



Global Dialogue on Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Economic Crisis: Building Back Better Aligned to the SDGs and the Paris Agreement

→ wri.org/covid-recovery-dialogue

Key Takeaways from 2nd Dialogue: Resilience

May 4, 2020

- 1. We are more aware than ever of global vulnerabilities.** The COVID-19 pandemic has infected more than 4 million people, put some 100 million out of jobs, and may push 130 million more people to the brink of starvation by the end of 2020. The task before us is to build back in a way that strengthens global resilience to future shocks while addressing the very significant near-term challenges of tackling unemployment, preventing massive food insecurity and jumpstarting the economy.
- 2. We must not create an artificial divide between development and climate resilience.** On one hand, adapting to the impacts of climate change can be characterized as “doing development differently,” whereby adaptation can unlock economic potential and result in more social inclusion and better environmental outcomes. On the other hand, investments in development — from basic public services, health care and social protection programs to improvements in good governance, information and knowledge, and human, social and institutional capacity — contribute to greater climate resilience.
- 3. We must get out of our siloes to create an effective recovery.** We need to work across sectors and not in siloes, including institutional silos. Over the last 20 years, crises have exposed interdependencies across sectors and borders (financial crises, health crises, refugees, climate). We must embrace the interconnectivity between climate, health, and biodiversity and ecosystem loss — as well as work across these various communities — in order to reduce the risk of and better manage future complex crises.
- 4. Concrete examples exist that strengthen climate preparedness while also providing social and environmental co-benefits and building preparedness for other risks, such as pandemics and economic crises.** We need to identify and amplify these examples. The Adaptation Fund, for example, has been strengthening the capacity of women’s groups and garment factory workers to adapt to the impacts of

This summary reflects the discussion of participants as captured by WRI and BMU staff and does not necessarily represent the views of the sponsoring institutions. The discussion was held according to the Chatham House Rule and therefore does not indicate the viewpoints of individuals.

climate change in ways that have also helped their communities address health risks from the coronavirus. The Adaptation Fund has also been helping farmers adapt to more frequent and intense droughts with family greenhouses; these greenhouses are currently enabling 1,000 people in one community to generate food and incomes while on lockdown. Going forward, we need to identify concrete sectoral opportunities to build resilience as part of the recovery, such as in infrastructure, water, food systems, etc.

5. **Stimulus measures should be ‘stress-tested’ to ensure that they are resilient to multiple risks, including climate change, pandemics and economic shocks.** Economic models need to build in climate impacts so that resilience and a comprehensive climate risk management framework become fully part of economic planning during the recovery. Risks will need to be identified at the local and regional levels. In addition, supply chains have been tested by the pandemic and will need to be rethought so that they are more resilient and sustainable and, in some cases, more regionally-based. Capital flows from sources outside governments, including from private banks, insurance pools and pension funds, should also be assessed for climate resilience.
6. **Mobilizing and channeling stimulus finance for resilience will be critical.** Resilience bonds and fossil fuel subsidy reform are two options, while debt relief will be critical for vulnerable countries to address climate impacts. Recovery efforts should also attract and guide private investors to support climate resilience, including incentives to ensure adequate financial return.
7. **‘With us, not for us.’** Vulnerable populations must have a voice and a role in shaping the response to and recovery from the pandemic, and South-South learning must be supported. We must do away with a ‘beneficiary’ frame, where programs are developed for rather than by vulnerable populations. Locally led planning and action, and investments in existing social capital of communities, will be key to effective and resilient recovery. Solutions exist; however, access to knowledge about what works, what does not and why, is a major gap and barrier to scaling and replicating those solutions and lessons learned.
8. **Developing and forming influential, inclusive and impactful alliances is therefore essential.** During the global finance crisis a decade ago, alliances weren’t formed in the early stages to shape the reform window that came afterwards. Other recent crises have exposed interdependencies across sectors and borders, as well as the need to build alliances across sectors, constituencies and geographies. Alliances should include and be responsive to those who are most vulnerable, and international solidarity will be key, including on issues such as fiscal space and debt relief and cancellation. Multilateral institutions are important, and we need alliances to help reform, shape and orient them appropriately. Right now, however, there may be a lack of a clear (political) leadership to promote this agenda.