be as short and simple as possible, and in multiple languages (the official languages of the UN at a minimum). The platforms for submission should be accessible to diverse people and welcome different types of content.

Room 5 also envisioned an innovative prize model: a "basket of prizes." That is, we would make a variety of prizes available and give winners of the challenge the option to choose their prize, driving home the idea "that you are in charge of your own empowerment and defining what advancement means to you." Potential prizes for this basket of prizes could include time with a celebrity/public figure (the purpose of including this as a prize is to show winning can be about connectivity and humanity), payment for the intellectual property of the winning content, sponsorship to conferences, and more.

The Room noted it would be critical to have a diverse judging panel. From the onset, the Room stressed the importance of elevating "non-usual suspects" in the operationalization and popularization of the competition (e.g., minority led/global south managing partners and firms).

If executed well, this competition is expected to bring in the "non-converted" to support the movement for gender equality; build excitement in the run up to the 2021 Generation Equality Forum, possibly through a partnership with UN Women; provide advisory support on messaging for leaders advocating for SDG 5; and keep gender equality at the forefront of the global agenda as the world works to "build back better."

¹ There was some discussion in the room around whether "competition" is a feminist term. In the end, the group reached consensus that encouraging women and girls to compete for accomplishments can be feminist and failing to do so actually harms women and girls.



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



MODERATORS

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November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 6 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

Access to water and sanitation connects to health, education, inequality, productivity and other key areas

- **Neonatal fatalities:** Handwashing interventions result in a [41% drop in neonatal fatality](#).
- **Child mortality:** Diarrhea caused by dirty water and poor toilets kills a child under 5 roughly [every 2 minutes](#).
- **Fatalities:** In 2016, diarrheal diseases were [the second leading cause of death](#) in low-income countries.
- **Gender inequality:** Women in Africa, born during rainfall deficiencies are more likely to [grow up stunted](#).
- **Education:** Globally, [31% of schools](#) don't have clean water and [34% lack decent toilets](#).
- **Education and inequality:** [25% of girls in India](#) skip school during menstruation due to lack of sanitation.
- **Productivity:** Every \$1 invested in water and toilets [returns an average of \\$4](#) in increased productivity.

Background

The COVID-19 crisis has brought home forcibly a major – and unnecessary – tragedy that is unfolding before our eyes: lack of access to water and soap for handwashing is thwarting COVID-19 pandemic mitigation efforts around the world. Water is a key “PPE” (Personal Protective Equipment), yet [2 out of 5 people](#) do not have access to a basic handwashing facility with soap at home. Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 6, “Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, is way off track. Water is needed – by people, for production, and for the planet – and yet it is limited and compromised. At the same time, water is generally taken for granted, and those that need it direly tend to often focus their action and demands on other seemingly more pressing sectoral needs, like schoolbooks, nurses, food, housing, or jobs.

Action opportunities going forward

From the perspective of organizations and professional fields that *use* water or are *impacted* by the people-dimension of

water use and accessibility, namely education, health, industry, youth, and trade unions, several Action Opportunities offer themselves up that could be taken on by leaders around the world, collaborating with each other and leveraging the convening power, delivery capacities, energy, and can-do attitude of their organizations.

Global advocacy: Mobilizing funding through a “WASH is the best PPE” campaign

Background

There is a need for more and new advocacy at different levels. Encouraging leadership by Heads of State would ensure that strong commitment could “trickle down” to policy makers and increase financial flows. Encouraging leadership among companies and civil society organizations active in fields that need or use water can also go a long way. Action-oriented advocacy can focus on convergent points between political agendas to which water can add, bringing greater understanding and motivation for people who are not “typical” actors in the water space themselves but have means and motivation to bring about change.

Action

An immediate imperative for global access exists right now in that access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is critical for the prevention of the further spread of COVID-19; in fact, WASH can be considered one of the best, possibly THE best, “Personal Protective Equipment” (PPE). Yet, the provision of WASH has not gained adequate traction. Providing WASH for all would amount to [US\\$115 billion per year](#) and, at the same time, create millions of jobs, oftentimes for unskilled workers and positively impact incomes and economic development. A campaign to raise awareness of and funding for “*WASH as a PPE in the fight against COVID-19*” could have a huge positive impact on people’s lives. A way forward would include, as part of such a campaign, the ongoing engagements with Ministers of Finance (e. g. through Sustainable Water and Sanitation for All (SWA) Partners), the Heads of States COVID-19 committee, globally operating companies, philanthropy, and the World Economic Forum (WEF), as well as work to mobilize action to identify and invest in specific and cost effective water-focused steps to limit the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

Education and schools as agents of change: Mobilizing pupils to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by investing in hygiene and sanitation in school buildings

Background

Where local communities are empowered especially with respect to water and sanitation services, and improved hygiene practices, and where Governments listen to these communities, schools can be a good place for community engagement and to coordinate for the common benefit. Handwashing can be promoted in schools – for COVID-19 prevention and hygiene – but only if WASH facilities are available. Schools are the right place for WASH interventions as they help younger generations adopt good habits which they can then influence their parents to adopt. Funding such programs has been a challenge in the past but could see new opportunities in the COVID-19 prevention and rebuilding context. A true “social contract” with and between communities would be important, reinforcing the sense of responsibilities amongst all parties. High-level advocacy on the linkages between WASH and Education is a powerful tool for making progress in this area.

Action

Opportunities for action may exist in many countries, including, for example, Ecuador. Ecuador, a country committed to providing universal education to all its citizens, including and in particular to those in rural and remote areas, faces huge challenges in providing water and sanitation to the schools that are located in remote areas. The majority of these schools have no or little access to adequate sanitation services. At the same time, [Ecuador aims to provide breakfasts every day for schoolchildren in need](#), a goal that the economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis have rendered impossible to meet right now. Noting the connections between healthy meals, clean water, and hygiene, and the link between the provision of water and sanitation and COVID-19 prevention, Ecuador is considering a new initiative that would mobilize actors across various sectors to provide water and soap to primary schools, in particular in remote areas.

Action

At the global level, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education had decided to include, in her July [2020 Report](#) to the General Assembly on the state of education, a particular focus on the interrelations between the right to education and the rights to water and sanitation. She committed to further communicate the link between education and access to water and sanitation in other interactions at the UN level, in particular the value of WASH for COVID-19 prevention. Furthermore, as a member of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), a specialized organization that brings together, amongst others, some 50+ members states, and in particular their education ministers, she committed to also leverage this forum for highlighting the value of WASH for COVID-19 prevention and as a protective “device” for individuals.

Global as well as local action: mobilizing the health sector for COVID-19 prevention by providing WASH facilities

Background

Much of the current COVID-19 related briefings do not include WASH; the necessity of access to water, sanitation, and hygiene appears to often be considered a detail. There are opportunities to change this. It should be possible to include – in various upcoming briefings for Heads of States and other health leaders, including Sector Ministers – the importance of WASH as PPE for their staff and their sectors; and to include promotion of WASH in immunization campaigns.

Even in the current context within which much attention is paid to limiting the spread of COVID-19 and the need for medical facilities, there is often little systematic attention paid to the fact that even health facilities in many parts of the world struggle to access clean water. One possible step could be to set up in-country coalitions that would bring together the public and the private sector around the goal of ensuring that all health facilities in a particular area or country have sustainable access to clean water and sanitation, working with local/in-country enterprises and through local/in-country chambers of commerce.

Livable water: mobilizing global corporates to invest in water, sanitation, and hygiene in the communities their employees live in

Background

The private sector's commitments typically focus on the situation of its employees themselves, such as commitments to provide livable wages and to respect ILO labor standards. To this end, the private sector has so far remained mostly silent on whether or not the communities their employees live in are able to provide safe water, sanitation, and hygiene – but the context of the spread of COVID-19 could be a reason for changing this.

Action

Existing commitments could be taken a step further – towards building a coalition of companies that would seek to build on pledges to provide access to water and sanitation to employees in the workplace and to also work with the communities in which employees and their families live to ensure WASH provision there.¹ Initiatives like this may well also have other positive side-effects, e.g. in terms of employment generation. Furthermore, such initiatives could instill new energy in the broader in-country community and political set-up responsible for WASH provision.

Focus on inequality: A new way of mobilizing stronger voices for access to water and sanitation, including by Women leaders

Background

COVID-19 has brought to light many persistent inequalities – in access to social services, health, education, jobs, protecting FMM – including, very visibly, inequality in accessing water and sanitation. In many countries, inequality has been growing over the past years, becoming also a major political factor and emerging as a concern also for businesses around the world.

Action

One specific way of building a thrust for concrete action would be to engage current and future women leaders – within and beyond the water sector – to promote access to water, sanitation, and hygiene for gender equality, COVID-19 response for families and communities, and reducing inequality.

¹ This commitment would go beyond the [2015] WBSCD launched “WASH Pledge” that invites companies to sign up to providing clean water and sanitation to their [employees in the workplace](#).

APPENDIX: MODERATORS AND PARTICIPANTS

Co-Moderators:

Catarina de Albuquerque, Chief Executive Officer, Sanitation and Water for All
Dr. Letitia Obeng, Chair, Water Integrity Network (WIN) and Patron, Global Water Partnership (GWP)
Jennifer Sara, Director, The World Bank, Water

Participants:

Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation
HE Monserrat Creamer, Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Ecuador
Professor Dr. Val Curtis, Director of the Environmental Health Group, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Haley Hill, Director, Office of the President, and chief of Staff, Global Development, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Evalin Karijo, Project Director, Youth Advocacy Project
Peter ter Kulve, President, Home Care, Health and Well-being, Unilever
Dominic Waughray, Managing Director, World Economic Forum Centre for Global Public Goods
Zouera Youssoufou, Managing Director and CEO, The Aliko Dangote Foundation



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



MODERATORS

Ashvin Dayal and Michael E. Webber

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 7 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

Focus area

What are the biggest **opportunities to advance and optimize technology for distributed renewable energy in underserved markets**? What actionable priorities could accelerate progress over the next 12-18 months, particularly in light of current crises?

Practical opportunities and challenges

- Transformational advances in hardware for power have occurred in recent years. A precipitous cost reduction in battery storage technology, particularly lithium ion batteries, on the heels of a similar cost reduction trajectory in solar photovoltaics (PV) have fundamentally disrupted the sector. In the United States, building new clean energy portfolios (a combination of renewables, storage, energy efficiency, and demand response) is now [cheaper than building new fossil generation](#) and will soon be cheaper than operating existing gas-fired power plants.
- Yet the approach to building out new power systems to serve the [nearly 800 million people](#) in the world without access to electricity is dominated by traditional grid development paths. Despite much talk about and promotion of distributed energy resources and off-grid energy access, of the [~\\$40B poured into the power sector](#) in sub-Saharan Africa in 2018, a little more than [1 percent](#) was put into distributed or off-grid solutions.
- Core impediments today to scaling distributed renewable energy in underserved markets are about harnessing existing advances and unlocking the dynamic interface of technology, regulation, finance, and policy – and largely not about pure technology R and D innovation (except in digital tech/modeling and, on a longer-term horizon, long-term storage).
- In the context of balkanized approaches, success in scaling renewable energy in underserved markets will require convergent execution on what matters, particularly from governments and donors – lest we lose the next decade to fragmented pilots.
- Success will also require surmounting the false choices that tend to dictate the discourse in the market today, particularly between:
 - Off-grid/decentralized vs. on-grid/centralized (we need integrated grid systems that drive both energy access, resilience, and sustainability)
 - Small-scale vs. large-scale (we need mixed-scale and networked/orchestrated solutions; just thinking of this as kW-scale for access or GW-scale for climate change will limit creative new solutions)
- Emerging COVID-19 recovery efforts and associated public investments in infrastructure represent a critical short-term opportunity to either more deeply entrench siloed approaches – or advance holistic models for a green, inclusive recovery.

Illustrative areas for action include:

- **Building capacity around integrated energy systems modeling** to unlock the synergies between grid-based and distributed renewable technologies, by building the capacity of utilities, regulators, and policy makers to fully leverage the potential. This is an area where NGOs/industry and others could partner to build an Africa-oriented power systems operator/modeling group that could bridge the false choice between grid vs. off-grid technologies by identifying what's possible and how to build the future grid intelligently from the start.
- **Harnessing advances in renewable technologies (especially battery storage and PV) by bringing purchasing scale to new markets, particularly distributed electrification systems for underserved populations.** This could include aggregated purchasing and/or volume guarantees across large and small companies to reduce costs and make new markets for disruptive technology. For example, bringing the current cost of these technologies in sub-Saharan Africa in line with global the average alone will drive down the realized price of energy storage by 70 percent and reduce the overall installed cost of a DRE system by approximately 30 percent.¹ It would require mobilizing blended private financing to rapidly expand capital available to developers to fund purchases, perhaps best deployed in markets with policy enabling context associated with countries participating in the emerging results-based pan-African Universal Energy Fund.

¹ Based on modeling by The Rockefeller Foundation, using World Bank and Bloomberg New Energy Finance data.

- **Supporting business model innovation to leverage emerging technologies** – for example by promoting collaboration between on-grid and off-grid solutions for rural customer markets. For example, there could be major efforts to use data from utilities to improve planning through complementary (rather than competitive) solutions that could attract large scale private capital. Approaches could include identifying and backing 3-4 progressive utilities most interested in an integrated approach where a stronger enabling environment is in place (e.g., Nigeria).



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



MODERATORS

Marcela Escobari and Otis Rolley

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 8 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

Problem

Amid unprecedented economic and social disruption, the U.S. and many countries around the world face the challenge to rebuild a resilient economy that can deliver decent employment and opportunities for mobility to all. Good quality jobs that provide opportunities for upward mobility are not only an end in their own right, but are also important drivers of strong, stable, and broad-based economic growth. A mounting body of evidence shows that better jobs are associated with increased [labor force participation](#), [productivity growth](#), [aggregate economic performance](#), [equity](#), [health](#), [public safety](#), and [social cohesion](#). Improving job quality and mobility is [compatible with high](#) employment levels, and also [disproportionately benefits](#) women and people of color.

But even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans were [increasingly](#) working low-wage, dead-end jobs, struggling to move up in the labor market with [declining](#) and uneven access to training and development. Upward mobility rates for low-wage workers have been [falling](#) for decades, often leaving workers churning through low-wage jobs without clear pathways for [advancement](#). Not surprisingly, waning job quality and economic mobility [disproportionately](#) affect women and non-white workers, who are overrepresented [in the low-wage workforce](#). As a result, the American economy is trending towards a lose-lose-lose equilibrium in which firms fall short of realizing their full potential, workers struggle to access opportunity, and the country fails to achieve shared prosperity.

Empowering stakeholders to create good jobs requires a whole-of-society approach. While creating enough high-quality, upwardly-mobile jobs is [unambiguously](#) good for society and [arguably](#) for many companies, doing so may not necessarily make sense for all firms at all times. In many cases, only public policy can raise the floor for workers while maintaining a level playing field for companies. However, effective policy design requires data on the prevalence and distribution of good jobs as well as on the levers that can drive improvement—data that only firms can provide. Agreeing on a set of metrics to capture firm practices is therefore essential to understanding opportunity structures and augmenting efforts to build a good jobs economy.

Widespread calls for accountability and racial justice have placed companies at a historical crossroads, prompting self-reflection and an ambition to create opportunity as well as foster equity for marginalized workers. In response, Room 8 will assemble firm leaders and experts to harness this momentum and create a framework for firms to proactively measure their investments in growing the quantity and access to good jobs. Tracking the right set of metrics will enable firms to more accurately assess how their business contributes towards these shared goals.

Objectives

1. Identify a simple, streamlined set of KPIs (key performance indicators) that firms can use to measure and enhance their creation of high-quality, upwardly-mobile jobs.
2. Form a coalition of private and public sector stakeholders (state and local) willing to lead by example by using and promoting these metrics to improve job quality and economic mobility.

Room 8 will build on the efforts of innovative ESG metrics organizations, such as [JUST Capital](#), [WEF](#), and the [Embankment Project for Inclusive Capitalism](#). Room 8 will also identify channels to disseminate its metrics framework, including to a coalition of over 1,000 firms that have signed Leadership Now's [Business for Racial Equity Pledge](#). In so doing, Room 8 will create a supportive infrastructure, ensuring that the developed metrics move the needle for low-wage workers in the US.



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



MODERATORS

CV Madhukar and Kevin O'Neil

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 9 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

SDG 9 calls for building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. It is important not only in its own right, but for making progress on every other SDG.

The 2020 edition of Room 9 focused on an idea raised in last year's 17 Rooms: digital public infrastructure, also referred to as digital public goods or platforms. These are base functions like digital identity, digital payments, or online civil and vital registries that allow governments, businesses, and individuals to carry out basic transactions with each other. Above this core lies a broader set of digital solutions for specific sectors, such as platforms for on-line learning or for managing healthcare data. Underpinning all of these are rules about who has access to what data passing through these platforms, creating a framework for privacy, competition, and transparency. Room 9 noted that it is worth advancing all of these elements of digital infrastructure, even if they require different tactics and timelines.

Room 9 confirmed the idea that digital public infrastructure can advance SDG 9 and the other SDGs. For example, it could allow a government to shift from fuel subsidies to direct cash transfers to poor households—a change that promises both anti-poverty and environmental benefits.

The number and importance of such use cases have only grown as the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the digitization of commerce, education, and government. This has created a gap between those with access to digital infrastructure and those without. Those countries that have world-class digital infrastructure have weathered the pandemic better than those without. The aggressive use of “data exhaust” from digital transactions to monitor disease spread and compliance with shutdowns highlights the crucial need to balance public good and private protections in data use.

Last year's Room 9 mooted the idea of an anchor organization to promote digital public infrastructure globally. This year's group argued that the idea had become actionable this year, with a UN High Level Panel [calling for digital public goods](#) and various efforts underway to make this reality (e.g., [cadpi.io](#), [digitalpublicgoods.net](#), [societalplatform.org](#)). An agenda for such an organization could include:

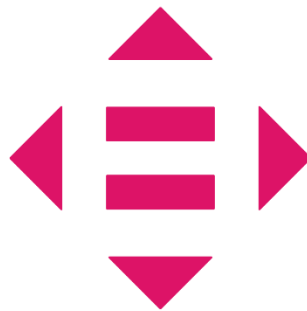
- **Demonstrate the value** of digital public infrastructure and the strengths of open tools to national governments and developers.
- **Align a community of supporters** around open software, standards, and systems that can potentially be implemented anywhere in the world, while making sure they are compatible with existing local systems.
- **Cultivate a local developer community** by ensuring that every local tech player can be a part of the innovation by building new tools on top of globally provided tools.
- **Build capacity and confidence of governments** to understand and build digital infrastructure. Outdated procurement practices and lack of experiences are a blockage, but strategies like embedding tech talent in government work.
- **Promote balanced policies on access and use of data**, especially by supporting local advocates, making data reasonably open to local businesses, governments and organizations, creating safeguards against surveillance (especially by government), and ensuring that individuals are empowered to access, control, and use data about them.

Participants identified steps to take in the next year to advance this vision, especially:

- Assemble a broader set of supporters and asking them for a commitment to support digital public infrastructure. These could focus on both broadly useful applications (e.g., identity, payments) and those for specific sectors (e.g. electronic health records, contact tracing).
- Support one country or regional example to do a full implementation, running from basic data policy to digital identity to applications in healthcare or education, demonstrating the value to others.
- Use the COVID-19 crisis to demonstrate what a coordinated push on digital public goods looks like, by articulating standards for data collection and use and supporting common platforms for managing testing, tracing, and vaccination data.



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



MODERATORS

Martin Abregu and Margaret Biggs

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 10 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

2020 has exposed a crisis of inequality. The Sustainable Development Goals focused attention on how poor and marginalized communities were being left behind. The COVID-19 pandemic and economic shock has accentuated these fault lines. The pandemic has disproportionately impacted poor and vulnerable groups, women and girls, and those working in informal and unregulated sectors. These groups have been hardest hit by the economic downturn, loss of income, school closures, and unhealthy work and living conditions. The climate crisis inevitably threatens to compound these inequalities.

The achievement of the SDGs now depends on putting in place the conditions for a **fair, equal, and just recovery**. The destiny of people and societies for the next decade will be largely shaped by the public health and economic response and recovery packages being put in place by national governments and international financial institutions. Agenda 2030 will fail unless global institutions and foundations, national governments, and local communities make tackling economic, social, and political inequality the principal goal for 2020-21 and beyond. Economic recovery itself will fall short unless it is broad-based and inclusive.

Social protection – conceived broadly as the protection of people, their wellbeing, livelihoods, and capacity - can be the “entry point” for tackling worsening inequality. An action agenda for inclusive social protection is the response-recovery-reset from the current crisis and a necessary catalyst for success on Agenda 2030.

A social protection action agenda would be grounded in three core principles:

- Targeting the needs of the bottom 40 percent of the population;
- Empowering and promoting inclusion and opportunity for all; and
- Giving agency and voice to civil society, particularly those representing the most vulnerable members of society.

Room 10 identified five actions for 2020 and 2021 that have the potential to be highly consequential in tackling inequality, both in terms of addressing the immediate crisis and the achievement of Agenda 2030.

#JustRecovery Campaign

The 2020 crisis has brought widespread realization on the part of citizens, communities, and policy-makers around the world that existing inequalities are unsustainable and unfair, and that new models of social and economic progress need to be advanced. This realization cuts across political, geographic, and sectoral lines. Take for example the words of the Financial Times, one of the world's leading business oriented publications - the pandemic has “laid bare the frailty of the social contract. Radical reforms are required to forge a society that will work for all.”

To drive this shift forward, we propose prioritizing a wide-ranging multi-stakeholder campaign - government, civil society, business, communities, and scholars - to champion and drive forward a “Just Recovery.” This campaign, within and across countries, would mobilize around the critical importance of putting inclusion and equity at the center of recovery efforts and future policy directions.

Accelerate adoption of new accountability and measurement tools

The current crisis has underscored the importance of distribution-sensitive indicators and disaggregated data in tracking impacts and designing policy responses. The “Beyond GDP” measurement agenda needs to be accelerated and mainstreamed by international financial institutions and national governments. In particular:

- Distributional metrics need to be consistently used by IFIs, national governments, and donors as diagnostic, design, and tracking tools. For example, the IMF/WB should integrate distribution-sensitive indicators into their advisory services and country-based reporting and prioritize in-country capacity building. Donors and foundations should also help developing countries develop the capacity to produce and utilize these indicators on a regular basis.
 - A top priority should be advancing and improving the fiscal redistribution indicator (SDG 10.2.4) as a diagnostic and tracking tool.

- G20 countries should undertake a special report in 2021 on the extent of income inequality and its trajectory by gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, and other relevant variables, as well as an assessment of policies to tackle inequality during and post-pandemic.

Build universal social protection systems

National governments need to be encouraged and supported in their efforts to build comprehensive social protection systems that aim for universal coverage with a focus on those most at risk of being left behind. At their best, these measures reach the most vulnerable, meet basic needs (cash, food, water, detergents); use non-governmental actors and local governance institutions to reach vulnerable groups; and are timely and responsive. At their best, social protection measures are also integrated with the expansion of economic opportunities for those who are excluded from education and skills training, business credit, and other levers that improve their ability to generate incomes for themselves and their families.

Mobilize finance

Social protection is additional to other essentials like education and public health and will require tapping new sources of funds, more effective deployment of existing resources and efficiency improvements in social spending and delivery. To this end:

- Domestic resource mobilization should target building progressive tax systems, tax and revenue collection capacity, and data transparency especially with respect to tax records, corporate tax reform, and tax transparency. Governments could also consider earmarking revenues from carbon taxes and/or reducing energy subsidies;
- International and national policy efforts to tackle tax evasion (BEPS 2.0) and illicit flows should be accelerated. These “lost” revenues far exceed official aid and direct foreign investment flows to developing economies;
- Bilateral donors should accelerate their quick-disbursing aid to help fill fiscal deficits in social spending;
- Any future general debt relief should consider the distributional impact of government spending, its social purposes, and be based on concrete improvements in economic utilization of funds and on governance performance;
- As new sources of global financing become available, top priority should be the creation of a Global Fund for Social Protection that is designed to support populations in the most fragile and poor states and to provide shock protection in future crises, including climate change; and
- To get more resources directly into the hands of households, digital technologies should be expanded (to facilitate online banking and transfers) and remittance costs should be reduced close to zero.

Engage and empower citizens and make national governments more accountable

The long-term political sustainability and effectiveness of social protection hinges on empowered citizen participation, especially of the most vulnerable sectors and indigenous peoples. Rules and institutions for empowered participation are in abundant supply in different legal systems---from policy consultations to citizen assemblies to free, prior, and informed consent of affected indigenous peoples. They now need to be effectively implemented in the design and execution of social protection programs. They also need to be embedded in the operations of national governments to ensure equal and fair opportunities for citizens and accountability for the use of public resources.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



MODERATORS

James Anderson and Tony Pipa

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 11 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

Context

Mayors and local governments have performed well at the frontlines of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has positioned them to be key leaders – both nationally and globally – in shaping an inclusive recovery. Their response during the acute crisis gave the world a formidable demonstration of their role protecting residents as well as acting as the last line of defense against misinformation.

There is consensus among the participants of Room 11 that local leaders are – and must remain – focused on “building back better” in response to these crises. This is as true of the response to the public health and economic emergencies wrought by COVID-19, as it is of these leaders’ need to grapple with the social crisis highlighted by issues of systemic racism and police brutality.

Mayors and other local leaders must address an ever-growing list of issues amid the pandemic, from dwindling resources to tensions with national governments. The SDGs can serve as a model for facing these challenges and elevating the collective agenda of equity and sustainability, connecting their local priorities to a global community of peers and stakeholders collectively committed to supporting and reinforcing each other’s efforts.

The group identified three key themes and two action steps to work toward:

Overheard

“The existential threat to mayors is an existential threat to the SDGs. And I really feel that coming out of this is the need for us to recognize that we need to protect subnational government, because that’s the channel through which the SDGs will actually be implemented.”

Key themes

- 1) We need to recognize the significance of local leadership to advancing the SDGs in COVID-19 era. Without mayors, the SDGs are not achievable: Local leaders are implicated in 68 percent of the SDG targets. We need to strengthen the **agency, capacity, and resources** of mayors to carry out that significant role:
 - a. **Representation:** Cities are not just locations for policy interventions or spaces for action, they rely upon the leadership of mayors who form the frontlines of the response and the recovery. We need to make sure mayors are central to designing the solutions – that they are not only in the room but leading the conversation and getting the support they need: “We need to move beyond an afterthought (...) Those who have been voted in the cities need to be represented.”
 - b. **Agency (“No one is safe until everyone is safe”):** In many countries, local leaders and especially mayors are under intense pressure, challenged by their national governments and political leaders, and in some cases are personally threatened for their actions. Our interventions must invest in and support City Hall: build their capacity, protect their independence, and leverage their credibility.
 - c. **Funding and budgeting:** Local governments worldwide face severe fiscal and budget constraints. Interactions with national governments and the global financial infrastructure will be instrumental in seeking relief.
- 2) Mayors are central to **restoring and protecting public health and economic security** in the face of the pandemic. They are **dual tracking**, responding in the immediate to the crises of health, inequities, and injustice, while envisioning a recovery that will be transformative and result in more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable cities.
 - a. **COVID-19 is the immediate priority:** Over the next 12-18 months, they will play an outsized role in protecting public health and stopping COVID by managing behavior change; disseminating a vaccine; and adapting public services to make citizens feel safe and whole.
 - b. **Partnerships:** Meanwhile, they will have to govern in the face of severe fiscal constraints and the unavailability of typical resources (county, state, country, private sector). To execute their vision for a transformative recovery, mayors will need to influence national and global decisions and develop new collaborations and partners, both locally and globally.
 - c. **Local policy decision-making should use the lens of addressing structural inequities and the climate emergency.** The pandemic has exposed where social supports are falling short and where long-term structural adjustments will need to be made to address these failures, especially to leave no one behind. Rebuilding and new investment provides an opening for cities to prioritize solutions that work both for recovery and for the long-term transformation of urban life.

- 3) Mayors' success depends upon **legitimacy and trust** from their public
 - a. **Evidence-based communications:** Over the next 12-18 months, mayors will have to combat disinformation and resistance to policies and practices that are necessary to advance public health, counter the pandemic, and restart the economy (vaccines, masks, lockdowns, etc.).
 - b. **Legitimacy:** Mayors need solutions that can reinforce their legitimacy by protecting community assets (from small businesses to civil society organizations), promoting transparency, facilitating citizen engagement, and leveraging non-state stakeholders that are trusted across the city ecosystem (communities, NGOs, local associations, mutual aid networks, etc.).

Actions and Proposals

- 1) **Advance tools and platforms that strengthen the legitimacy and trust** of local leaders
 - a. **Support mayors in combating misinformation and communicating key health measures** to counteract the pandemic through communications tools and approaches that include collaboration with media partners, citizen engagement, and leveraging trusted civic assets to build legitimacy for sensible health practices.
 - b. **Raise global awareness regarding the centrality of mayors and local leaders** to driving a transformative recovery and advancing the SDGs, increasing public support and strengthening their positions vis-à-vis other levels of government through a global communications campaign.
- 2) **Advance local and global models of mutual aid** that support mayors to protect health and economic security in the short-term, and advance equity and sustainability over the long-term:
 - a. Support and advance funds/facilities (such as the Swedish Municipal Credit Agency and the proposed U20 Global Urban Resilience Fund) **to strengthen the financial independence of cities and mayors** and reshape the international financial structure to be more city-led.
 - b. **Develop, collect, disseminate tools that enable mayors to support and leverage community assets** from across the city ecosystem (local civil society, local businesses, intermediaries, neighborhoods, mutual aid networks, social entrepreneurs, etc.).
 - c. **Strengthen the international infrastructure** to scale these tools and provide expertise, economic analysis, or applications that support mayors as they come under duress.

APPENDIX: MODERATORS AND PARTICIPANTS

Co-Moderators:

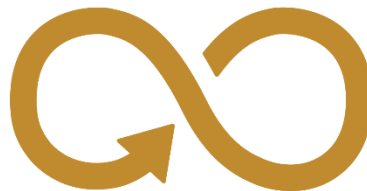
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Jenny Durkan, Mayor, Seattle
Mauricio Rodas, Visiting Scholar, University of Pennsylvania; Former Mayor of Quito
Nina Hachigian, Deputy Mayor for International Affairs, Los Angeles
Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner, International Affairs, New York City
Randall Woodfin, Mayor, Birmingham, Alabama
Sascha Haselmayer, Public Interest Technology Fellow, New America
Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, Mayor, Freetown



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



MODERATORS

Matthew Bishop and Jessica Long

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 12 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

According to the UN, sustainable consumption and production is about promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services, green and decent jobs and a better quality of life for all.

Situation

If the global population reaches 9.6 billion by 2050, the equivalent of [almost 3 planets](#) will be required to sustain current lifestyles. The patterns that need to change are outlined across the 8 targets on efficient use of natural resources, halving global food waste, sound management of chemicals, reducing waste, and encouraging the private sector to integrate sustainable practices across their value chain (refer to sidebar).

SDG 12 HIGH PRIORITY TARGETS

[12.2](#) By 2030, achieve sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
[12.3](#) By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels, and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses
[12.5](#) By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse
[12.a](#) Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production

Today, 1/3 of food produced – [or 1.3 billion tons](#) – for human consumption each year is wasted; households directly consume [29 percent of global energy](#) and contribute [21 percent of CO2 emissions](#); energy use is projected to grow by another [35 percent in OECD countries by 2030](#); and [more than 1 billion people](#) still do not have access to fresh water.

Complication

Unsustainable resource use, dysfunctional/abusive supply chains, minimal use of renewables, insufficient reuse/recycling, fragmented waste treatment, inadequate ESG emphasis by investors, and other funders of activity, are among the trends that impede progress on SDG 12.

- Less than 0.5 percent fresh water is available of 3 percent total ([which is frozen](#)).
- Less than 1 percent clothing is recycled – costs \$100 billion in materials – [annually](#).
- 95 percent of plastic packaging value is lost – costs \$80-120 billion – [annually](#).
- Only 20 percent of world energy consumption [comes from renewables](#).
- Global food waste costs [\\$940 billion in economic losses annually](#).

Status

- Worldwide material consumption reached 92.1B tons ([+254 percent since 1970](#)).

Is this progress?

- Material footprint – the quantity of material extraction required to meet consumption per capita increased from [8 tons in 1990 to 12 tons in 2015](#).
- Policy frameworks are growing: [71 countries and the EU have 303 instruments to regulate sustainable consumption and production](#).
- Average compliance rate on Montreal Protocol, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions is [approximately 70 percent](#).
- UNEP serves as the 10YFP Secretariat and funds SDG 12 implementation in developing countries and countries with [economies in transition](#).
- Over [\\$100 trillion](#) is now invested by money managers that have signed UN Principles of Responsible Investment, but implementation is too often superficial.

COVID-19 Impact (non-exhaustive)

- COVID-19 impact on consumption patterns have led to supply/demand and supply chain challenges leading to piling up of waste as suppliers dispose overstocked inventories.

- Waste recycling has also been affected due to COVID-19, with [at least 50 curb-side recycling programs reported to be suspended across the U.S.](#)

- Health concerns from COVID-19 have scaled the consumption of single-use items.
- Quarantine policies in most countries have led to changes in consumption patterns. Increased demand for online home delivery of consumer goods will lead to increase in the organic and inorganic waste generated by the households.
- Increased pressure on investors and business to demonstrate commitment to society/stakeholders other than shareholders.

Recommendations for 2020-2021:

Overall Recommendation/Hypothesis: We need to leverage the increased government funding (stimulus/bailout conditions), investments and policies/regulations associated with COVID-19 (e.g. through stimulus packages, conditionality) to “build back better” systems of sustainable production and consumption.

Focus Area: Focusing on mobilizing coalitions and recommending government policies that encourage investment in cross-sector partnerships, innovation and minimum standards around **waste** (broadly defined), specifically:

- 12.3 - By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels, and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.
- 12.5 - By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse.

We outline here a global approach, with a focus on piloting circular economies in cities and regions:

Waste is an economic, environmental and societal problem.

- Global food waste costs \$940 billion in economic losses annually. 95 percent of plastic packaging value is lost – costs \$80-120 billion annually.
- Unmanaged waste is polluting our streams, oceans, food systems and is impacting air quality, land stability.
- Women, children and those living in poverty are disproportionately disadvantaged by wasteful and exploitative practices.

Cities and regional ecosystems are an ideal focus for driving the linear to circular transition, as they are the growing center of human population, economic growth and use of scarce resources.

- More than [80 percent of global GDP](#) is generated in cities
- More than [two-thirds](#) of the world’s energy is consumed in cities, accounting for over 70 percent of global CO2 emissions
- Cities generated [1.3 billion tons](#) of solid waste per year in 2012, which is forecast on current trends to rise to [2.2 billion tons by 2025](#).
- Material consumption by the world’s cities will grow from 40 billion tons in 2010 to about [90 billion tons by 2050](#).

Practical Challenge

Addressing three main challenges associated with waste (both at time of production and at end of use) that are critical to progress Goal 12:

- 1) **Lack of standards** (e.g. waste hierarchy) and requirements (e.g. percent recycled content) around major categories of waste such as plastics, rubber, electronics, etc. including impact measurement.
- 2) **Insufficient infrastructure** to prevent waste (e.g. in food supply chain) and divert from landfill (e.g. recycling facilities).
- 3) **Insufficient incentives** for investors, businesses, and consumers to focus on reducing wasteful behavior.

Desired steps forward in 2021

Cities (and regions) of all sizes and geography need help transitioning from linear to circular, driving toward responsible consumption and production.

We need to **leverage the increased government funding** (stimulus/bailout conditions), investments and policies/regulations associated with COVID-19 (e.g. through stimulus packages, conditionality) to “**build back better**” systems of sustainable production and consumption.

Several organizations (PACE, OECD, Circle Economy, EMF, etc.) have already developed **tools, frameworks, standards, policies, case studies**, etc. around circular cities. We need to get more cities to start their circular journey by leveraging leading practices.

We propose the creation of a “Circular Cities and Regions Accelerator” program focused on:

- **Spreading global best practices and helping make them locally relevant** (i.e. identifying key waste streams and externalities, relevant policies, potential interventions and incentives, etc.)
- **Bringing together local partners** (e.g. govts, financial institutions, non-profits, local businesses, etc.) to create, own and implement circular practices.
- **Advancing funding and other non-financial resources** to specifically support the adoption of circularity/SDG12 across cities.

Goal

Over the next 12-24 months, we would like **100 cities to accelerate progress on their circular objectives** (could be at different stages, i.e. strategy, planning, implementation, measurement, etc.) to progress SDG12.

Potential cities include Denver, Lagos, Phoenix, SLC, Seattle, Portland, Amsterdam, Philadelphia, Nairobi, etc. Cities in OECD, C40, WEF

Immediate next steps

- Strategy and planning (6-8 weeks) – develop the Circular Cities and Regions Accelerator concept, including:
 - theory of change
 - potential partners
 - potential funding sources
 - existing resources/assets
 - key metrics/indicators of success
 - key considerations, e.g. gender and racial equality, mix of urban/rural, human rights
- Cities and partnerships (8-10 weeks)
 - Identify and secure potential partners (private sector, non-profits, donors, knowledge partners, academia, etc.)
 - Secure 2-3 cities (ideally including at least one in a developing country and one in a developed country) for participation in the initial accelerator
 - Develop initial terms and agreements for piloting the Accelerator
- Pilot Circular Cities and Regions Accelerator (6-12 months)
 - Develop city/regional concepts and plans
 - Form local coalitions and confirm funding
 - Develop city/region-specific playbook, leveraging existing or new assets (e.g. OECD, Circle-Economy, EMF, etc.)
 - Provide support to develop strategy and roadmaps/plans
 - Provide support to execute playbook and roadmaps

SDG Interconnections



Removing fossil fuel subsidies creates fiscal space to redirect resources to addressing poverty, education and healthcare. Coupled with the successful delivery of 12.a would target poverty in target countries such as Nigeria.



20 percent of the world's 50 largest food companies have waste reduction programs. Successfully creating the food loss and food waste index (SDG 12.3) would lower food waste and tackle hunger and nutrition in high-impact zones.



Circular principles applied to water recycling, reuse and efficiency increase the quality and accessibility of clear water. Additionally, enhancing materials reuse reduces overall water consumption progressing SDG 6.



The growth of renewables stimulates clean energy use, decoupling energy consumption from resource use. Additionally, new sharing models could reduce energy demands and progress SDG 11 along with SDG 12.



Increasing research and development – especially across developing economies pursuant to target 12.a – will enable to large-scale innovations required to rotate to sustainable production and consumption technologies.



Households consume 29 percent of global energy and the construction industry is one of the largest GHG emitters. Sustainable and resilient infrastructure can conserve energy consumption and reduce emissions.



Resource efficiency reduces overall GHG emissions. Circular models of production and consumption that advances secondary materials – instead of virgin materials – often require less energy (especially energy for extraction)



Sustainable production will lead to reduced land and water pollution, which currently leads to deforestation and biodiversity loss that impacts marine life.



Supply chain labor practices and movements in conflict zones; good governance around waste streams and movement of prohibited items



Cross-sector partnerships and financing will be required to accelerate and scale circular innovations

SDG 12 Reference Sheet

| Target | Indicators | Progress |
|--|---|--|
| 12.1 Implement the 10-Year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries | 12.1.1 Number of countries with sustainable consumption and production (SCP) national action plans or SCP mainstreamed as a priority or a target into national policies | 71 countries plus the EU have participated in reporting. A prototype survey was conducted in 2015 and 82 countries had policy instruments supporting shift to sustainable consumption and production. Handled by 10YFP secretariat |
| 12.2 By 2030, achieve sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources | 12.2.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP | The global material footprint rose from 43 billion metric tons in 1990 to 54 billion in 2000 to 93 billion in 2017 – 113 percent increase since 1990 . Without action it is projected to grow to 190 billion metric tons by 2060. |
| | 12.2.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP | Domestic materials footprint has also increased from 8.1 metric tons of natural resources used per individual in 1990 to 12.2 metric tons in 2017 . High income countries are 13x higher than low-income countries (2 metric tons pp) |
| 12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels, and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses | 12.3.1 (a) Food loss index and (b) food waste index | FAO and UNEP lead 12.3 and the indexes continue to be refined. Government targets need to enhance: countries with more than 30 percent global population do not have targets. |
| 12.4 By 2020, achieve environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment | 12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement | 185 parties to the Basel Conventions; 180 parties to the Rotterdam Convention; 156 parties to the Stockholm Convention; 197 parties to the Focal points for Montreal Protocol and; 35 parties to the Minamata Convention. Next reporting cycle in 2020. |
| | 12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment | The methodology for 12.4.2 completed in July 2019. The Data Assessment tool will be released to NSOs to conduct self-assessments. |
| 12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse | 12.5.1 National recycling rate, tons of material recycled | No official data. The Task Force on Waste Statistics is developing methodology. |
| 12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and trans-national companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle | 12.6.1 Number of companies publishing sustainability reports | 93 percent of the world's largest companies are now reporting on sustainability. |
| 12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities | 12.7.1 Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans | This is a policy-related indicator; 90 countries have been identified as focal points and the data collection survey will be conducted in 2019. |
| 12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature | 12.8.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment | UNESCO uses its quadrennial reporting mechanism to collect data and report on 12.8. The latest round was conducted in 2016 and responses from 82 countries were identified as having suitable data for calculation. The collection will be conducted every 4 years. |
| 12.a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production | 12.a.1 Amount of support to developing countries on research and development for sustainable consumption and production and environmentally sound technologies | No official data about support to developing countries for sustainable R&D. Low and middle income countries tend to spend about half the amount on R&D expenditure as a share of GDP as high income countries. |
| 12.b Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products | 12.b.1 Number of sustainable tourism strategies or policies and implemented action plans with agreed monitoring and evaluation tools | UN World Tourism Organisation (WTO) reports on 12.b. An international questionnaire by WTO will collect tourism statistics to feed into its dataset. The methodology is under review. |
| 12.c Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities | 12.c.1 Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP (production and consumption) and as a proportion of total national expenditure on fossil fuels | An initial baseline data assessment of data availability demonstrates that 99 countries have existing data which can be used to estimate fossil fuels direct transfer, and many have information on tax revenue forgone. The initial reporting started in 2018. Data on direct transfers and tax revenue foregone expected to be put in place by 2020. |



13 CLIMATE ACTION



MODERATORS

Elizabeth Cousens and John Podesta

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 13 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

The direction and nature of the global economic recovery over the next year will be driven by the large-scale response and recovery packages that are being developed and implemented by governments and international financial institutions. If targeted properly, these investments can jumpstart the low-carbon transition and avoid locking in high carbon assets for decades to come. However, we see many worrying signs—rising debt (especially in already heavily indebted developing countries), a raft of new coal projects being pursued and approved, and large amounts of rescue funding given to the fossil fuel industry with few to no conditions. By some estimates, twice the amount of money has been spent globally on rescuing the fossil fuel industry than on supporting low-carbon sectors. To “tip the scales,” we must focus on redirecting funding away from carbon lock-in and toward rapid growth in the development and deployment of low-carbon infrastructure. Infrastructure is particularly important – and was an area where progress was lagging even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For a green investment-driven recovery to be successful, however, it needs to create – and be widely understood to create --a pathway for high-quality jobs, improved public health, environmental justice, energy access, and more inclusive economic growth within and across nations. This requires us to define and fund clear transition pathways for the individuals and communities whose livelihoods are now dependent on the fossil fuel industry and demonstrate that building a more sustainable economy is inextricably linked to the advancement of broader economic and social justice objectives.

Room 13 identified several signature initiatives/focus areas that could substantially contribute to the achievement of these interrelated goals, including:

- **G20-led green infrastructure initiative:** We need to make a decisive shift toward green infrastructure, and a G20 initiative focused on launching a new global platform– and/or elevating and upgrading an existing one– could catalyze that shift. A shared platform would help to prioritize and accelerate investments, disseminate policy ideas, provide risk mitigation tools, streamline funding processes, and ensure that low-carbon projects are cost-competitive with higher carbon ones, particularly in emerging and rapidly developing economies. The G20 is well situated to provide global strategic coordination and direction to such an infrastructure drive, including calling for and committing to build, sustain, and promote the platform, and would be a way to channel major overseas investment flows through the IFIs and the Belt and Road Initiative toward green investment.
- **Drive climate action through debt relief and swaps:** Debt challenges are rising to crisis levels in some countries— some have already defaulted this year and many others face that prospect in the coming months. This debt could be reduced, restructured, or canceled in a way that unlocks resources for national climate action. This could build on the bilateral “debt for nature swaps” that were first implemented in the 1980s and include exploring ways to support robust land restoration for ecosystems that have been decimated or heavily degraded.
- **Mobilize finance for targeted set of transformative “showcase” global projects:** To move beyond the incremental benefits that come with incremental change, and to catalyze excitement for truly transformative climate action, countries could prioritize and mobilize financing to drive such transformations and breakthroughs in a small number of priority areas, each with a clear geographic focus and on a short-term timeline.

One opportunity could be to launch an initiative on greening soft commodity supply chains (soy, palm oil, beef, timber), given the leading role these commodities play in tropical deforestation. This could build on the Bonn Challenge and New York Declaration on Forests and leverage the China-hosted Convention on Biological Diversity COP next year, which would align SDG 13 with other nature-related SDGs.

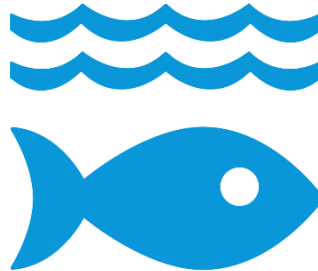
Another opportunity is to strategically align climate and energy access goals through a drive to significantly accelerate the deployment of distributed electricity systems in under-served communities across the developing world by bringing purchasing scale to new projects. Room 7 has proposed large-scale, coordinated public-private effort to drive down the costs of and build new markets for such energy systems, as well as other ideas aimed at building a clean energy future for all.

Other suggestions of showcase projects included 100 percent clean green islands, accelerated just coal transition, and a Congo Basin forest finance initiative.

- **Combine social policies with climate action:** Climate action needs to be closely tied to social and economic justice. The *gilets jaunes* (yellow vest) protests in France— which were triggered by a proposed tax increase on diesel fuel to fund national climate objectives— are a glaring example of what can happen when these priorities are not well aligned. On the other hand, we are seeing encouraging signs of such alignment in the resurgent environmental justice movement, including in the United States. We can help link the two by supporting the UN and its partners in their efforts to integrate the SDGs on jobs, health, education, and hunger, with the SDGs on climate, affordable and clean energy, sustainable production and consumption, and life on land and below water— at the international, national, and local level.
- **Accelerate the development and deployment of green hydrogen:** Green hydrogen could provide a new and important fuel source that is of unique value to hard-to-decarbonize sectors such as heavy industry, freight, and trucking. Building on the early efforts of the EU and Japan, a concerted international push to scale green hydrogen holds promise for enabling an accelerated low-carbon transition across sectors, including in Africa and Asia, where pilot projects are currently being planned. This initiative could be part of a new green infrastructure platform.
- **Build better data on impacts of green policies and investments:** Persuading policy makers to pursue a green path to economic recovery will require better evidence (especially for employment-intensive small businesses) showing that these policies and investments will indeed be more impactful than the familiar alternatives. More high quality, locally-relevant data, and information needs to be collected and shared on the full suite of benefits that will flow from particular policies and investments— perhaps most importantly in terms of job creation, but also associated benefits such as public health. Mayors, governors, sub-national actors, research think tanks, and international financial institutions (IFIs) financing relevant projects around the world can be critical partners in this undertaking. They can be a source of such data and make use of it to inform their own as well as national-level policy making.



14 LIFE BELOW WATER



MODERATORS

Kristin Rechberger and Enric Sala

November 2020

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Premise for Room 14

Overexploitation and global warming are diminishing the ability of the ocean to provide for us. Strategic and effective ocean protection is a quick and cost-effective way to replenish marine life and the critical services it provides, enhancing food security, climate change mitigation, and livelihoods.

Achievable, ambitious game-changers by the end of 2021

- Achieve SDG 14's target of 10 percent of the ocean protected by 2020.¹ Effective management is also necessary.
- Secure "30 percent of the ocean in well-managed, highly protected areas (MPAs)² by 2030" as a target of the post-2020 framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Encourage countries to commit to sustainably manage 100 percent of the ocean area under national jurisdiction, guided by sustainable ocean plans by 2025, beginning with the 14 countries of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. This requires investment in training and tools in marine ecosystem management.
- End harmful subsidies to fishing.³
- Encourage all coastal countries to join the Port States Measures Agreement to help end illegal, unmanaged, and unregulated fishing worldwide.

Integrating SDG 14 with other priority SDGs through 2021

While all the SDGs tie closely to the ocean, COVID-19 has highlighted the need to build stronger resilience for our natural and socioeconomic systems and tighten agendas between SDG 14 and the following for mutual benefit:

SDG 13 (Climate Action):

The ocean is a recipient of climate change impacts such as ocean warming and acidification that kills coral reefs, but it is also a solution. Ocean sediments are the largest carbon sink on earth, but human activities such as bottom trawling and dredging (and eventually deep-sea mining) disturb ocean carbon stocks and release significant amounts of CO₂ that would otherwise be locked in the seafloor. With extreme weather events intensifying, climate adaption has become as important as mitigation. Funding and scaling ocean renewable energies, including off-shore wind, and decarbonizing maritime industries such as shipping is essential.

- We will embed ocean decarbonization and nature-based solutions into climate agendas including the Climate COP 26 (Glasgow) end 2021.

SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being):

By some estimates, the world already [produces](#) enough food for 10 billion people, but we [waste a third of it](#) from the sea (or the farm) to the table. Nearly a third of the [wild fish catch](#) is destined for animal feed, thus redirecting food and essential nutrients from low-food-secure countries to rich, high-food-secure countries. In addition, most fish stocks are [overfished](#) or have already collapsed, because of fisheries mismanagement. A combination of 100 ocean management with well-placed MPAs, international agreements such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and cutting-edge technology can foster replenishment, tracking, and compliance. Sustainable ocean economies with local beneficiaries also helps lift and keep people out of poverty. In addition to nourishing us physically, a healthy ocean restores us psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.

- We will continue to tie the ocean to the human condition including the UN Food Systems Summit end 2021.

SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):

Large-scale industrial fisheries have the largest impact in the ocean, but they employ [24 times less people](#) than small-scale fisheries. Redirecting harmful subsidies to restore sustainable small-scale coastal fisheries and aquaculture would improve livelihoods and local economies on coastal areas worldwide, mostly in developing countries.

¹Strategically placed, well-managed, highly protected marine areas have proven to replenish marine life and related economies that depend on them including tourism and fisheries.

²"Marine protected areas" as per IUCN [definition](#), and level of protection as defined by the [MPA Guide](#).

³There is overcapacity in the global fishing fleet and there is excessive fishing effort to the point that [82% of fish stocks](#) are experiencing overfishing. This is propped up by harmful government subsidies that enable a small number of countries to fish all over the world, threatening and often depleting the food base of developing countries where they fish. WTO should eliminate harmful subsidies.

- We will work to decrease risk, opening investment in a sustainable, just ocean economy with a hopeful watch on the WTO ending harmful subsidies.

SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) & SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation):

In addition to climate pollution, solving for land-based pollution (plastics, nutrient, sewage, and industry run-off) is required for a healthy ocean.

SDG 15 (Life on Land):

'Ridge to reef' and management of coastal and upstream activities is necessary for life on land and below water, including mangroves and other critical coastal ecosystems.

- We will continue to connect land systems to sea systems for smarter management including with geospatial analytics.



15 LIFE ON LAND



MODERATORS

Rosina Bierbaum, Tom Lovejoy, and John Robinson

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 15 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

Chapeau: Ecological integrity¹ is central to SDG 15, contributes to many other SDGs, and highlights the importance of nature-based solutions in restoring human and ecological health². There are many opportunities to sustainably manage and restore natural landscapes, achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), restore degraded ecosystems, and deliver co-benefits, including biodiversity conservation, combating climate change, and maintaining human well-being. Loss of natural ecosystems and ecosystem degradation contribute to many pervasive and costly societal problems; prevention is less costly than responding to impacts such as zoonotic outbreaks, coastal flooding, and invasive species³. 2021 offers unique opportunities to address ecological integrity and the role of nature-based solutions through three treaty negotiations, the Green Recovery efforts to respond to COVID-19, and increasing concerns of the business and economic community (as identified by the World Economic Forum (WEF)).⁴

This is a unique moment in time, where the importance of ecological integrity, human health, and safe and equitable communities converge. As the world “builds back better”, nature-based solutions must be at the core to build resilience of people and ecosystems, while delivering a major contribution to climate stabilization.

The Risk (why we have to meet the SDG 15 targets):

- SDG 15 is one of the “foundational” SDGs, the Earth-Life Supporting System, which underpins progress towards a range of SDG targets. It is central to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. If achieving the SDG 15 targets are at risk, the rest of the SDGs are vulnerable.
- The scale and pace of **biodiversity loss** prompted the WEF in their Global Risk Report to identify it as one of the **top 5 risks** over the next 10 years.
- Biodiversity loss (including both the loss of diversity and the loss of ecosystem function and services) is tied to increased **health risks** (emergence of zoonotic and infectious diseases⁵), **climate risks** (failure to adapt and mitigate climate change), **risks of natural disasters** (loss of wetland, mangrove and coral reef buffering), **food risks** (disruption of food stocks and commodity supply chains), to name a few.
- The significance of SDG 15 rests on its emphasis on:
 - **Protecting the integrity of natural ecosystems.** The importance of retaining the intactness of natural ecosystems is underscored in the emerging consensus of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.⁶
 - **Halting land degradation.** Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality, which involves designing socio-ecological interventions that seek to achieve no net loss of ecosystem function and services, while establishing governance and management systems that deliver on other SDG targets.
 - **Reversing land degradation/ecological restoration.**⁷

¹ Beyer et al. 2019. Substantial losses in ecoregion intactness highlight urgency of globally coordinated action. *Conservation Letters*. 13:e12692. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12692> ; Grantham et al. In press. Modifications of forests by people means only 40% of remaining forests have high ecosystem integrity. *Nature Communications*.

² The CBD Zero Draft has as one of its five goals: “No net loss by 2030 in the area and integrity of freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, and increases of at least [%] by 2050, ensuring ecosystem resilience”. Maintaining ecological integrity would help address the global loss of biodiversity (SDG target 15.5). Maintaining ecological integrity contributes both to the storage of carbon and to its sequestration: Intact forests, for instance, store more carbon than logged, degraded, or planted forests, continue to function as major net carbon sinks. Additionally, intact ecosystems improve resilience to shocks such as fire, droughts, floods, pests, and invasives, thus offering adaptation advantages. Maintaining ecological integrity, therefore, is an effective “Nature-based solution” to the challenges of climate change, and can contribute to meeting SDG 13 Climate Action. (Watson, J.E.M. et al. (2018). The exceptional value of intact forest ecosystems. *Nature Ecology and Evolution* 2, 599-601; Mokany et al. (2019). Reconciling global priorities for conserving biodiversity habitat. *PNAS*. Doi/10.1073/pnas.1918373117)

³ Dobson et al. 2020. Ecology and economics for pandemic prevention. *Science* 3, 379-381

⁴ WEF (World Economic Forum). (2020). Global Risk Report 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-risks-report-2020>. Also see <https://www.weforum.org/reports/covid-19-risks-outlook-a-preliminary-mapping-and-its-implications>

and <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/top-global-risks-report-climate-change-cyberattacks-economic-political/>

⁵ Given the global COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing “One Health”, of nature, people, and livestock, is an important part of the communications message. <https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/basics/index.html>. Recognizing interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment.

⁶ IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services). (2019). Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Retrieved from <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>.

⁷ Aichi Target 15 calls for restoration of at least 15 percent of degraded ecosystems. UN General Assembly declares 2021-2030 the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration. Building on initiatives like the Bonn Challenge, which targets the restoration of 350 million hectares of degraded ecosystems by 2030.

The Opportunities (for policy engagement provided by three upcoming CoPs):

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), CoP 15. Inclusion of ecosystem integrity as one of the headline goals for the new Global Biodiversity Framework. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the implementing mechanism and aims to maintain the global environmental commons and provide global environmental benefits.
- **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) CoP 26.** Structuring and revising the NDCs to accommodate nature-based solutions and align efforts to mitigate climate change, promote resilience and adaptation, and conserve biodiversity.
- **UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), CoP 15.** The Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) initiative, in particular, focuses on maintaining ecological integrity.
- In addition, we are entering the **UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030**, and the European Union is launching the Green New Deal in Europe.

The Challenge of COVID-19: The loss of ecosystem integrity, ecosystem degradation, and the illegal harvesting and trafficking of wild species, all a focus of SDG 15, are the ecological and social conditions that predispose the emergence of new zoonotic diseases. COVID-19 paradoxically creates an opportunity, challenging us to “build back better”, reset our relationship with nature, and deliver on the targets of SDG 15.

Designing for Success (framed around avoiding risks as identified in the WEF, including the risks of zoonotic diseases, and creating the enabling conditions and opportunities to be able to achieve other SDG targets⁸):

- **Direct investing in nature.**
 - Maintaining ecological integrity through the establishment and management of protected and conserved areas⁹, including areas managed by Indigenous people and local communities (promoting IPLC management)¹⁰
 - Valuing and investing in protecting ecosystem services and natural capital. Fostering and implementing natural capital accounting¹¹
 - Avoiding clearance, degradation, and fragmentation of ecosystems. Implementing spatial land use planning that explicitly includes biodiversity values
 - Avoiding deforestation¹²
 - Controlling illegal wildlife trade, especially in urban markets¹³
 - Restoring and rehabilitating degraded lands and accommodating multiple functions of landscapes to ensure supply of multiple ecosystem services⁶
 - Improving the management of production forests and farms to improve sustainable production of food, fiber, and fuel, while storing more carbon in biomass and soils, and as the basis for vibrant and equitable rural economies.
- **Direct investing in jobs.** Jobs in ecological restoration, green infrastructure, and improved management of forests and farms provide both employment and ecological benefits. Such jobs are much more cost-effective than many other forms of investment.¹⁴ (Something akin to the Civilian Conservation Corps. Aboriginal Rangers, Green Army). Government-supported work programs could target vulnerable communities and youth, both groups hit hard by the pandemic.

⁸ Including SDG 1, No Poverty, SDG 2, Zero Hunger, SDG 6, Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 7, Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 12, Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13, Climate Action.

⁹ Globally, the costs of supporting the protected area portfolio has been estimated at \$76 billion/year ([McCarthy et al.](#)). Actual investments are perhaps 20% of that.

¹⁰ Garnett, S.T., Burgess, N.D., Fa, J.E., Fernández-Llamazares, Á., Molnár, Z., Robinson, C.J., Watson, J.E., Zander, K.K., Austin, B., Brondizio, E.S. and Collier, N.F., 2018. A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation. *Nature Sustainability*, 1(7), p.369.

¹¹ More than half of the world's total GDP – \$44 trillion – is moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services. (World Economic Forum (2020). *Nature Risk Rising*. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/nature-risk-rising-why-the-crisis-engulfing-nature-matters-for-business-and-the-economy>).

¹² Removing subsidies that encourage deforestation, restricting private land clearing and supporting IPLC management would cost \$1.5B/year. Direct forest protection payments would cost \$9.5B/year. (Dobson A. P. et al. (2020) see above)

¹³ Monitoring wildlife trade, reducing spillovers, early detection and control, ending wild meat trade in China. Annual cost \$22 – 30 billion (Dobson A.P. et al. (2020), see above).

¹⁴ McElwee, P., et al. (2020). Ensuring a Post-COVID Economic Agenda Tackles Global Biodiversity Loss. *One Earth*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2020.09.011>

- **Structuring other financial investments to avoid negative impacts on SDG 15.**
 - Removing perverse and negative financial subsidies. Environmentally harmful subsidies include those that support emission-intensive agriculture ¹⁵ and fossil fuel extraction ¹⁶.
 - Ensuring that investments in infrastructure both provide development benefits and minimize environmental impacts (E.g., the “Belt and Road” is looking at a huge investment in infrastructure; there is also great interest in infrastructure investments in stimulus packages). “Doing things right” could promote a focus on climate-resilient, green infrastructure.
- **Structuring financial investment to build biodiversity and ecosystem conservation into the entire financial system**, including considering biodiversity/ecosystem risk in loans, tele coupled global trade, increase in financialization.
- **Structuring financial interventions associated with bailout/stimulus funds**
 - For countries assuming sovereign debt associated with the economic challenge and COVID-19, linking the cost of that debt to protecting a country’s biodiversity¹⁷ Nature Performance Bonds.
 - For corporate entities receiving stimulus and bailout funding, linkage with the need to address biodiversity/ecosystem risk.

Actions:

NEAR-TERM Actions:

- CBD. Ensure a coherent set of goals and action targets that motivate all countries to protect their most intact ecosystems, improve the overall integrity of all ecosystems and allow the full participation and involvement of indigenous peoples.
- UNFCCC. Ensure full representation of nature-based solutions to climate change, especially those that secure or enhance ecological integrity in all NDCs, with enhanced international financing when needed. This is relevant for both mitigation and adaptation.
- UNCCD. LDN target setting program that 124 countries already embraced, incorporating the Great Green Wall Initiative, the 3-S initiative (Sustainability, Stability, Security) with a focus on youth and environmental security. Implement the UNCCD 2018-2030 framework with a commitment to achieve LDN in order to restore productivity of degraded land, reduce the impact of drought on vulnerable populations and safeguard livelihoods.
- Private Sector. Provide guidance for positive action by the private sector, for both corporate action and investments beyond their footprint that protect, restore, and improve management of ecosystems. This should be done in a way that links biodiversity climate, human health, rights, equity, etc. without distracting from the urgent need to reduce corporate fossil fuel emissions.
- COVID-19 recovery packages must address the risks to biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and services, and access to nature. Promote the idea that 30 percent of the multilateral and bilateral funds targeted for sustainable development be directly aimed at biodiversity conservation, and the remaining 70 percent ‘do no harm’ to natural ecosystems.
- GEF-7 \$4.1 B replenishment (2018-2022) is effectively implemented to better protect the future of the planet and human well-being, to help safeguard the world’s forests, land, water, climate, build green cities, protect threatened wildlife, and advance nature-based solutions.

LONG-TERM Actions:

(these may include traditional “change the incentives”, improve valuation, PES, etc.; candidate actions)

- Environmental and Natural Capital Accounting. All countries put an accounting system in place that establishes realistic environmental targets to account for externalities and value “avoided” environmental degradation.
- Biodiversity Management. All countries have access to reliable and up-to-date information for the sustainable use and effective management of biodiversity. Mapping nature to create a global biodiversity framework.

¹⁵ Of the \$700 billion/year, some \$220 billion/year goes into supporting the production of emission-intensive goods, such as livestock, soy, and palm oils, which in turn support natural land conversion and only about 15% are aimed at public goods, supporting services, including ecological services, that create the enabling conditions for the agricultural sector. The Food and Land Use Coalition (2019). Growing better: Ten critical transitions to transform food and land use. Retrieved from <https://www.foodandlandusecoalition.org/global-report/>

¹⁶ “Fossil fuel subsidies, which generate both end carbon emissions and water and land pollution at sites of extraction, processing, and disposal, range between US\$300 and \$680 billion per year globally and result in estimated global damages of at least \$4 trillion in externalities...” (McElwee, P., et al. (2020), see above)

¹⁷ Finance for Biodiversity Initiative (“F4B”). Mava Foundation

- Ecological Integrity is mainstreamed in all national land use and development planning.
- The concept of Land Degradation Neutrality is expanded and adapted to foster avoiding loss of natural capital, ecosystem services, and improving human well-being.
- Private Sector. The sector partners with governments, and new biosphere entrepreneurs emerge that add value to the biosphere and improve human well-being, while safeguarding natural ecosystems, and use ecosystem services so that returns to nature are neutral or net positive. Access to information on biodiversity similar to the Carbon Disclosure Project would help companies, investors, and consumers make environmentally appropriate decisions.
- Adopt a carbon tax, especially to help protect tropical forests.¹⁸

¹⁸ [Barbier et al. 2020](#). Nature 578, 213.



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



MODERATORS

Nancy Lindborg and Sarah Mendelson

November 2020

The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 16 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

We aim to address both specific aspects of SDG 16 and a holistic, refreshed approach to broaden constituencies in favor of dignity and respect for human rights given the multiple crises we face today. Room 16 participants identified **four focus areas**: Transparency/Accountability/Anti-Corruption; Justice (Racial, Access, Transitional); Innovative Approaches/Reframing of Human Rights/Social Justice; and Resilience/Fragility/Peacebuilding.

Room 16 participants identified **four main priorities** on which we want to make progress by December 2021. We view the priorities as campaigns and actions that will advance the four focus areas, some that crosscut, and some that are specific to one area. Our overarching goal is to advance an understanding of how the SDGs in general, and SDG 16 as well as the [16+](#) agenda represent paradigm shifts in how we think and do development, advance sound governance, and safeguard human rights. The current global pandemic is laying bare the many inequities and injustices that span the globe, including in higher income countries, animating the need for a new, stronger social contract for fragile communities wherever they exist around the world. Most fundamentally, how the numerous COVID-19 stimulus and relief packages are shaped, allocated, and applied will dictate whether recovery is just, inclusive, and able to prevent further outbreaks of violence due to exacerbated grievances and marginalization. Inclusive, equitable, and demand driven approaches are key to those aid/recovery funds flowing more justly. If a renewed or new stronger [social contract](#) can emerge along with these funds, we will make progress on the SDGs.

Cross Cutting Priority—Getting #JustRecovery: To address the multiple crises emergent from COVID-19, governments and international institutions have, in a matter of months, mobilized the largest stimulus and relief packages since World War II, amounting to at least [\\$12 trillion](#). These packages may enable the kind of inclusive, equitable, and just recovery envisioned by the inclusion of Goal 16 in the Global Goals. Yet, when vast amounts of money move fast, there is an increase of corruption, state capture, and systemic failure and the money doesn't reach those most in need. We, therefore, propose prioritizing a global multi-stakeholder campaign that involves governments, civil society, private sector, and others to advocate and institutionalize inclusivity and transparency concerning the numerous COVID-19 stimulus and relief [packages](#) and ensure the intended goal of building back better, more justly and equitably, in countries and cities around the world.

This wide-ranging campaign within and across countries would call for actions by governments and non-governmental actors related to transparency, participation, and oversight of the multiple elements in the recovery process. These would cover aid packages and debt financing, public procurement processes as well as tracking where the money goes and who specifically benefits. It would trace the impact on specific populations affected by COVID-19 and make sure their voices are [heard](#). It would include passing and enforcing public beneficial ownership laws in order to prevent leakages and prioritize support to companies fulfilling their tax and societal obligations. (Such an effort would also help expose dictators' dollars.)

The value proposition of this multi-stakeholder approach involves institutionalizing a paradigm shift, combining the traditional supply-side governance model, albeit with an emphasis on transparency, with a demand-side, data-driven model that begins by identifying people's needs in a locality and then empowers citizens, civil society, the private sector, and others to both shape responses and trace financial flows. A particular emphasis would be on data collection of [justice needs](#) and engagement with grassroots organizations to amplify the voice of vulnerable communities in program design and implementation.

The #JustRecovery campaign would serve as a unifying banner to tie together multiple flows of assistance, whether national or local recovery funds, overseas development assistance, humanitarian response, peacebuilding, social justice and human rights work, both at home and around the world. This approach could include, among other elements, data visualization and dashboards, supported by standardized, disaggregated data collection to highlight numerous inequities related to health, income, access to justice, as well as pinpoint needed interventions, and track what is effective. Information on needs and inequities as well as a focus on local decision making and increased resources at the local level would lead to better outcomes, less fragility, and more resilience in all communities regardless of context.

The Transnational Justice Priority: Applying relevant international standards to domestic justice practices, especially in the struggle for racial justice in the global north and the knock-on effects of COVID-19 felt in communities around the world, is an urgent priority. One strand involves efforts to bring domestic laws on the use of force more in line with [international standards](#), especially with regard to policing. Another concerns tracking the impact of UN human rights instruments (using an algorithm and country-based correspondents) to assess what is actually happening in a [community](#). A third effort promotes specific lessons from the menu of reconciliation and transitional justice efforts used around the world and applied to the [United States](#) and the fight for racial justice and equity.

The Next Generation Priority: The impact of the pandemic has underscored the need for new approaches to teaching and researching [human rights](#). The opportunity is to create a re-energized Community of Practice to explore new, innovative approaches and methodologies that use the SDGs to engage high school and university students, with an emphasis on a demand-driven, data-informed, human-centered design. Successfully institutionalizing new approaches would also lead to more focus on localities and locally based leadership. It would involve [field building](#), elevating a focus on inequality and inequities, socioeconomic issues as well as work with cities. Practically, it involves convening experts as well as students, sharing best practices and syllabi, exploring the role that experiential learning and [moot courts](#) can play, and other modalities to be identified.

The Elevating Prevention Priority: Fragility is gaining ground everywhere. This priority places greater attention on investing in prevention rather than relying on military and humanitarian responses deployed only after a crisis has erupted and devastated communities. A decade of evidence underscores the importance and potential of aligning development, diplomacy, and security approaches to focus on improving local social contracts through locally led initiatives. Putting more accountable, inclusive governance—the essence of Goal 16—at the heart of development has been identified by key donors as a more effective approach, from the World Bank to the UK and the [US](#). Moving from policies to action will, however, require sustained, focused advocacy, and all concerned parties need to acknowledge that upstream prevention work has many aspects. It involves integrating peace action into peace education, for example, to engage young people in building peace in their own communities. It involves policy approaches that center peacebuilding in donor diplomacy and foreign assistance portfolios as well as measuring the impact of the totality of engagement, not just a program here and there, on drivers of fragility in a country.



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



MODERATORS

Ángel Cabrera and Suzanne Fortier

November 2020

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Focus area

Room 17 focused on the question of expanding access around the world to education on sustainable development.

Practical challenges

- Access to high quality, affordable education, which can be facilitated via online education but highlights the essential nature of Internet connectivity
- Availability of open-source educational resources on sustainable development
- Integration of sustainable development into the curriculum

Desired steps forward in 2021

In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we need to cultivate leaders at the local level with a strong sense of agency and ownership. We also need globally-minded leaders who can understand the interdependencies between communities and engage in international networks of change. Higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to deliver this leadership talent; they have the expertise and capabilities. Higher education's response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the level of confidence higher education institutions inspire in their communities. For higher education to deliver on this promise, we will need to address questions of access, educational resources, curriculum, and connections.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced universities from around the world to adopt remote instruction almost overnight. This unplanned transformation has forced students and faculty alike to leverage technology to teach and learn, and it has demonstrated how even the most traditional institutions can deliver value in an online format. Higher education after COVID-19 will be much more open to online education than previously. This will create new opportunities to expand access and, in the context of the SDGs, develop the leadership talent that is necessary in communities around the world.

Online instruction can also facilitate new modes of collaboration and enable virtual exchanges and connections among faculty and students from different nations. In an era of limited travel, virtual exchanges and international collaborative courses can provide an effective avenue for developing students' global mindset and their ability to engage productively with individuals and institutions from other parts of the world. Virtual exchanges and shared courses can also help leverage the unique resources different institutions have around different SDGs and amplify the impact we can all have collaboratively.

While this massive shift to online instruction opens up exciting new opportunities, it also raises questions that are yet to be fully resolved. First, underlying cost structures, and therefore issues of affordability remain so far unchanged. While some exciting new models are leading the way into dramatically reducing or even eliminating tuition, most universities are yet to alter their models in that regard.

Second, while online instruction can expand access, it can also exacerbate differences between haves and have-nots, as availability of broadband Internet access continues to vary enormously between and within countries. Students residing in low-income households often do not have consistent access to personal computers and household internet connectivity, a disadvantage that was further highlighted when students departed campuses due to the pandemic in spring 2020.

Finally, for higher education to play the enabling role it can play in the SDGs, there needs to be the right content and curriculum. Several organizations are developing open educational resources that can be of great value. Universities will need to design non-credit micro-credentials, for-credit courses built into the curriculum, and community-based learning opportunities that will put that knowledge into action. The latter will require collaboration with non-profits, businesses, and governmental organizations.

We call on higher education institutions and their networks to identify and communicate their strengths within the 17 SDGs, create new courses and learning opportunities for students, and partner with others to share resources, connect students, and amplify their collective impact.

As a concrete action, the University Global Coalition is launching a year-long process to bring together diverse expertise and share best practices and impact projects, involving faculty, students, and staff for each of the goals.

The successful implementation of the SDGs requires the full participation of higher education. While the COVID-19 pandemic creates major new challenges for universities, it is also triggering a number of innovations that will be critical in delivering what is expected.

Our commitment for the next 18 months is pursuing solutions in this direction.