

# ▶ CSPR technical note

Coordination Support unit for Peace and Resilience (CSPR)

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## COVID-19 response and recovery in countries affected by disasters and climate vulnerability: challenges and opportunities

### A double burden that puts preparedness to the test: coping with disaster and climate risks and the pandemic

In the context of COVID-19, countries affected by recurrent disasters and climate change face multiple struggles, having to simultaneously deal with the challenges posed by the pandemic and other equally or more destructive hazards such as droughts, floods, tropical storms, volcanic eruptions, or earthquakes. In some cases, these same countries are also affected by other fragility factors, such as political instability and conflict, further impeding their capacity to cope with the health risks of the virus, the consequences of a disaster, and the negative impacts of both on livelihoods.<sup>1</sup>

While the pandemic may not have hit Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and fragile countries with the same force shown in the most affected countries in Asia, Europe, and the Americas, the stringent lockdown measures implemented worldwide meant that economic activities of LDCs were also heavily impacted (less export and internal closure), forcing many businesses to close with devastating consequences for workers, especially those in the informal economy. In many cases, those countries are anticipating outbreaks of COVID-19 while still recovering from or forecasting other disasters, ranging from the recent desert locust induced-crisis in Eastern Africa, to expected volcanic eruptions in parts of Asia and the impending hurricane season in the Pacific and the Caribbean. The situation of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is particularly worrisome. Many of them are dependent on tourism and, with travel restrictions due to COVID-19, have paid a heavy toll. At the same time, disasters such as Tropical Cyclone Harold caused widespread destruction in Vanuatu, where 60% of schools and 20% of health centres reported damage, and in Fiji, where over 2,000 homes were destroyed or damaged, and roads made unusable in many locations due to flooding and fallen trees.<sup>2</sup>

With the risk of serious COVID-19 outbreaks hitting disaster-prone countries, emergency response plans and recovery strategies need to be rethought and redesigned to ensure they are compatible with the battle against the pandemic. This poses dilemmas such as how to implement evacuation procedures, ensure safety and health in evacuation centres

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<sup>1</sup> DEVINVEST/ILO (2020), [Coping with double casualties: How to support the working poor in low-income countries in response to COVID-19](#).

<sup>2</sup> Information shared in the context of the UNDRR webinar [Combating the dual challenges of climate-related disasters and COVID-19](#) (16 April 2020). More information at: [www.undrr.org/event/webinar-combating-dual-challenges-climate-related-disasters-and-covid-19](http://www.undrr.org/event/webinar-combating-dual-challenges-climate-related-disasters-and-covid-19).

and shelters, or rebuild the needed essential infrastructure while respecting confinement and physical distancing. At the same time, additional support measures are needed to cushion the negative socio-economic impact that COVID-19 related restrictions will undoubtedly have.

As in most crisis situations, in the context of the current pandemic the most vulnerable population groups and remote communities risk being further marginalized and excluded from the provision of both health care and safe income-generation opportunities. This could give rise to grievances and mistrust about unequal or insufficient access to basic services, decent jobs and livelihoods, which in turn could undermine social cohesion and negatively impact recovery and development. It is therefore essential to identify and tackle underlying or emerging fragility factors in responding to and recovering from the pandemic in order to avoid doing further harm to the social fabric.

But the picture is not so dark. Responding to the pandemic in disaster-prone countries also provides opportunities to strengthen the linkages between the world of work and disaster risk reduction, climate change action and sustainable development by addressing systemic risk across multiple sectors.<sup>3</sup> Recovery efforts focusing on employment and decent work can contribute to that goal by promoting effective prevention and preparedness actions to help affected countries “build back better”, with increased resilience to future shocks and in a way that addresses grievances and enhances social cohesion.

## A unique opportunity to address underlying causes of disasters and climate vulnerability

As mentioned above, the threats posed by disaster and climate vulnerability do not stop because of COVID-19, on the contrary: there is an urgent need to continue investing in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and mitigation to avoid compounding risks. In this sense, the COVID-19 response provides an entry point to tackle root causes of fragility in disaster-prone countries by mainstreaming DRR, CCA and environmental sustainability across sectors to “recover better”, reducing existing risk and preventing the creation of new risk.

The emergence and propagation of infectious diseases is in many cases fuelled by events related to climate change and environmental degradation. For example, it is common for rapid onset disasters such as floods to ignite the spread of infectious diseases. But it would seem that more long-term weather patterns may also have such impacts: the warming of Arctic permafrost, for instance, is predicted by some researchers to lead to the potential release of pathogens from thawing permafrost.<sup>4</sup> With regard to COVID-19, one of the reasons cited for its spread is the increased interactions between humans and animals, which are pushed to live closer to human settlements due to climate-change induced food scarcity and destruction of their original habitats through deforestation, construction, etc.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, environmental degradation aggravates the health impacts of such diseases: air pollution, for instance, is thought to increase the medical risks of COVID-19. Moreover, it also compounds the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and containment measures, resulting in doubly threatened livelihoods.

In Pakistan, among the measures adopted for addressing the losses of jobs and incomes due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions is the 10 Billion Tree programme aimed at providing employment while countering the effects of climate change. The campaign was allowed to restart its activities after an initial ban due to the lockdown. In the period April to June 2020 the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa committed to employing 19,353 workers through the programme at a daily rate of Pak Rupees 500 PKR (3.5 USD) per day, mainly benefiting women and unemployed daily workers who were migrating home from locked-down cities. Workers were required to wear masks and maintain the mandated two metres

<sup>3</sup> Mami Mizutori/UNDRR (2020), [What COVID-19 tells us about the changing nature of disaster risk](#).

<sup>4</sup> Robin Fears/EASAC (2020), [“Arctic warming and microbial threats: Perspectives from IAP and EASAC following an international academics’ workshop”](#), The InterAcademy Partnership.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations (2020), [A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#).

of social distance between them. The programme thus provided much needed livelihoods and income support in a safe way in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, while leveraging green jobs as a way to help prevent future crises by reducing the risk of flooding, providing cool spaces, absorbing carbon dioxide emissions and protecting biodiversity.<sup>6</sup>

ILO's programmes, approaches and tools can also be used to address COVID-19 related unemployment while helping to protect and restore the natural environment for a more resilient and greener recovery. These include green works, which can provide employment and social protection for COVID-19 affected workers through, for example, reforestation, terracing, or irrigation programmes. They also include the setting up of environmentally responsive businesses and the development of skills for green jobs, which, likewise, help to generate employment while supporting the transition to a more sustainable future.

ILO constituents - governments, employers' and workers' organizations - have a key role in seizing this opportunity and paving the way to a socially just but also resilient and environmentally sustainable recovery. In particular, they should be involved in DRR and CCA discussions and policy/strategy formulation to ensure these are aligned with world-of-work concerns. Their convening power and membership base should also be harnessed for translating messages into practical action at employer, workplace and worker level.<sup>7</sup>

## What works in contexts of disaster and climate vulnerability?

The ILO has decades of experience in dealing with the impacts of crises through employment and decent work. International labour standards as well as crisis-specific strategies and approaches promoted in the context of the Decent Work Agenda provide clear directions on important building blocks of recovery and resilience-strengthening: job creation, social protection, enterprise support, education and training, institution building and social dialogue.

Recommendation No.205 on employment and decent work for peace and resilience (2017) is a landmark international labour standard that offers guidance to address world-of-work issues with regard to conflict and disaster situations with the aim to promote peace, prevent crises, enable recovery and build resilience. The Recommendation focuses on recovery and reconstruction but also on addressing root causes of fragility and taking preventive measures for building resilience. This makes its guidance particularly relevant for labour institutions in countries facing the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic while also dealing with disaster and climate vulnerability. The Recommendation gives inspiration and guidance specifically to ILO constituents from disaster-prone and conflict-affected settings to get directly involved in crisis preparedness, response and mitigation measures to protect markets and the labour force.

The Jobs for Peace and Resilience global flagship programme (JPR) translates the normative framework of Recommendation 205 into tangible action by using employment-intensive approaches to create jobs; enhancing skills for employability; improving links between labour supply and demand; and promoting local economic development and the private sector with support for self-employment, cooperatives and businesses. Since weak governance, a lack of dialogue and rights violations have been shown to slow down or impede crisis recovery and social cohesion, the JPR also places an important focus on institution building, social dialogue and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as a means to "build back better" and thus contribute to more peaceful and resilient societies.

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<sup>6</sup> Rina Saeed Khan/Thomson Reuters Foundation (2020), [COVID-19: Pakistan's 'green stimulus' scheme is a win-win for the environment and the unemployed](#), World Economic Forum in collaboration with Thomson Reuters Foundation; ILO Country Office for Pakistan, 2020; *Dawn* newspaper (various dates).

<sup>7</sup> For more information and guidance on the role of employers' and workers' organizations in crisis response and resilience building, see [ILO website on Disaster and conflict resilience](#), and ILO (2020), [Recommendation No. 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience: What Role for Trade Unions?](#). For specific examples of joint actions taken by social partners to support recovery and strengthen resilience, see ILO (2020), [Managing Conflicts and Disasters: Exploring Collaboration between Employers' and Workers' Organizations](#).

### Some key messages from Recommendation 205

- ▶ **Employment and decent work** are vital to promoting peace, enhancing social cohesion, preventing crisis situations arising from conflicts and disasters, enabling recovery and building resilience.
- ▶ Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, other human rights and other relevant **international labour standards**, including standards on safety and health and on working conditions, need to be respected, promoted and realized also in crisis response.
- ▶ Responses need to be developed through **social dialogue**, with the active involvement of the most representative employers' and workers' organizations and, as appropriate, of relevant civil society organizations.
- ▶ Population groups and individuals who have been made **particularly vulnerable** by the crisis - including, but not limited to, children, young persons, persons belonging to minorities, indigenous and tribal peoples, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, migrants, refugees and other persons forcibly displaced across borders - require special attention. For example, women need to be empowered to effectively and meaningfully participate in decision-making processes in the context of crisis response and recovery and resilience building.
- ▶ Measures of **social protection** need to be developed and strengthened as a means of preventing crises, enabling recovery and building resilience.
- ▶ Creating or restoring an **enabling environment for sustainable enterprises**, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises, is key to stimulate employment generation, economic recovery and development.
- ▶ Facilitating a **just transition** towards an environmentally sustainable economy is essential as a means for sustainable economic growth and social progress, and for creating new jobs and income-generation opportunities.<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ Strengthened international **cooperation and partnerships** are needed to ensure joint and coordinated efforts in crisis response and synergies in the humanitarian-development nexus.

### Disaster Risk Reduction through Decent Work: Examples of ILO approaches

#### Employment-intensive investments for job creation and infrastructure development

Employment-Intensive Investment Programmes (EIIP) aim to address unemployment and underemployment through public investment, typically in infrastructure development, but also for environmental works and the provision of services. EIIPs have been mobilised in post-disaster situations to reconstruct – by building back better - essential infrastructure, while providing decent jobs to those whose livelihoods are threatened by crises. In Mozambique, for example, in the aftermath of cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019, the ILO's *MozTrabalha* employment policy support programme was mobilized to restore public services. One of its interventions was the rehabilitation of a technical and vocational educational training (TVET) centre, which generated short-term employment for the young workers who were affected by the disaster, while the use of climate-resilient alternative construction materials and mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in technical and vocational education provided pathways to long-term resilience. EIIPs have also been successfully used in health emergencies: during the West African Ebola crisis, for example, EIIPs were leveraged to construct essential health and sanitation infrastructures while providing employment. In the context of COVID-19, it is likely that new needs for public assets and services will emerge, for example, in relation to health, sanitation, waste management, and that these needs can be fulfilled through employment-intensive approaches. These programmes also need to make sure that social distancing measures are in place, that PPE is provided and that other necessary health and safety precautions are taken.

*For more information and guidance, see [ILO website on EIIP's Response to COVID-19](#) and [ILO \(2020\), Guidance note - Jobs for Peace and Resilience: A response to COVID-19 in fragile contexts](#).*

<sup>8</sup> For more information, see ILO (2015), [Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#). The concept of a "just transition" encompasses a range of social interventions needed to secure workers' rights and livelihoods when economies are shifting to sustainable production, primarily combating climate change and protecting biodiversity. The ILO 2015 Guidelines note the challenge of communities being adversely affected by climate change, and stress the need to support their ability to cope and adapt.

### Support for disaster resilient businesses

Businesses, especially Micro-, Small- and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), constitute the backbone of the economy in most developing countries and are often among the hardest hit when disasters occur. In such contexts, physical assets may be damaged or destroyed, employees may be injured or fall ill, and access to inputs and markets may be disrupted, limiting or disrupting production and sales. However, there are measures which can help businesses not only to cope with the impacts of a disaster once it has occurred, but also to reduce risk in advance. These include climate- and disaster-related insurance products: for instance, in the Caribbean, the ILO's Impact Insurance Facility, in collaboration with the Munich Climate Insurance Initiative, has developed products that can protect livelihoods in times of hurricane-related disasters, such as high-speed winds and excess rainfall. They also include capacity building and support in the field of Business Continuity Management (BCM). The ILO has supported MSMEs with training in developing business continuity plans, both in relation to climate change-related threats (e.g. extreme weather events in the Caribbean) and in relation to health emergencies: following the outbreak of Avian Influenza in Asia, guidelines on business continuity planning in the context of pandemics were developed and rolled out. These types of measures have the essential added value of not only addressing the impact of a specific disaster once it has hit, but also preparing for future hazards. As such, BCM skills learned in the context of climate hazards will no doubt serve in the context of COVID-19, while BCM capacity building in relation to COVID-19 will continue to benefit businesses beyond the pandemic and reduce other future risks.

*For more information and guidance, see [ILO website on SME resilience and COVID-19](#) and [ILO \(2020\), Guidance note - Jobs for Peace and Resilience: A response to COVID-19 in fragile contexts](#).*

### Social protection for resilience, inclusion and development

Social protection aims to reduce and prevent social risks such as poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout the life cycle, and is increasingly used across humanitarian and development processes to provide predictable and sustainable support for populations affected by crisis. In disaster contexts, social protection initiatives are essential to alleviate basic and immediate human needs. Affected persons can rely on them when they do not have jobs, livelihoods or other means of providing for themselves, and can benefit from cash transfer programmes, facilitated access to health care services, school feeding programmes and child grant programmes. For example, after Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in 2013, the ILO supported an emergency programme aimed to provide decent work opportunities to workers of the informal sector. The Philippines' Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Programme (DILEEP) had been initially conceived as a response to the 2008 financial crisis. However, in the wake of Haiyan, the government redirected it towards households affected by the typhoon, particularly workers in the informal sector. The programme, which combined immediate cash assistance with longer-term protections for participants, ensured that public works were decent work, provided affected persons with the equivalent to 30 days of salary, and affiliated beneficiaries to national health and employment injury insurance schemes as a condition of participation. Nearly 80,000 participants received immediate relief, and were covered under the national health and employment injury insurance schemes. Catastrophic events such as the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the need for strengthening social protection schemes and establishing social protection floors, which can be designed as part of national disaster preparedness strategies to provide an effective mechanism to respond to protection needs in the wake of shocks. These initiatives also have long-lasting impacts on human capital development and the prevention of poverty and social exclusion. Universal access to health care helps prevent the spread of epidemics. Basic income security for those in need facilitates access to nutrition, education and care and contributes to the development of a future productive workforce. Social protection is therefore both a source of resilience and a base for inclusive growth and development.

*For more information and guidance, see [ILO \(2016\), Social Protection and Climate Change](#) and [Social Protection Monitor on COVID-19](#).*

Having caused serious disruptions to economies and societies worldwide as a result of a biological hazard, COVID-19 is a "disaster" in the proper sense of the word,<sup>9</sup> but differs from most natural disasters in various ways. Unlike most other disasters, it has global reach, and it does not cause damage or destruction of physical assets or infrastructure. In addition, while its impact on jobs and livelihoods is equally – if not more – destructive than other disasters, it is clear that

<sup>9</sup> In line with the definition of disaster in UNDRR Terminology (2016), available at: [www.preventionweb.net/terminology/view/475](http://www.preventionweb.net/terminology/view/475)

response measures, even when based on the same mechanisms as in other crises, need to be thought through and designed differently.

While there is still more to be learned about COVID-19 to be able to design and implement pandemic-response measures that contextually address root causes of disaster and climate vulnerability to “recover better”, reducing existing risk and preventing the creation of new risk, the following should be given due consideration:

- ▶ Crises can generate or exacerbate **discrimination, inequality, forced labour and child labour**. Rights violations such as these often combine with weak governance and lack of dialogue, slowing down or even impeding recovery. A strong focus on **institution building, social dialogue, and international labour standards**, including Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, is therefore required to support the recovery process and build resilience. In particular, social dialogue is an essential mechanism for inclusion and active participation of employers’ and workers’ representatives in decision-making, and provides a natural platform for addressing grievances, building trust and enhancing cooperation at all stages of crisis response.
- ▶ **Preparedness** is essential. Countries that are not yet at a crisis stage need to prepare beforehand, including through business continuity management in both the public and the private sector, by: i) identifying risks, and evaluating threats and vulnerabilities; ii) managing those risks; and iii) preventing and mitigating the adverse effects.
- ▶ **Measures to prevent, mitigate and prepare for crisis and build resilience** can be taken in ways that support economic and social development and decent work.
- ▶ The specific situations and needs of population groups and individuals who have been made **particularly vulnerable** by the crisis, need to be prioritized. These people include, but are not limited to, children, women, young and elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to minorities, indigenous and tribal peoples, migrants, refugee and internally displaced persons.

#### **The risk of ignoring increasing inequalities and potential threats to social cohesion: the example of women**

COVID-19 is no different than other disasters in terms of “discrimination” among different population groups. For example, this is evidenced in relation to gender: while men and older age groups have higher mortality risks than other population groups, in terms of the socio-economic impact women and girls are likely to be disproportionately affected. Due to their role as providers of unpaid or paid care work, women are more exposed to the health risk of the virus, and, in the case of unpaid work, their care responsibilities also limit their opportunities to engage in paid employment. As women are more likely to be engaged in informal or low-wage activities or migrant work, the devastating impact of public health emergencies is likely to be even greater for them than the population at large. In addition, programmes and funding to support women and girls (for example, in terms of access to protection from gender-based violence) are often cut at times of crisis.

Moreover, the possible combination of the pandemic with a natural disaster has the potential to further aggravate the situation of women and girls. As observed many times in the past, disasters can exacerbate gender inequalities. The destruction of infrastructure as a result of disaster causes livelihood losses as workplaces lose their operation capacity, as entrepreneurs lose productive assets and as transport gets disrupted. For women who remain in such settings, damaged roads and bridges or schools and crèches often mean an increased domestic burden as the fetching of water or firewood is made more difficult, and as the responsibility of caring for children and the elderly falls back on women. The deaths, injuries or out-migration of men, or the separation of families when fleeing as refugees or when internally displaced mean sudden shifts of responsibilities, with women needing to find ways of sustaining their dependents. On the other hand, reconstruction efforts offer a chance to build a more gender-equitable future. Improving the economic opportunities of women through immediate employment in the aftermath of disaster is a crucial goal because of its intrinsic importance and because of its contribution to programme success in building resilience. For instance, as women have been found to allocate a greater proportion of their economic dividends to family

well-being and community recovery, it contributes positively to overall welfare outcomes and strengthened resilience.

*Sources:* CARE International (2020), [Gender Implications of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Development and Humanitarian Settings](#); IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action (2020), [Interim Guidance: Gender Alert for COVID-19 Outbreak](#); and ILO-PBSO-UNDP-WB (2016), [Joint Statement on Employment programmes for peace](#). See also ILO (2020), [The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work](#).

- ▶ **Early analysis of the needs of all individuals** - disaggregated by gender, age and other characteristics – economic units and sectors are essential, as is their use to inform immediate and long-term recovery measures taken in response to the pandemic.
- ▶ A **coordinated, inclusive and conflict-sensitive assessment** is of the essence to identify needs and design responses that avoid contributing to the emergence or aggravation of grievances about unequal access to services, livelihoods, resources, or about violations of fundamental principles and rights at work and other international labour standards. This is the first step for developing employment and decent work interventions that help realize social justice and ultimately promote social cohesion, peace and resilience.
- ▶ **Social protection mechanisms** are essential for basic income security, in particular for persons whose jobs or livelihoods have been disrupted by the crisis. Effective access to essential health care and other basic social services needs to be ensured in particular for population groups and individuals who have been made particularly vulnerable by the crisis. Where these mechanisms are not in place or have insufficient coverage, the COVID-19 pandemic can be used as an opportunity to establish or expand social protection floors with a view to support recovery and build resilience to future crises.
- ▶ As concretely shown - yet again - by this pandemic, **employers' and workers' organizations** play a vital role in disaster prevention, preparedness and response and in supporting resilience building.<sup>10</sup>

### Employer and worker organizations and COVID-19

There are numerous examples of social partners contributing to address the consequences of crises by either working together or separately in response to their members' needs.

For example, in Sri Lanka, employers' and workers' organizations have a long history of being involved in crisis management, from the context of the country's nearly three decade-long civil war to recent natural disasters such as floods and landslides. With the COVID-19 crisis, they are yet again demonstrating their key role in such situations. Among other initiatives, in order to safeguard the interests of workers and employers and facilitate social dialogue, a tripartite agreement between the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC), trade unions and the Ministry of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations was concluded. The agreement calls upon employers to pay wages for days worked based on the basic salary and, for any days not worked, to either pay at the rate of 50 per cent of the basic wage or Rs 14,500 (whichever is higher). In addition to ensuring that full salaries would be paid for workers (for March and April 2020), this agreement represented a rare occasion where all stakeholders agreed on fixed minimum wages at national level. It also demonstrated the importance and effectiveness of social dialogue in responding to the challenges brought about by COVID-19 in fragile and disaster-prone settings.

*Sources:* ILO ACT/EMP, 2020

<sup>10</sup> For guidance on the contribution of workers' organizations to the implementation of Recommendation 205, see ILO (2019), [Workers' Guide to Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation \(No. 205\)](#). For more information on the relevance of Recommendation 205 for trade unions in the context of COVID-19, see ILO (2020), [COVID-19 and R205: what role for workers' organizations?](#), and ILO (2020), [COVID-19 Crisis: Why ILO Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation \(R205\) is relevant for Trade Unions?](#)

- ▶ The response to COVID-19 offers opportunities to support a **just transition towards an environmentally sustainable economy** as a means of economic growth and social progress. Seizing these opportunities will contribute to on-going action against climate change and disaster risk, with positive impacts on people's jobs, health, education, opportunities and future.
- ▶ **Education and vocational training** and guidance are fundamental for prevention, preparedness, recovery and resilience building. Not only can they provide new job opportunities to those who are unemployed as a consequence of the crisis, but they can also help promote disaster risk education, reduction, awareness and management for recovery, reconstruction and resilience.
- ▶ **Local knowledge, capacity and resources** are an important part of the response to crisis situations, including with a view to prevention.
- ▶ **Emergency workers** and those coordinating their work, including volunteers, need to be supported in facing the double risk related to concurrent disasters, such as natural or climate-related disasters and the current COVID-19 pandemic, both with regard to themselves and those they aim to help.

#### COVID-19 tips for emergency workers on the front line of “double disaster” situations

It is essential that emergency workers dealing with other disasters (such as tropical storms, heat waves, or floods) during the COVID-19 pandemic are:

- ▶ Involved in the elaboration of prevention measures and work design and in decisions on occupational safety and health.
- ▶ Adequately protected against inherent risk while carrying out their work through COVID-19 related safety and health guidance and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). As emergency workers are confronted with multiple stressors in this situation, they also need to be offered psychosocial support.
- ▶ Provided decent working conditions generally, including in relation to aspects such as pay, leave and rest entitlements and the right to organize.
- ▶ Provided the means to protect those they aim to help also from the COVID-19 risk. For example, in emergency shelters, Standard Operating Procedures may need to be revised; physical distancing needs to be made possible (which may involve increasing the total space available); awareness on hygiene practices need to be ensured, and handwashing facilities provided; and special attention needs to be paid to the most vulnerable (for instance, the elderly, who are more at risk of getting serious complications from the virus, may need separate shelters).
- ▶ Committed to minimizing hospitalisations linked to other disasters, for example by strengthening community level care, so as to avoid the overburdening of hospitals and additional COVID-19 contagion risks.

Sources: UNDRR Webinar of 16 April 2020 (op.cit) and ILO (2020), *ILO Sectoral Brief: COVID-19 and public emergency services*.

- ▶ **Integrated programmes** for decent work promotion are a way to offer comprehensive solutions to tackle the multidimensional impact of the crisis. Not just restoring jobs and livelihoods but also expanding social protection mechanisms, promoting the respect and realization of FPRW and ILS (including those relating to OSH, which are particularly relevant in health emergencies and crisis response contexts), building the capacity of institutions and promoting social dialogue. Recovery interventions focusing on these areas support “building back better” on the basis of the Decent Work Agenda.
- ▶ **International cooperation** is required to tackle this multidimensional crisis. An adequate response from the international community in disaster-prone countries is essential to recovering jobs and ensuring incomes. Development assistance, for instance, should focus on long-term employment-centred structural changes,



without missing the opportunity of promoting an environmentally sustainable recovery, which can be ensured only by strengthening disaster preparedness, coping mechanisms and resilience of labour institutions.

The COVID-19 crisis confronts countries around the world with the need to build resilience across sectors to shape societies that will be able to resist, adapt to and recover from similar shocks and crises in the future. Besides highlighting persistent inequalities and human rights challenges, the pandemic has also clearly shown that the pressures humans are placing on the natural environment have harmful consequences for all.<sup>11</sup>

Social and economic interventions in response to the crisis will have to build back better so that the new systems created are safer, fairer and more sustainable.<sup>12</sup> Efforts must be aimed at increasing equality and inclusion but also reducing disaster and climate risks. International labour standards, the Decent Work Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement, provide a strong basis for placing people, employment and decent work at the centre of an environmentally sustainable recovery.

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations (2020), [A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#).

<sup>12</sup> Guy Ryder/ILO (2020), [COVID-19 causes devastating losses in working hours and employment](#).

## Annexes

### Annex 1. Checklist for world-of-work responses to disasters, climate change and COVID-19

	General considerations	Considerations for COVID-19
<b>Disaster Awareness, Prevention, Preparedness and Response</b>	<p>Do national employment policies and strategies, DWCPs, project designs and other frameworks include measures for disaster preparedness for the world of work?</p> <p>Do thematic world of work interventions include DRR dimensions? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do TVET programmes include the integration of DRR awareness in curricula?</li> <li>Do enterprise support programmes include measures such as business continuity management or access to financial services (e.g. weather-related micro-insurance) to help businesses remain in operation and counter risks?</li> </ul>	<p>Are the specific socio-economic needs caused by COVID-19 taken into account in the content of interventions? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do public employment programmes take into account new constraints (e.g. construction bans) and respond to new needs created by COVID-19 (e.g. for health, sanitation, waste-management, security programmes)?</li> </ul> <p>Are health and safety conditions met? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are norms and recommendations related to physical distancing and the provision of personal protective equipment followed?</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency workers</b>	<p>Can the work carried out by emergency workers in disaster situations be characterised as “decent”? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are workers’ rights respected, do emergency workers have access to social protection, and do they have the right to organize?</li> </ul>	<p>When dealing with other concurrent disasters in the context of COVID-19, are emergency workers provided decent working conditions, and are COVID-19 specific safety measures foreseen and implemented? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When working in emergency shelter environments, are appropriate distancing and hygiene measures observed, and is PPE provided?</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental degradation and climate change</b>	<p>Do programmes to mitigate climate change through employment-related measures also consider the need to assist communities to prevent, prepare for and cope with climate change-related disasters? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do programmes to create “green jobs” also help</li> </ul>	<p>Do employment-related climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes take into account COVID-19 in their content and processes? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of content, are environmentally sustainable sectors or industries given support to survive the economic impacts of COVID-19?</li> </ul>

	<p>beneficiaries to reduce climate related risks and to adapt?</p> <p>Are programmes which respond to disasters environmentally sustainable and do they help to mitigate climate change by building back better and greener? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do physical infrastructure programmes for reconstruction use environmentally friendly methods and materials?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of processes, are appropriate COVID-19 safety and hygiene practices incorporated into climate change and environmental action projects to protect workers?</li> <li>Do employment-related COVID-19 response programmes take into account the need to factor in environmental responsiveness and climate change action?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Facilitation of peaceful co-existence</b></p>	<p>Is conflict-sensitivity integrated into strategies, programmes and projects related to disasters? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has an analysis of conflict drivers such as the lack of opportunities, lack of contact or existence of grievances been carried out prior to project design?</li> <li>Have activities to enhance social cohesion (for instance, workplace cooperation between conflicting groups) been integrated into disaster response or resilience building programmes?</li> </ul>	<p>Have COVID-19-specific or -induced conflict drivers been taken into account? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are grievances linked to the unsafe working conditions and disproportionate exposure of some groups of workers to COVID-19-related risks taken into account and addressed?</li> </ul> <p>Is COVID-19 factored into usual social cohesion building strategies? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the promotion of contact between conflicting groups, is remote networking and physically safe collaboration promoted?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Institutional capacity in DRR and the world of work</b></p>	<p>Are ILO constituents and world of work actors capacitated in DRR? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are world of work institutions involved in the design and implementation of national DRR policies, strategies and frameworks, and able to bring in a decent work perspective?</li> </ul> <p>Are DRR authorities and other stakeholders capacitated in promoting DW? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do DRR authorities and other key actors understand the risks posed for DW by disasters and the importance of DW for DRR, and do they ensure its inclusion in DRR initiatives?</li> </ul>	<p>Does the content of capacity building cover the multidimensional disaster risk (e.g. arising from natural hazards and COVID-19) and the implications for the world of work?</p> <p>In institutional capacity strengthening, are COVID- safe precautions taken into account (e.g. replacing face-to-face training with online learning)?</p> <p>Is business continuity for the public sector ensured?</p>

<p><b>Programme coherence and integration</b></p>	<p>Do programming frameworks identify and address the relevant components of the DWA in a holistic and integrated manner? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do programmes identify and address difference facets of decent work as relevant to specific disaster risks and responses, e.g. the promotion of access to employment, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue?</li> </ul>	<p>Are programmes designed in a way which tackles the multi-faceted socio-economic challenges and health aspects brought about by COVID-19? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do job creation programmes also integrate the need to include social protection and occupational safety and health dimensions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rights-based approach</b></p>	<p>Do policies, strategies, programmes and other frameworks to prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters through employment-related measures embody a rights-based approach, promoting the application of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) and other relevant international labour standards?</p>	<p>Do employment-related measures of the response to COVID-19 reflect the need to guarantee ILS and labour rights, especially the FPRW? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are safeguards in place to ensure sanitation work does not entail a risk of forced or child labour?</li> <li>Is harassment and violence against health workers prevented?</li> <li>Is the right to organize respected during the emergency phase?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social dialogue and employers' and workers' organizations</b></p>	<p>Is social dialogue and the roles of employers' and workers' organizations leveraged in disaster prevention, preparedness and response? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are employers' and workers' organizations involved in providing DRR education and awareness, emergency relief, or services such as support in business continuity planning to their members?</li> </ul>	<p>Do social partners provide support for employers and workers during the COVID-19 crisis? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is support provided for groups of workers whose jobs/livelihoods are at risk?</li> <li>Is support provided to assist the viability and continuity of enterprises, including SMEs?</li> <li>Is support provided for the adoption of measures for safe working conditions in all workplaces, including in high-risk sectors?</li> <li>Are inclusive processes of social dialogue at all levels recognized and respected?</li> <li>Is the role of social dialogue embedded as a key component of the crisis response and recovery?</li> <li>Does inclusive social dialogue adopt appropriate (i.e. safe) mechanisms to protect from COVID-19 transmission, e.g. remote meetings and written communications?</li> </ul>

<b>Vulnerable groups: Leaving no one behind</b>	Are the impacts of the disaster assessed for different population groups (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, etc.) and are interventions designed in a way which takes into account their specific challenges and needs?	Is the differentiated impact of COVID-19 on these different groups assessed, and are responses designed accordingly? For instance, women have been shown to be particularly exposed to the medical risk given their relatively high proportion among (especially informal or unpaid) care workers – are measures to protect these workers included in response programmes?
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## Annex 2. Disaster and climate vulnerability terminology <sup>13</sup>

**Build back better:** The use of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies and the environment.

**Disaster:** A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts

**Disaster risk:** The potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets which could occur to a system, society or a community in a specific period of time, determined probabilistically as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity.

**Disaster risk reduction:** Disaster risk reduction is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.

**Fragility:** The combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies.

**Hazard:** A process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

**Preparedness:** The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters.

**Prevention:** Activities and measures to avoid existing and new disaster risks.

**Resilience:** The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.

**Vulnerability:** The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards.

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<sup>13</sup> UNDRR (2016), [Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction](#) (for all except *fragility*) and OECD (2016), [States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence](#), OECD Publishing, Paris (for *fragility*).