

The Green Rebound: Mobilising COVID responses for climate neutrality

Briefing Paper 3: International solidarity and global cooperation

Climate Strategies' members discussed the role of **international solidarity** in the COVID-19 response. Some questions considered were:

- How can we carry international solidarity forward?
- How can we produce research to ensure good policy recommendations for different parts of the world?
- What does the current crisis mean for national debt, security, prosperity and participation in global cooperation?

The discussion was framed by the understanding that 'solidarity' goes beyond the notion of global cooperation and support, to committed action covering difficult issues such as reparations, loss and damage, resilience and pandemic-induced displacement.

Priorities for developing countries

In the context of international solidarity, **developing countries must address their immediate needs** for liquidity and equity driven social protection, targeted in particular to the coping mechanisms of informal economies, livelihood at risk, jobs at risk, and the plights of a migrant labour force without adequate job and social security. Short-term survival will often come above mitigation, so acting in solidarity means a careful consideration of local contexts and approaches, themes and sectors, for cooperation and committed actions. **On climate action**, the long-standing Developed-Developing-Least Developed country, North-South divides on decarbonisation vs. resilience and development, threaten to split the discourse and weaken measures. This, together with the prospect of a rise in nationalism, casts shadows on the future global negotiations around effective and immediate multilateral responses, with pathways unclear.

Debt relief

Conditional debt relief for developing countries is a short-term option for integrating climate action in developmental responses, yet bilateral deals are highly contentious and concerning for many practitioners. **Multilateral regimes where conditions are co-developed in good trust given the national circumstances**, in a similar model to NDCs, could be more successful by strengthening the latter. However, a clear differentiation between aid and other types of support with conditions for long-term, cleaner paths of development is needed.

Innovation financing

Unlike in many other crises, **physical capital is unchanged, whilst demand and supply are affected**. Thus, the usual short-term fix of debt relief and risk response may not be the right path, rather recommending a focus on **long term social capability building** and bottom-up empowerment of developing countries, given the potential of human resources for sustainable development. Some approaches include improving innovation and technology development toward sustainability through specialised funds and mechanisms, building on experiences like CDM or the EU Innovation Fund which address development goals. Bottom up innovation financing can be highly successful, especially in the energy and water sectors, as these are the core sectors which can provide better adaptive capacity for any pandemic.

Redefining globalisation

A more critical scientific approach to build insights into the future path of globalisation is needed, as issues like the existence of pollution havens in developing countries, and the huge, global movement of migrant workers in distress arising from the current dynamics, challenge the long-standing view that globalisation is a positive thing for integration of the global economy. With a single disciplinary approach on health now being prioritised without regard to economic growth, this is an opportune moment to critically assess broken, global, economic governance frameworks. At the same time, **we are seeing declining levels of global leadership and cooperation** as a result of multi-lateral institutions faltering and inward-looking policies rising.

Both impacts and benefits from globalisation have often been oversimplified. Thus, **we require an academic debate that reassesses globalisation in a post-COVID-19 world beyond a yes/no response**, to redefine the roles and responsibilities of governments. **Governments also have the duty to lead the purpose driven mobilisation of climate finance**, and not only rely on private finance and trade for the pursuit of development goals, but to rebuild trust in international mechanisms and solidarity among countries at various stages of development. Paris Agreement and its article 6 offers some tools.

Synergies for development

Climate, development and health need a joint approach. The basic response to COVID-19 – hygiene – is an example of synergy – in this case, access to energy and water – that is placed at the centre of SDGs, disaster response and climate. Traditional, sectoral conversation on energy, industry, forestry and agriculture needs refocussing to address those synergies and service provision mechanisms to enhance access. Under a sectoral approach, we can identify best practices, financial mechanisms and existing cooperation to be scaled up. Climate Strategies has a unique opportunity here, with a network expanding across many countries able to share best practice as well as financing advice for these core sectors in the long-term.

Next steps

- Define the priority sectors with maximum multiple benefits, necessary policies and best practices for developing country policy makers. Comparisons of different approaches to energy and water sector regulations and fiscal regimes to help overcome the crises will be very valuable.
- More focus on solidarity-oriented non-market approaches under article 6.8 of the Paris Agreement, which combines mitigation and adaptation and has not been operationalized yet. An example of this is large-scale low carbon technology procurement plans for least developed countries following the success story of the Indian government LED expansion programme, where governments from developed and developing countries collaborated to make technologies accessible through cost reduction by bulk procurement and blending of international and domestic finance (as suggested by Benito Müller).
- Opportunity for a joint article in a journal based on our discussions.
- Climate Strategies could support and align with movements in climate finance, such as prioritising discussions of the new global financial goal at COP26. Many are trying to dismiss it, but this would engender a lack of trust which is at the core of participatory process in multi-lateral climate cooperation. Indeed, Climate Strategies could help further the discussion by pushing for a public sector sub target that could clear up the clouds above the \$100bn target.
- Explore potential for multilateral cooperation in capability building in climate technologies and knowledge in the lines of what is happening now on cooperation to address the current response to COVID-19 for making future Pandemic proof. An example would be to enable more technology transfers and sharing of intellectual property rights in a similar model to what is happening now.
- Joint research plan for knowledge production using primary information for selected least developed countries (South Asia, East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa) and also a large developing country like India. Focus will be on globally connected small, medium and informal economy and labour force. Strategic alternative recovery paths following a multidisciplinary framework connecting it to near-term SDGs and mid-century climate and sustainable development goals.

This briefing paper was prepared based on a videoconference on 29.04.2020 attended by the following Climate Strategies Members: [Kasturi Das](#), [Susanne Dröge](#), [Benito Müller](#), [Karsten Neuhoff](#), [Jiahua Pan](#), [Joyashree Roy](#)

Convenor: Joyashree Roy

Rapporteurs: Zoe Rasbash (lead), Adrián Lauer (contributor)