

COVID-19 response

**Subcommittee Meetings Committee of Permanent Representatives Subcommittee meeting
2 April 2020**

COVID-19 response

- (1) Collective leadership**
- (2) Operational response**
- (3) Strategic response: initial building blocks**

Collective leadership response

- **UNEP senior leadership fully engaged**
- **Working closely with Heads of UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats**
- **Increased periodicity of leadership meetings**
- **With a focus on:**
 - 1) **Ensuring operational continuity (UNEP is open for business) and understanding individual responsibilities in the management of the crisis, including Duty of Care**
 - 2) **Examining portfolio implications as well as longer-term programmatic and strategic options for maintaining relevance to global conversation**

Collective leadership response - 4 pillars

- Duty of Care
 - Programmatic response
 - Budgetary
 - Communications
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UNEP's operational response – duty of care pillar

- Crisis Management Group established on COVID-19 – late Feb 2020
 - Ensuring UNEP is open for business while focusing on duty of care
 - Administrative guidance for all UNEP personnel, greater support to vulnerable groups
 - Business continuity plans and contingency measures for all duty stations
 - Designated COVID-19 Country Coordinators to lead response at duty stations
 - Stepped up internal communications (regular broadcasts, intranet, virtual townhall)
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Alternate working arrangements

- Management exercising maximum flexibility
 - Enhancing virtual conference and collaboration systems
 - 38 out of 40 duty stations are fully or partially telecommuting
 - Well-being support (e.g., buddy system with over 360 participants)
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Understanding the context

“We are facing a global health crisis unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations — one that is killing people, spreading human suffering, and upending people’s lives. But this is much more than a health crisis. It is a human crisis. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is attacking societies at their core”.

United Nations, March 2020. Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19

SHARED
RESPONSIBILITY,
GLOBAL
SOLIDARITY:

Responding to
the socio-economic
impacts of COVID-19

March 2020



A 'silver lining' for the environment?

No. The COVID-19 response is no model for environmental response

The stunning impact of COVID-19 social distancing on air pollution

COVID-19: SATELLITE DATA REVEAL GLOBAL AIR POLLUTION LEVELS PLUMMETING



Environmental improvement – the silver lining amidst COVID-19 outbreak

Coronavirus shutdowns have unintended climate benefits: cleaner air, clearer water

Wild animals wander through deserted cities under Covid-19 lockdown

Block 1

Contribution to the emergency phase



Waste management an essential public service in the fight to beat COVID-19

- **Guidelines on the Environmentally Sound Management of Biomedical and Healthcare Wastes**
- **Guidance documents and best practice (Basel Convention's Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific)**
- **Factsheet on Healthcare or Medical Waste**
- **Draft overall guidance document on the environmentally sound management of household waste.**

Block 2

Delivering on a 'Super Year', with fewer or modified 'Super Stops'

- **An ambitious agreement at CBD COP 15 still matters, greatly**
- **Climate, biodiversity and chemical crises have not disappeared**
- **The world can ill-afford delays in key environment-related decision-making and investment**
- **Discussions within UN System to ensure nature remains a top priority**

Block 3

Rebuilding the post-pandemic world, better

Re-examine, retool, accelerate UNEP work on:

- ***Green Jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world* (UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC, 2008)**
- **Global Green New Deal (2009)**
- **Green Economy**
- **Sustainable Consumption and Production**

... whilst maintaining ambition on NDCs

Secretary-General António Guterres, 31 March 2020

“Everything we do during and after this crisis must be with a strong focus on building more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies that are more resilient in the face of pandemics, climate change, and the many other global challenges we face”.

Block 3

Rebuilding the post-pandemic world, better (cont'd)

- **Initiating an ambitious line of enquiry on environment and health, including into zoonotic diseases and the connection with ecosystem health (with FAO, WHO, OIE)**
- **Mobilizing existing platforms and partnerships beyond the environment for post-pandemic responses, for instance:**
 - **UNEP FI**
 - **UNEP Inquiry**
 - **Enhanced collaboration with UNDP**

Block 4

Modernising environmental diplomacy

- **Legal study on options, opportunities and barriers for accelerating the transition to online diplomacy**
- **As a contribution to the broader and multilateral system**

4 blocks

- 1. Contribution to the emergency phase**
- 2. Delivering on a 'Super Year'**
- 3. Rebuilding the post-pandemic world, better**
- 4. Modernising environmental diplomacy**