

# COVID-19: How to Integrate Crisis Management with Transformative Climate and Sustainability Action<sup>1</sup>

## A Cross-Project Synthesis Paper<sup>2</sup>

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This paper seeks to **condense the current (multi-perspective) discourses on how to achieve a recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that enables transformative climate and sustainability action**. It intends to facilitate orientation, provides ideas for argumentation in favour of a green recovery from the pandemic, and lays out a foundation for further in-depth analysis and tailor-made use. The paper first outlines the **impacts of the pandemic** on various environmental policy and governance processes worldwide. It proceeds with a discussion of **how multiple actors are engaging in the unfolding debate** on how to design a transition into a green and sustainable post-COVID-19 world. Thirdly, **ideas for transformative climate and sustainability action** in a post-crisis setting are presented. Finally, several tables list **actors, institutions and discursive alliances** that have published statements on the matter.

Considering how rapidly the COVID-19 crisis and the measures taken to fight it are evolving, the paper is intended as a **living document** and basis for further discussion and analysis. Its aim is to serve as a **'library' for ideas and perspectives** by collecting relevant resources from national and international institutions, organizations, think tanks, governments, NGOs and media.

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**Table of Content**

- Executive Summary..... 3
- 1. COVID-19: A Global Crisis ..... 4
  - a. Causes and Immediate Impacts of the Pandemic ..... 4
  - b. Response Measures..... 4
- 2. Risks for Climate and Sustainability Action Processes ..... 5
  - a. Climate..... 5
  - b. Biodiversity ..... 6
  - c. Sustainable Development and Agenda 2030 ..... 6
- 3. Discourse Analysis: A Sustainable and Green Post-Corona Transformation ..... 9
  - a. The Risk of Another Crisis..... 9
  - b. Green Stimulus Packages ..... 10
- 4. Entry Points for Transformative Climate and Sustainability Action in a Post-Crisis Setting ..... 10
  - a. Accelerate Energy Transition ..... 11
  - b. Integrate Climate, Biodiversity and Sustainability Agendas ..... 11
  - c. Enhance Crisis Risk Management and Resilience..... 12
  - d. Invest in Sustainable Infrastructure and Mobility..... 13
  - e. Cooperate Multilaterally..... 13
  - f. Explore New Production Patterns and Work Cultures ..... 14
  - g. Encourage Changing Behaviors and Narratives ..... 14
- 5. Case Studies for Sustainable Recovery: Past and Present ..... 14
  - a. The European Green Deal ..... 15
  - b. The Republic of Korea’s Green New Deal ..... 15
  - c. Response Measures at State Level: New York..... 16
  - d. City Action: Amsterdam’s Doughnut Economy..... 17
- 6. Positioning of Think Tanks, NGOs and Research Institutes ..... 17
- 7. Positioning of German Government and European Union ..... 21
- 8. Positioning of International Organizations ..... 23
- 9. Resources..... 25

## Executive Summary

- Numerous states have taken drastic measures to contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus' spread, with **dire consequences on virtually all areas of economic, cultural and social life**.
- The pandemic is expected to disproportionately affect the often fragile health, economic and social systems in **developing countries and emerging economies**. **Fears of a massive reversal of gains** made in international development over the last two decades are growing.
- Basing economic recovery programs on investments in fossil fuels **bears the risk of reversing past progress** toward sustainable economic systems by increasing emissions, which would have **disastrous socio-economic effects** over time.
- When designing stimulus packages, it is crucial to **identify and make use of potential synergies** between post-corona recovery programs and green economy measures, as well as climate and sustainability action.
- Large-scale investment in **clean technologies and markets crucial for fostering sustainable lifestyles and combatting climate change** could be triggered in response to the corona fallout. This could help create **green jobs** to restart the economy.
- The overarching goal for transformative climate and sustainability action in a post-COVID-19 world must be to **revive economies while simultaneously setting the course for sustainable, inclusive and resilient low-carbon societies** (double dividend).
- **Potential measures for a green recovery** may be identified in the areas of energy, biodiversity, risk management and resilience, infrastructure and mobility, economic practices and production patterns as well as human behaviour and work culture.
- **Green recovery action** has been taken at supranational, national and subnational levels both in the past and present. Examples include the EU, South Korea, the State of New York and the City of Amsterdam.

## 1. COVID-19: A Global Crisis

### a. Causes and Immediate Impacts of the Pandemic

The novel coronavirus is keeping the world in suspense. Infection and death rates are rising exponentially in all countries. The emergence and rapid spread of COVID-19 is linked to the fact that more and more regions of the world are [heavily impacted by human intervention](#); **large-scale land-use changes, ecosystem degradation, agricultural intensification and homogenization as well as biodiversity loss** are amongst the drivers that are believed to have increased the chance of a zoonotic disease spilling over from wildlife to humans. Moreover, climatic and ecosystems changes (e.g. thawing permafrost) affect the release of viruses and bacteria unknown to human immune systems into the environment, which is why epidemics such as COVID-19 are likely to become more frequent.

Numerous states have taken drastic measures to contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus' spread, with **dire consequences on virtually all areas of economic, cultural and social life**. While it was the Global North that has initially been hit hard, the pandemic is expected to **disproportionately affect the often fragile health, economic and social systems in developing countries and emerging economies**. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that at least [195 million jobs will be lost worldwide](#), and UNEP expects [income losses to exceed \\$220 billion](#) in developing countries. With an estimated 55% of the global population having no access to social protection, **income losses will reverberate across societies**, impacting education, human rights and, in the most severe cases, basic food security and nutrition ([UNEP 2020](#)). Non-governmental organizations such as [Welthungerhilfe](#) fear that the number of people suffering from hunger could increase dramatically in a short time. The International Food Policy Research Institute's early projections indicate that even under an effective COVID-19 containment scenario, [14 million to 22 million people could slip into extreme poverty](#). Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [warns](#): "So far, we have been unable to assess the full effects of COVID-19 in developing countries. In many places **we might lose a decade of development progress – if not more.**"

At the same time, the responses to COVID-19 have had instant **environmental impacts**. For instance, with factories forced to shut down and road and air and road travel massively reduced, **air pollution has dropped** in parts of the world and **global greenhouse gas emissions are temporarily falling** (according to some sources, [GHG emissions could easily decrease by 5% or more this year](#)). However, this drop might be dwarfed by a sharp increase during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic ('**rebound effect**'), as seen after the financial crisis in 2009/10.

### b. Response Measures

Meanwhile, uncertainty is growing across the globe – especially regarding the **longer-term impacts of the pandemic and appropriate response measures**. Rebuilding a (new) economy during and after a possibly devastating recession will require gargantuan efforts and investments. COVID-19 relief assistance has to focus, first and foremost, on strengthening the health sector, coupled with liquidity support for the economy, social protection measures and the stabilization of national budgets. This **first phase, immediate disaster response**, has seen governments adopting **measures to maintain access to health care, food and shelter** by, for instance, supplying medical equipment, delaying rent payments, delivering food to isolated risk groups or supporting people who have lost their jobs and income due to lockdowns. The types of aid needed vary from country to country, but in many low- and middle-income countries **support from multilateral development banks**

**and the IMF will be critical** to avoid erasing years of progress within poverty reduction ([World Bank 2020](#), [OECD 2020](#)).

In a **second phase**, as the immediate health crisis subsides, a **green design of economic stimulus packages to revive national (or regional) economies** during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is of paramount importance. Developed and developing economies alike will focus on stimulating their industries and job markets. As pointed out above, any strategy for recovery must acknowledge the fact that the destruction of globally important ecosystems is likely to be a root cause of more and more frequent pandemics. In pursuit of a long-term vision of a sustainable society, it is therefore crucial that investments not only serve to boost demand in the short term, but also **provide supply-side impulses to create post-corona economic structures that are sustainable, resilient, environmentally friendly, efficient and effective**.

In that sense, **how could the global effort launched in response to the economic fallout of COVID-19 offer opportunities for an integrated and systemic approach with actions on the climate crisis, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development?**

## 2. Risks for Climate and Sustainability Action Processes

The initial response measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 have had drastic consequences for the international climate and sustainability agendas. In the face of the Corona crisis' urgency, **policy and governance processes related to climate, biodiversity and sustainable development are slowing down**. At least in the first stage of response to the pandemic, sustainability and environmental challenges take a backseat, with meetings and conferences being cancelled, postponed or moved online, and political attention and priorities shifting.

For example, countries such as [Poland](#) and the [Czech Republic](#) suggested the European Union should ease up on policies to cut GHG emissions and scrap its Emissions Trading System to free up funds to fight the effects of COVID-19. [Brazil](#) has reduced efforts to fight environmental crimes during the pandemic. The [United States](#) have announced a relaxation of environmental rules, allowing power plants, factories and other facilities to determine for themselves if they are able to meet legal requirements on reporting air and water pollution. In a number of countries, international development agencies have thinned out the presence of international staff on the ground, impacting operations of development projects, including on climate change and environmental issues.

These and many other developments are particularly concerning as 2020 was meant to become a **climate and sustainability 'super year'**, for instance with the first revision of countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the submission of long-term strategies setting the course for the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement and the negotiation of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework ([UNEP 2020](#), [IISD 2020](#)).

The following sections provide a (non-exhaustive) overview of the risks climate and sustainability action processes are facing under the current circumstances.

### a. Climate

The secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) announced the **cancellation of all physical meetings** until the end of April 2020. A series of regional climate negotiations meant to strengthen member states' Nationally Determined

Contributions (NDCs) were also called off, such as the Africa Climate Week that was scheduled to take place in Kampala, Uganda. The Petersberger Klimadialog will be held in a shortened format as a video conference end of April 2020.

The **UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)** planned for November 2020 in Glasgow has been [postponed to next year](#). The UNFCCC will clarify the new process and timeline once a new date for COP26 has been set. Nonetheless, the NDC updating process that was meant to culminate at COP26 shall be continued. Even though UNFCCC has not put out an official position yet, **countries are expected to submit their revised NDCs before the end of 2020**. All NDCs submitted in 2020 will be included in the UNFCCC synthesis report. As some support activities for the updating process are likely to fall through due to COVID-19, there is a risk that some updates will not be as comprehensive as previously expected. The Paris Agreement's ratcheting mechanism only envisages a next round of ambition-raising in 2025, which renders lagging behind on updating processes even more concerning.

**Japan**, at the end of March, was the first G7 country to submit an updated climate action plan. Despite the UN's plea for far tougher action to tackle the climate crisis, Japan **only reaffirmed its 2015 goal**. This [drew criticism](#) from architects of the Paris Agreement for failing to set more ambitious targets and for not leading by example as an industrialized nation. It remains to be seen whether other countries will follow Japan's lack of ambition and only confirm existing commitments, and what ambition-raising will look like in post-corona economies.

Finally, and as a result of efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, science around the world is grinding to a halt. The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** is currently working on its 6<sup>th</sup> assessment report on global warming (due out next year) and is [struggling to keep it on track](#). Gatherings had to be cancelled and cooperation is more difficult due to government lockdowns, travel bans and university closures.








## b. Biodiversity

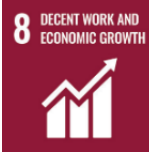







Two critical **UN Biodiversity Convention meetings**, SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3, have been rescheduled for August and September 2020 respectively. Further meetings for key preparatory processes for the 2020 [UN Biodiversity Conference](#) and the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework are under revision.

The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** announced that its **World Conservation Congress**, scheduled for June in Marseille, France, has been postponed to January 2021.



## c. Sustainable Development and Agenda 2030

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting development in many ways. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [noted](#): "Without support from the international community, we risk a massive reversal of gains made over the last two decades, and an entire generation lost, if not in lives then in rights, opportunities and dignity." The following table shows that **the corona crisis is affecting all SDGs and demonstrates their interconnectivity**.

	<p>Loss of income, leading vulnerable segments of society and families to fall below poverty line; the most vulnerable societies struggle most with COVID-19. Preliminary estimates by the ILO suggest significant rises in unemployment—in the order of 13 million, with a high scenario of almost 25 million—losses of labour income of as much as \$3,400 billion and increases in the number of people in working poverty (ILO, 2020) (more <a href="#">information</a>).</p>
	<p>Food production and distribution could be disrupted, supply chains are interrupted due to border closures and export stops. The <a href="#">International Food Policy Research Institute's early projections</a> indicate that even under an effective COVID-19 containment scenario, 14 million to 22 million people could slip into extreme poverty and low- and middle-income countries could see a 25% decline in agri-food exports (more <a href="#">information</a>). Volatility, combined in some countries with market tampering and stockpiling, is starting to impact the prices of food, with deleterious effects on nutrition of the most vulnerable.</p>
	<p>Devastating effect on health due to limitations of existing health care systems worldwide; facilitation of medication. People that are already suffering from other diseases like HIV, tuberculosis or malaria, especially in the Global South are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. Older persons are not just struggling with greater health risks but are also likely to be less capable of supporting themselves in isolation. Homeless people, because they may be unable to safely shelter in place, are highly exposed to the danger of the virus. <a href="#">Persons with disabilities</a> could be left without vital support and advocacy due to social distancing. Persons in prisons, in migrant detention centers or in mental health institutions could face higher risk of contracting the virus due to the confined nature of the premises.</p>
	<p>More than 1.52 billion children and youth are currently out of school or university, representing 87 per cent of the world enrolled school and university student population. This affects social and behavioral development. In addition, The World Food Program (WFP) estimates that more than 320 million primary schoolchildren in 120 countries are now missing out on school meals (more <a href="#">information</a>). Sustained disruption of education could lead to a rise in child labour and child marriage, placing a further brake on developing countries growth.</p>
	<p>Women's economic gains at risk; quarantine regulations lead to increased levels of violence against women; women account for majority of health and social care workers who are more exposed to COVID-19 (more <a href="#">information</a>). Women play a central role in the market as traders, producers, and health care workers, and they often assume the role of caretakers in the community. These roles may increase exposure to illness and impact income earning. The current crisis threatens to push back the limited gains made on gender equality and exacerbate the feminization of poverty, vulnerability to violence, and women's equal participation in the labour force.</p>
	<p>Supply disruptions and inadequate access to clean water hinder access to clean handwashing facilities, one of the most important COVID-19 prevention measures; in many countries poorer communities have to share a water supply and/or sanitation site and cannot practice physical distancing, which means they have a higher infection risk.</p>
	<p>Supply and personnel shortages are leading to disrupted access to electricity, further weakening health system response and capacity.</p>

	<p>Economic activities suspended; lower income, less work time, unemployment for certain occupations. The supply chain disruptions halting the manufacturing industry and the falling commodity prices, in particular oil, further compound the economic impact of the pandemic. This has rattled the financial markets, tightened liquidity conditions in many countries, created unprecedented outflows of capital from developing countries and put pressure on the foreign exchange markets, with some countries experiencing dollar shortages. Weak local currencies will constrain the government's ability for fiscal stimulus at the scale needed to stabilize the economy and to tackle the health crisis and human crisis (<a href="#">more information</a>).</p>
	<p>Industry and infrastructure under enormous pressure; partly limited access to financial services. One <a href="#">study</a> found that only 7.3% of 301 surveyed SMEs in Kenya and Senegal had insurance, and 16.9% had access to loan finance for recovery from climate disasters. It's safe to say that few, if any, private sector actors in LMICs or high-income countries have pandemic insurance (<a href="#">more information</a>).</p>
	<p>Inequality due to all the synergies between the other SDGs. The crisis will affect developed and developing countries differently. The situation in developing countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS could become critical (<a href="#">more information</a>). The spread of the virus will further weaken an already fragile macroeconomic picture, where debt accumulation has outpaced the growth of income even before the crisis. Given that a significant share of developing country public debt is in foreign currencies, mainly in US dollars, this will lead to a substantial increase in external debt servicing and refinancing costs for both corporations and governments. And for some developing countries the shortage in dollar liquidity and higher refinancing costs will undermine debt sustainability (<a href="#">more information</a>).</p>
	<p>About a <a href="#">billion people living</a> face higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to inadequate access to safe water and sanitation, poor housing quality and overcrowding. With shrinking household budgets (due to lack of income) the affordability of energy decreases for many poorer households.</p>
	<p>Supply chains and production are interrupted; production of emergency health care equipment interrupted; disruption of global production and consumption patterns (<a href="#">more information</a>)</p>
	<p>Reduced commitment to climate action: there is a risk that most political capital and limited financial resources are absorbed by the response and diverted away from the implementation of the NDCs. However, lower <a href="#">temporarily</a> environmental footprints due to drastic reduction in economic activity and transportation.</p>
	<p>Overfishing in the coastal waters of many African states by foreign, often Western, fleets also leads to local populations making greater use of bushmeat. This in turn increases the likelihood that pathogens will be transmitted to humans.</p>
	<p>Highly polluted or damaged ecosystems are less resilient to ecological stress and crisis. Agriculture SMEs are extremely vulnerable to shocks, as they have limited cash reserves and little access to risk-finance tools. Due to increasing deforestation and exploitation of natural resources, pathogens have overcome species boundaries. Intensive land use and the spread of monocultures lead to a loss of biodiversity and change the composition of mammal populations. Danger of even more uncontrolled deforestation and pollution, due to covid emergency focus of global and national priorities. Thread of emergence of even more and more dangerous viruses and bacteria from melting permafrost.</p>



	<p>Conflicts prevent effective measures for fighting COVID-19; those in conflict areas are most at risk of suffering devastating loss from COVID-19. Additionally, strict measures of isolation could lead to reduce presence of peacekeepers in conflict settings. The relocation of resources could lead to weaker crisis and conflict management structures.</p>
	<p>Aggravate backlash against globalization and principles of multilateral cooperation; but also highlight the importance of multilateral international cooperation on public health and sustainable development. Global pandemics are urging the global society to collaborate in all aspects of the SDGs.</p>

Source: [Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19](#) (United Nations 2020)

### 3. Discourse Analysis: A Sustainable and Green Post-Corona Transformation

As the Corona pandemic continues to unfold into a global health crisis with dire economic and social consequences, governments are undertaking comprehensive measures in order to soften the impact on economy and society. Massive sums of money are being rapidly allocated to stimulus packages to reboot the economy. This has triggered a debate among politicians, the private sector, non-profits and academia alike about how to best design these packages: should their focus be solely placed on short-term economic recovery by relieving heavy industries from tax burdens and easing environmental regulation while following traditional economic patterns? Or do these packages provide a chance to channel large-scale **investments into technologies with long-term prospects** that trigger additional benefits in the transformation towards a sustainable economy? Multiple actors are engaging in the unfolding debate on this topic (see table further below).

#### a. The Risk of Another Crisis

In response to the COVID-19 crisis some sources have argued in favor of **measures that would be counterproductive** regarding the long-term effort toward a **sustainable economy**. Some of the arguments stem from conventional **climate denialism rhetoric** following the logic that climate action should be halted in order to deal with a larger threat such as the corona pandemic ([New York Times 2020](#)). The economic fallout from corona is **perceived as such a concrete danger that it justifies halting action** to prevent more abstract threats like climate change. This narrative provides the basis for policy proposals such as abolishing the ETS, abolishing carbon caps, postponing aviation tax reform or halting the European Green Deal (an idea [raised](#) by the Czech Prime Minister) ([Greenpeace 2020: 4](#)).

**Proposals such as these bear the risk of reversing past progress** toward sustainable economic systems by reviving the usage of fossil fuels and thereby increasing emissions. This development may **cause the global community to stumble from one crisis into an even bigger crisis**. An unsustainable economic recovery program after corona would amplify the climate crisis, which would have **disastrous economic and social effects** in the medium and long-term. As mentioned above, the cut in emissions caused by the fallout from the pandemic may be **offset by economic resurgence after the crisis**.

Such development had been witnessed in reaction to the 2008 financial crisis, where the quick economic recovery caused higher emissions than before the crisis ([Nature Climate Change 2011](#)). The risk for this effect is particularly high when **stimulus packages promote**

**unsustainable economic practices** based on fossil fuels. After the financial crisis, measures that caused a spike in emissions included: the easing of fossil energy prices which hindered a structural change toward renewable energy as well as large-scale government investment that were not guided by climate considerations. These measures stimulated unsustainable consumption patterns in order to drive production and increased excessive consumption. If applied carefully, such measures can boost local sustainable production instead of relocating economic activity overseas.

## b. Green Stimulus Packages

In order to counteract this possibility, stimulus packages should be embedded in **comprehensive systemic approaches ensuring coherent and operational strategies**. More precisely, stimulus should steer investment toward **climate-relevant industries and technologies**. Consequently, green jobs are created in sectors with long-term prospects for sustainable and inclusive growth which can enhance social equality and foster sustainable lifestyles ([Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie 2020: 8-11](#)).

Consensus exists in the global discourse that recovery programs, launched in response to the economic fallout from the corona pandemic, provide an opportunity. Large-scale investment in **technologies and markets crucial for fostering sustainable lifestyles for our and future generations and combatting climate change** could be triggered in response to the corona fallout. While the short-term crisis response should focus on strengthening the capacities in the health sector and social systems, the **medium and long-term recovery should take advantage of the various opportunities for modernization** in order to mitigate the risk for another crisis down the road. Proponents of this idea include international institutions ([IEA](#)), think tanks ([Climate Analytics](#), [Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie](#), [Greenpeace](#)), foundations ([F20](#)) and the media ([New York Times](#), [Bloomberg NEF](#)).

Undoubtedly, the pandemic also bears the **potential to inject a sense of urgency** into the climate debate, at a time when people are highly sensitized to the realities of a global emergency and **governments are willing to mobilize and spend vast sums of public funds** ([OECD](#); [IMF](#)). This dynamic could provide the opportunity to identify and make use of potential **synergies between post-corona recovery programs and green economy measures, as well as climate action**: Investment and facilitating reforms (e.g. simplified tender procedures and lighter regulation) in solar and wind energy could **relaunch the struggling energy transition while expanding opportunities for employment**. The expansion of energy efficiency measures in the housing sector could also create green jobs with a long-term perspective during the economically difficult times ahead.

The **high potential for employment** in resource-efficient, climate-friendly and ecologically sound sectors is a recurring argument in literature advocating for green **post-corona stimulus packages**. Interconnecting post-corona measures with climate and sustainability action could **mitigate the economic fallout from both COVID-19 now and the climate crisis in the future**. This twofold potential of green recovery packages has been labelled a 'historic opportunity' by the head of the IEA ([Climate Change News 2020](#)).

## 4. Entry Points for Transformative Climate and Sustainability Action in a Post-Crisis Setting

The overarching goal for transformative climate and sustainability action in a post-COVID-19 world must be to **revive economies while simultaneously setting the course for sustainable, inclusive and resilient low-carbon societies** (double dividend). The World

Resources Institute (WRI) has coined this approach “**build back better**”, calling for interventions and solutions that address several interconnected problems simultaneously. It aims for nothing less than a “new social contract”, making a point that systematic change is needed to fight both the corona and the myriad environmental crises facing the planet ([WRI 2020](#)). Emerging from the 2008/09 financial crisis, the Green Economy Movement has been growing in many countries (see Korea example below), advocating for sustainable, inclusive and resilient economies and societies ([Partnership for Action on Green Economy](#), [Green Growth Knowledge Platform](#), [OECD Green Growth](#)). **Potential measures for a green recovery** have already been piloted and implemented in many cases. Expanding and strengthening them could boost the stricken economy toward a sustainable future.

This section serves as a **collection of potential measures that target synergies** between the post-corona crisis response and green economy actions. The measures identified below may be pursued by governments of both industrialized and emerging economies in response to the post-corona crisis. They could also provide a conceptual basis for multi- or unilateral development programs in partner countries.

#### a. Accelerate Energy Transition

The transition toward an efficient and clean energy supply is a core component of the global climate agenda while at the same time **bearing enormous economic, employment and innovation potential**. The cost of key renewable energy technologies has decreased significantly while their technical quality has improved. [Governments should seize the opportunity](#) to direct investment toward such technologies and create green jobs in the energy sector to restart the economy. The situation on the oil and financial markets also favors a diversion of capital (both subsidies and investment) from fossil fuels to clean energy. Potential post-crisis measures in the energy sector include:

- **Improve the energy efficiency** of buildings in order to create jobs, reduce energy costs and help the environment by saving energy of buildings in order to create jobs, reduce energy costs and help the environment by saving energy
- **Ramp up** investment in [renewable energy technology](#) (solar, wind, batteries, carbon capture storage, etc.) as well as grid upgrades
- **Provide** large-scale investment into **alternative fuel technology** (e.g. hydrogen and biofuels) which could make aviation and other forms of transport greener while creating jobs
- **Make investment in [clean energy](#) even more attractive** to private investors by providing guarantees and contracts to reduce financial risks
- **Take advantage** of **low interest rate** levels which make the financing of large projects more affordable
- **Take advantage** of [low oil prices](#) and **decrease fossil fuel subsidies**
- **Decrease bureaucratic hurdles** for clean energy such as complicated tender procedures

#### b. Integrate Climate, Biodiversity and Sustainability Agendas

[Recent research on the ecology of diseases](#) suggests that climate change, biodiversity loss and deforestation are contributing drivers behind pandemics. The risk of such events can only be reduced if habitats are preserved and remain intact. It is becoming increasingly important to perceive biodiversity and climate protection as part of risk prevention; healthy ecosystems can support economic growth, societal wellbeing and climate stabilization. These insights could be further explored and used to **strengthen the biodiversity-climate-**

**health-nexus** (as advocated by Victor Galaz, [SEI 2020](#)). Such a collaborative, multisectoral, transdisciplinary and international approach has been labelled “**One Health**” ([WHO 2017](#), [CDC 2020](#)).

See also [IASS Potsdam](#) on the matter: “Climate emergency and health emergency are two sides of the same coin. [...] This pandemic offers us a painful but important opportunity to re-design our social and economic systems based on what really matters: **planetary health**. This means embracing the fact that the health of people and the health of the planet are inextricably intertwined; that our natural ecosystems are the most essential elements supporting life on this planet.” Potential measures to strengthen the biodiversity-climate-health-nexus are:

- **Increase ecosystem resilience through nature-based solutions** (e.g. preservation and restoration of wetlands, forests and agricultural lands) > Change in **landscape management** necessary
- Shifting from industrial to **regenerative agriculture** is feasible today and generates immediate economic and health benefits
- Strengthening human and environmental health by [operationalizing a systemic nutritional approach](#)
- [Decrease pandemic outbreaks](#) by banning wildlife trade and closing wildlife markets, optimizing consumption and substituting animal proteins with plant proteins

### c. Enhance Crisis Risk Management and Resilience

An important aspect of post-crisis recovery is **building up the capacity to withstand other crises in the future**. Building up resilience involves **comprehensive measures on all levels of government and in all sectors of society**. If applied correctly, such measures can help to better understand and identify crisis risks, strengthening early and long-term response mechanisms and improving regional and global capacities for coordinated disaster response mechanisms (e.g. [Sendai Framework](#)). Improving resilience is, however, **not only a structural challenge but also a question of societal psychological readiness**. Effective crisis management should thus be guided by a **holistic and interdisciplinary** approach. Suggestions for improved crisis management ([political/economic](#) and [sociological](#)) include:

- **Apply an interdisciplinary and systemic approach** when tackling global problems such as pandemics. This includes acknowledging **the cross-sectoral impact and interdisciplinary nature of crises** in order to orchestrate an effective whole-of-society response. Important lessons may be drawn from the corona crisis in this regard:
  - The corona crisis has continuously been framed as a solely medical incident. This **diminishes the public credibility and effectiveness of non-medical actors** (e.g. Federal Office for Public Protection and Crisis Management in Germany)
  - Crisis management has thus far been dominated by a virologist perspective at the cost of advice from other disciplines, which leads to the **neglect of risks in other sectors (social, economic, psychological)**
- **Base political decisions on interdisciplinary scientific counsel** from various academic disciplines, including sociologists, economists and risk experts instead of only medical and pandemic experts
- **Raise awareness and capacities for holistic and smart decision making** in partner countries (at all levels and for all target groups)

- **Include various stakeholders** such as trade unions, representatives from the school and health care systems as well as the private sector etc. **in the early stages** of crisis management
- **Proactively communicate** cross-party consensus on decisions and conflicts of opinion (the latter in constructive manner while presenting solutions to the conflict). This helps to engage the population in crisis management and thereby counteract public unease and panic.
- **Strengthen science and academia** and foster multi-sectoral problem analysis capabilities
- **Strengthen the role and capacities of civil society** in order to explain and support emergency measures during the COVID-19 crisis as well as transformative change during recovery
- **Strengthen education for sustainable development and abilities for evidence-based decision-making**
- **Strengthen the rule of law and anti-corruption capacities** of partner countries

#### d. Invest in Sustainable Infrastructure and Mobility

Incentivizing the planning of **resilient infrastructure** as well as expanding our means of **sustainable transportation**, especially in urban areas, would not only contribute to global efforts to reduce emissions but also provide vast opportunities for employment. An analysis of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act shows that green stimulus measures outperformed more traditional infrastructure investments in some cases. For instance, 4.2 million job hours were created by investing US\$ 1 billion in (clean) public transport, while the same amount spent on building highways and other road infrastructure only generated 2.4 million job hours ([WRI 2020](#)). Potential measures could be:

- **Increase investment in sustainable urban mobility and infrastructure** in order to create jobs and decrease emissions in cities
- **Develop public employment programmes** for target groups particularly affected by the pandemic in sectors such as sustainable urban mobility, inter-regional train traffic as well as smart city solutions
- **Invest into research** in the area of sustainable transport solutions and innovative urban concepts. Future cities should be focused less on individual automotive transport while placing greater emphasis on shared and sustainable mobility

#### e. Cooperate Multilaterally

Many actors have stressed the importance of strong global cooperation in light of this unprecedented health, social and economic crisis ([World Bank 2020](#), [OECD 2020](#)). In a [SEI webinar](#), participants suggested turning 2020 into a “**super year of cooperation**”, an equally humble and powerful narrative to tackle COVID-19 and its consequences.

One lesson that could possibly already be drawn from the initial crisis response is that an **early and orchestrated multilateral response** to pandemics is critical in mitigating its economic consequences. In the case of COVID-19 such cooperation (e.g. at EU level) could have been improved significantly as countries often resorted to unilateral action. Especially during the **initial crisis response stage**, critical activities such as tracking and isolating infected people or procuring and evenly distributing essential medical equipment such as masks or ventilators were mostly pursued at national level. The following measures are therefore of paramount importance:

- **Reach out to and cooperate with other countries and donor organizations** in order to achieve stronger commitments to the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030
- **Deepen existing multi-stakeholder approaches**

#### f. Explore New Production Patterns and Work Cultures

Responding to the COVID-19 crisis offers the opportunity to make our economic patterns and practices both at micro and macro levels more localized, sustainable and socially just:

- **Foster local production** by shifting from global supply chains to sourcing products locally in order to satisfy national demands despite global delivery shortages
- **Test new cross-sectoral production patterns** (e.g. in the automotive industry which is a main driver of manufacturing and chemical industries)
- **Permanently alter work culture** by establishing remote working as a viable long-term alternative, investing in digitalization and reducing business trips
- **Analyze** the potential opportunities to cut subsidies for unsustainable jobs and reallocate the workforce to more sustainable industries (e.g. from aviation to railway)
- **Waive sanctions** to ensure access to food, essential supplies and medical support

#### g. Encourage Changing Behaviors and Narratives

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that **cross-border threats require both global, systemic solutions and individual behavioral changes**: “Over the past few weeks, governments and businesses have acted swiftly to mandate drastic, but necessary measures to stem the coronavirus, keeping people indoors, grounding air travel, cancelling events and closing borders. **Citizens, equally, are uniting to shift their behavior en masse**, by working and teaching their children from home, washing their hands more frequently, protecting the elderly, and helping neighbors shop for food. **The same decisive spirit is needed in the climate crisis**. We need both significant government policies and important personal behavior changes.” This quote by Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, points to the following measures:

- **Efficiency and Sufficiency**: [Learn from the mechanisms behind individual behavioral change](#) during COVID-19 for the collective action needed to tackle the climate challenge (read scientists, analysts and policy experts from a range of disciplines on their thoughts on [how the lifestyle changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic could affect global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the short and long term](#))
- **Enhance communication portraying the losses of life and assets due to the climate and biodiversity crises as real and concrete as the losses due to COVID-19** (instead of disguising them as “natural disasters”)

### 5. Case Studies for Sustainable Recovery: Past and Present

With the above entry points for transformative climate and sustainability action in a post-COVID-19 setting in mind, are there lessons to be learned from past and present green recovery efforts? The following case studies are examples of how a region, country, state and city deal(t) with transitioning toward more sustainable, climate-friendly and resilient post-crisis structures.

### a. The European Green Deal

Due to the health and socioeconomic crises induced by COVID-19, the implementation of the **European Green Deal** is expected to suffer delays. This could affect [initiatives such as the biodiversity, raw materials and farm-to-fork strategies](#) as well as the follow-up to the European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan. Moreover, it may [slow down initial plans to adopt the European Climate Law](#) and a number of other policy proposals this year.

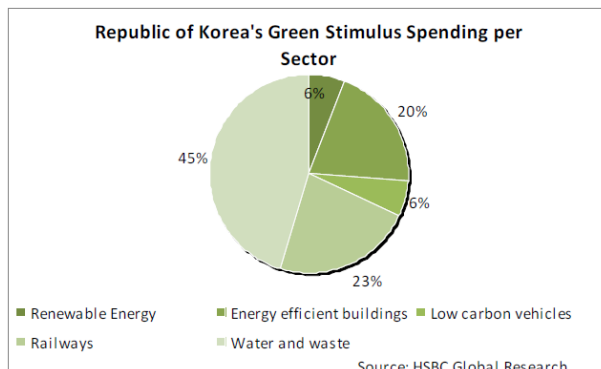
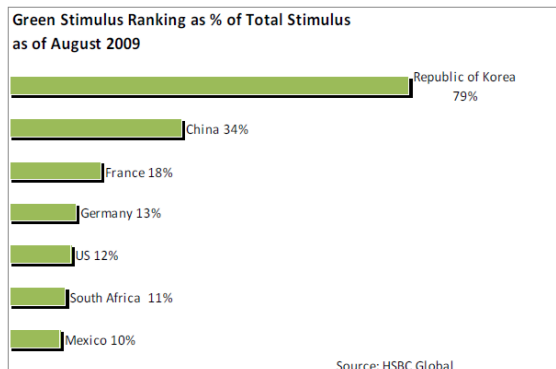
This is daunting, since hopes are being placed in a strong and committed impulse from the European Union as a global 'lead actor', which would strengthen the international dynamics in climate and biodiversity protection efforts. An early decision to raise the European 2030 climate target from a currently 40% to a 50-55% reduction of GHG emissions (compared to 1990 levels) would send a strong signal to decision-makers worldwide. **Linking the European Green Deal with the Corona crisis response packages** would help relaunch the economy in a sustainable fashion.

The Green Deal "must be central to a resilient recovery after COVID-19," EU environment ministers from 13 member states wrote in a [joint commentary](#). "The Green Deal provides us with a **roadmap to make the right choices in responding to the economic crisis while transforming Europe into a sustainable and climate neutral economy**. We should withstand the temptations of short-term solutions in response to the present crisis that risk locking the EU in a fossil fuel economy for decades to come," the text reads. The EU's response will focus on the most vulnerable people, including migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and their host communities and integrate its strategic objectives set out in the Green Deal and the Digital Agenda.

After EU finance ministers agreed [a €540 billion package](#) to support member states (through the ESM), companies (through the European Investment Bank) and workers (via the European Commission's new instrument SURE) in the Corona crisis, **the European Council announced it will hold a video conference on 23 April to further discuss the recovery plan** to the pandemic. Equally, the [European Commission](#) emphasized that despite the postponement of the COP26, the EU will commit to the climate and energy targets for 2030.

### b. The Republic of Korea's Green New Deal

As part of the response to the 2008/09 financial crisis, over US\$ 400 billion were spent on green stimulus measures. Globally, however, this sum only represented 15% of total fiscal stimulus pumped into the world economy. While China and the United States accounted for the vast majority of investment in absolute numbers, it was the **Republic of Korea** that embraced calls for a green recovery the most, **directing nearly 80% of its economic stimulus budget toward renewable energies, energy-efficient buildings, low-carbon transport, and water and waste management** ([HSBC 2009](#), [UNEP 2009](#)).



Korea launched a “**Green New Deal**” in January 2009 as a means of creating jobs and revitalising the economy. The stimulus package comprised a mix of fiscal measures amounting to a total of US\$ 38.1 billion, the equivalent of **4% of the country’s GDP**. As a result of these measures, GDP growth in South Korea resumed faster than among all other OECD member states; in fact, the country showed one of the highest growth rates in 2010 ([WRI 2020](#)).

Simultaneously, however, energy usage, carbon intensity and GHG emissions increased, leading to the conclusion that the 2009 Green New Deal **might have been effective as an economic policy instrument but ineffective as an instrument of environmental policy**, at least in the short term ([Mundaca & Damon 2015](#)). The nation’s economic success still primarily stems from energy-intensive industries fuelled largely by coal; nuclear power being the only significant low-carbon energy source (solar and wind accounted for less than 2% of electricity generation in 2018). Consequently, the Climate Action Tracker has deemed South Korea’s policies to achieve the 2-degree target of the Paris Agreement to be “critically insufficient” ([Carbon Brief 2020](#)).

With the COVID-19 pandemic taking a significant toll on the Korean economy, the country’s ruling political party [announced its ambition to once again design a Green New Deal](#) and deliver net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The plan, including a carbon tax, a phase-out of coal project financing and large-scale investment in renewable energy, still lacks a clear roadmap and timeline. However, the governing party – if re-elected – is expected to announce details on its shift away from fossil fuels at the P4G (Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030) conference to be held in Seoul this summer.

### c. Response Measures at State Level: New York

Having been hit extremely hard by the COVID-19 outbreak, the state of New York has placed the focus of its **economic crisis response measures on clean energy technologies**. The state announced the [passing of legislation](#) which establishes an Office of Renewable Energy Siting that will act as the oversight and facilitating body **for renewable energy projects**. Additionally, the state launches a Clean Energy Resources Development and Incentives Program that targets and prioritizes the development of abandoned commercial sites, landfill etc. into clean energy plants. To ensure that **the program is socially compatible it includes benefits for local communities** to host renewable energy projects. The legislation is embedded in New York’s overall [climate strategy](#) which includes a US\$ 1.7 billion renewable energy and infrastructure investment package and aims at 100% clean electricity by 2040.



#### d. City Action: Amsterdam's Doughnut Economy

On 8 April 2020, the City of Amsterdam formally embraced the so-called “**Doughnut Model**” [devised by British economist Kate Raworth](#) from Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute to redesign the city after COVID-19. The model describes how societies and businesses can contribute to economic development while still respecting the limits of the planet (planetary boundaries) and our society (SDGs). Amsterdam is committed to **using the Doughnut as a tool for transformative action** and [starting point for future public policy decisions](#) – and is the first city in the world to make such a commitment. The newly launched [Amsterdam Donut Coalition](#), a network of over 30 community groups, SMEs, research institutes and local government agencies, already applies and promotes the Doughnut Economics approach. The downscaling of Raworth's initially global model to the city level could provide valuable insights into alternative, holistic approaches to recovering from COVID-19's devastating impacts at a sub-state level.

#### 6. Positioning of National and International Think Tanks, NGOs and Research Institutes

##### National and International Think Tanks, NGOs and Research Institutes

###### [Agora Energiewende](#)

- 100 Mrd. EUR [Konjunkturpaket](#), das sich am Green Deal orientiert
- Wirtschaftsbelebung mit Modernisierungsschub verbinden
- Strompreissenkung für Haushalte (20%) und Gewerbe (25%)
- 20 Mrd. EUR Hilfe für den Bausektor (höhere Abwrackprämien für Ölheizungen, Fertighaus-Konzepte)
- 15 Mrd. EUR Hilfe für die Chemie- und Stahlindustrie (effizientere Hochöfen, Steuervorteile und Boni gemessen an CO<sub>2</sub>-Einsparung)
- 5 Mrd. EUR für den Aufbau von industriellen Elektrolyse-Anlagen
- 13 Mrd. EUR für die Förderung von Wind- und Solarenergie sowie Stromnetzen

“So sollte ein Corona-Krisen-Wachstums- und Konjunkturpaket den Fokus darauf richten, dass die verschiedenen Industrie-Sektoren Investitionen in klimaschonende Technologien tätigen können. So werden nicht nur die Emissionen dauerhaft gesenkt, sondern diese Industrien auch zukunftsfähig gemacht, denn die Herausforderung der Klimakrise wird sich in den nächsten Jahren ja weiter verschärfen. So sollten etwa **Maßnahmen zur Wiederbelebung der Baukonjunktur explizit die Gebäudesanierung ins Zentrum stellen, Unterstützungen für die energieintensive Industrien den Fokus auf Investitionen in effizientere und klimaschonendere Technologien legen und Maßnahmen in der Autoindustrie den ohnehin notwendigen Umbau in Richtung Elektromobilität fördern.** Zudem sollte die jetzt beginnende Kurzarbeiter-Phase dafür genutzt werden, **Training und Schulungen für die neuen Technologien** durchzuführen, damit die für neue klimaschonenden Investitionen notwendigen Qualifikationen vorhanden sind.”

###### [BUND](#)

“Die Welt steht am Scheideweg. Die Corona-Krise zeigt, wie verletzlich wir Menschen und wie verletzlich unsere Wirtschafts- und Sozialsysteme sind. Es ist deshalb gut, dass die Bundesregierung in dieser für uns alle herausfordernden Situation Geld in die Hand nimmt, um Menschen und Unternehmen in der Not schnell zu helfen. Damit die Menschen, die Unternehmen, unsere Wirtschaft auch nach der Corona-Krise und langfristig gut aufgestellt sind, **braucht Deutschland einen Green Deal: für Gerechtigkeit, Arbeit und Umwelt. Menschen absichern, nachhaltige Arbeitsplätze schaffen, eine klimafreundliche Zukunft mit starken regionalen Kreisläufen aufbauen.** Das muss jetzt der Grundsatz sein, um unsere Wirtschaft aus der Krise zu

führen. Parteipolitisch motivierte Blockaden, wie sie jetzt in Äußerungen zum Ausbau der Windkraft oder beim Solardeckel aufscheinen, haben hier nichts verloren." (Olaf Bandt, BUND-Vorsitzender)

"Wir brauchen jetzt einen wirklichen Green Deal für Europa und internationale Solidarität. Deutschland muss in diesen Krisenzeiten über die nationalen Grenzen hinweg denken und handeln. **Im Rahmen unserer Entwicklungszusammenarbeit müssen wir Technologien und Gelder für die Länder bereitstellen, die ihrer Bevölkerung und ihren Unternehmen in der Krise nicht im gleichen Maße helfen können.** Bei uns dürfen die Hilfen nur an Unternehmen fließen, die sich dazu verpflichten, ihre CO2-Emissionen im Sinne des Pariser Klimaschutzabkommens umfassend zu reduzieren." (Kathrin Schneider, BUND-Klimaexpertin)

#### [Centre for European Policy Studies \(CEPS\)](#)

The crisis may actually offer a unique opportunity for the EU to live up to the Green Deal's promise of economic modernisation along the Paris decarbonisation objectives, allowing for a rethink of national taxation, innovation, infrastructure, entrepreneurship or the reform of the common agricultural policy. The current crisis may hold a lesson for climate change. **Climate change is like a pandemic in slow motion; once our systems are 'overwhelmed', the impacts are likely to be unprecedented. The 'recovery' will also be in slow motion, because equivalents to containment (mitigation) and building of intensive care units (adaptation) will have to operate over decades to bring greenhouse gases to levels more suitable for achieving the aim of a more stable socio-economic and environmental status.**

#### [Climate Focus](#)

"Scientists have estimated that global warming at the upper end of this range could, in fact, threaten the very existence of the human race. **What to do when faced with two global crises of such monstrous proportions at once? Is it logical to focus all available resources on combating the beast before us when a much more serious danger looms over humanity?** In the short term, yes – the first beast will devour us if we do not act promptly. Decisions to cancel climate meeting, events, and demonstrations scheduled for the coming months – or to move them online – are therefore beyond question. However, in our battle against the coronavirus we should not ignore the other beast, which if not controlled will inevitably devour us all eventually. **There is a real risk that the corona crisis sucks up all our energy and political will and that – desperate for social and economic normalcy – we revert straight back to business-as-usual.**" (Darragh Conway and Szymon Mikolajczyk, Climate Focus)

#### [Club of Rome](#)

**Covid-19 has shown us that overnight transformational change is possible.** A different world, a different economy is suddenly dawning. This is an unprecedented opportunity to move away from unmitigated growth at all costs and the old fossil fuel economy, and deliver a lasting balance between people, prosperity and our planetary boundaries.

We know what the solutions are: **investing in renewable energy instead of fossil fuels; investing in nature and reforestation; investing in sustainable food systems and regenerative agriculture; and, shifting to a more local, circular and low carbon economy. These positive actions can also be a much-needed source of collective hope and optimism for life regeneration in these uncertain times.** (Open Letter to Global Leaders, 26.03.2020)

#### [Council on Foreign Relations](#)

"Links between COVID-19 and other global challenges underscore the importance of multilateral cooperation across a broad array of issue areas." (Kaysie Brown & Megan Roberts, UN Foundation)  
<https://www.cfr.org/coronavirus>

#### [Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik \(DIE\)](#)

“Germany should capitalise on the present momentum to underscore the value of multilateral platforms. The corona threat shows that isolated measures by individual states are inadequate. (...) The corona crisis also uncovers the tremendous potential of **digital platforms (online meetings, video conferences, etc.) for contributing to international cooperation in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.**”

#### [European Policy Centre](#)

“It is essential that the EU does not lose a track of its global commitments and goals, including for climate neutrality, when addressing the ongoing health and the expected economic crisis. **Greater sustainability must be a key as the EU shifts focus from immediate response to recovery plans. Most importantly, the corona crisis highlights the importance of prevention, mitigation and resilience building.** It is in the EU’s interest to do all possible to proactively manage the transition to a competitive, sustainable, climate-neutral economy. This is the time to accelerate – not slow down – the work started.” (Annika Hedberg, EPC)

#### [Foundations 20](#)

Ambitious European Green Deal must also form the basis for the announced EU stimulus packages to deal with the Corona crisis – Foundations appeal to EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen for ambitious climate protection.

#### [Germanwatch](#)

„Wir dürfen nicht eine exponentiell anwachsende Krise bekämpfen, indem wir eine andere exponentiell wachsende Krise - die Klimakrise - befeuern. Wir müssen gezielt das Gesundheitssystem, die Krisenfestigkeit der Gesellschaft – hierzulande sowie in den Ländern des globalen Südens - und die zur Gefahrenabwehr notwendigen Klimaziele stärken. **Die Investitionsimpulse müssen deshalb der Start für die Umsetzung des Europäischen Green Deals sein.**“ (Christoph Bals, Politischer Geschäftsführer)

#### [Greenpeace](#)

Unser Umgang mit der Corona-Krise kann uns viel über die Bewältigung der Klimakrise lehren. Die Pandemie zeigt uns, wie entscheidend es ist, auf die **Wissenschaft zu hören**. Wie wichtig entschlossenes Handeln der Politik ist und dass Verhaltensänderungen eben nicht von allein kommen. **In kritischen Situationen braucht es klare Ansagen, das ist dann auch okay so. Wir lernen gerade, dass jeder und jede einzelne von uns zur Lösung beitragen muss.** Und wie entscheidend es ist, zusammenzuhalten und auf die Verwundbarsten in unserer Gesellschaft Acht zu geben. Mit eben diesem Verhalten können wir auch die Klimakrise bewältigen. **Ich hoffe, dass wir die Lehren aus der Corona-Krise, in Zukunft auch auf den Klimaschutz anwenden.**“ (Lisa Göldner, Greenpeace Expertin)

**Grüner Marshall-Plan für Deutschland-** Wie notwendige Wirtschaftshilfen die Corona-Krise abfedern und die ökologische Transformation beschleunigen können (Eine Studie des Forums Ökologisch-Soziale Marktwirtschaft im Auftrag von Greenpeace, März 2020):

[https://www.greenpeace.de/sites/www.greenpeace.de/files/publications/2020-03-foes-wirtschaftshilfen-corona-krise\\_1.pdf](https://www.greenpeace.de/sites/www.greenpeace.de/files/publications/2020-03-foes-wirtschaftshilfen-corona-krise_1.pdf)

#### [Harrup Advisory](#)

For climate change to reclaim its place on the media agenda, activists should be forewarning that unless humanity changes its relationship with the environment, lockdowns could become common. This new normal we are experiencing across the world, is a potential precursor to what a climate crisis might look like (Ian Twine, Harrup Advisory)

#### [International Energy Agency \(IEA\)](#)

Governments are drawing up stimulus plans in an effort to counter the economic damage from the coronavirus. **These stimulus packages offer an excellent opportunity to ensure that the essential task of building a secure and sustainable energy future doesn't get lost amid the flurry of immediate priorities.**

"We may well see CO2 emissions fall this year as a result of the impact of the coronavirus on economic activity, particularly transport. But it is very important to understand that this would not be the result of governments and companies adopting new policies and strategies. It would most likely be a short-term blip that could well be followed by a rebound in emissions growth as economic activity ramps back up. **Real, sustained reductions in emissions will happen only if governments and companies fulfil the commitments that they have already announced – or that they will hopefully announce very soon.**

**Governments can use the current situation to step up their climate ambitions and launch sustainable stimulus packages focused on clean energy technologies.** The coronavirus crisis is already doing significant damage around the world. Rather than compounding the tragedy by allowing it to hinder clean energy transitions, we need to seize the opportunity to help accelerate them." (Fatih Birol, 14.03.2020)

#### [Fraunhofer-Institut für System- und Innovationsforschung](#)

**„Vermutlich bleibt ein positiver Trend zum Homeoffice und zu Videokonferenzen. Um routinierte Verhaltensweisen zu ändern, braucht man ein Momentum wie die Corona-Krise, das die Menschen zum Umdenken zwingt. Homeoffice und Videokonferenzen sind fast obligatorisch.** Arbeitgeber schaffen jetzt die nötige Infrastruktur und Arbeitnehmer lernen die Tools zu nutzen. Bedarf und Bereitschaft werden auch nach der Pandemie höher sein. Möglicherweise gibt es positive Synergieeffekte für den Kampf gegen den Klimawandel. Die Erfahrung des gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalts im Kampf gegen den Virus über die nationalen Grenzen hinaus, könnte dazu führen, dass auch **der Klimawandel als gesamtgesellschaftliche Aufgabe verstanden wird.** Natürlich ist es aber noch viel zu früh um diese Dynamik abzuschätzen.“ (Dr. Johannes Schuler, Projektleiter für Nachhaltigkeit und Infrastruktursysteme am Fraunhofer-Institut für System- und Innovationsforschung)

#### [Stockholm Environment Institute](#)

"Even as we deal with the crisis and immediate relief measures, the debate has already started on what form the recovery should take. In particular, there are growing calls for a **"green" recovery – one that accelerates progress towards decarbonization and broader social and environmental sustainability goals, rather than simply restoring the unsustainable patterns that will leave us more prone – and less resilient – to future crises.** [...] Looking beyond environmental questions, the COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder that all **three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – are inextricably linked.** In the South, major shortfalls in water and sanitation, overcrowded and poorly housed communities, and a lack of social safety nets are causing grave concern over the eventual scale of the pandemic and its impacts. And even in the North we are quickly starting to see how inequalities within cities and between urban and rural areas are determining people's chances of surviving the pandemic, both financially and health-wise. **The recovery needs to be socially just and make our societies far more resilient to future crises.** While the calls for a green recovery have acknowledged this, it is perhaps more useful – and potentially less alienating – to talk of a sustainable, just and resilient recovery." (SEI Research Director Åsa Persson)

#### [World Economic Forum \(WEF\)](#)

"[A]s the world's attention now shifts to the outbreak of Covid-19, **the global community cannot allow itself to stop fighting for more ambitious action on climate change, or for solutions to challenges around cyber security and international security, for that matter.** [...] While we do

need to account for new dangers and do need to address the pandemic, it is important that we do not cease the important work of marshalling the global community in raising ambition on climate action. At the same time, we should pursue measures that make collective blind spots less likely to occur. Here, a **strong global multi-stakeholder framework - one in which governments, businesses, and international organisations work in concert - is fundamental.**" (Børge Brende, WEF President)

#### [World Resources Institute \(WRI\)](#)

What governments should avoid is trying to boost their economies in the wake of one global health crisis by exacerbating another — namely air pollution. A stimulus package that includes ramping up fossil fuel production or use would do exactly this. [...] **The good news is that a mounting body of evidence demonstrates that pursuing low-carbon and climate-resilient growth is the best way to unlock lasting economic and social benefits.** Bold climate action could deliver at least \$26 trillion in net global economic benefits between now and 2030 compared with business-as-usual according to the New Climate Economy. This includes creating more than 65 million new low-carbon jobs in 2030. (Helen Mountford, Climate & Economics, WRI)

## 7. Positioning of German Government and European Union

### German Government and EU

#### Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit (BMU)

„Der Klimawandel existiert weiter, auch wenn er gerade weniger Aufmerksamkeit bekommt. Viele spüren im Moment, wie verletzlich wir sind - individuell und als Menschheit. Wir sollten daraus lernen, auch die anderen großen Krisen, die uns Menschen verletzlich machen - den **Klimawandel und die Naturzerstörung - ernst zu nehmen und entschlossen gemeinsam zu bekämpfen.**“ ([Svenja Schulze, 29.03.2020](#))

„Jetzt ist die Zeit für akute Krisenbekämpfung. Aber es wird eine Zeit nach der Pandemie geben. Spätestens dann sollten wir die Ursachen dieser Krise verstanden haben, um für die Zukunft besser vorbeugen zu können. Die Wissenschaft sagt uns, dass die Zerstörung von Ökosystemen Krankheitsausbrüche bis hin zu Pandemien wahrscheinlicher macht. Das zeigt: **Die Naturzerstörung ist die Krise hinter der Coronakrise.** Umgekehrt gilt: Gute Naturschutzpolitik, die vielfältige Ökosysteme schützt, ist eine wichtige Gesundheitsvorsorge gegen die Entstehung neuer Krankheiten. Ich würde es sehr begrüßen, wenn der **Weltbiodiversitätsrat den globalen Wissensstand zu diesen Fragen sammelt, aufarbeitet und der Politik weltweit zur Verfügung stellt.** Denn die Weltgemeinschaft hat nach der Pandemie die Chance, eine **neue globale Biodiversitätsstrategie** zu beschließen – und so zu zeigen, dass sie aus den Pandemien der Vergangenheit gelernt hat.“ ([Svenja Schulze, 02.04.2020](#))

#### Bundesminister für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung

„Es ist wichtig, das weltweite Zusammenwirken von Human- und Tiermedizin besser zu erforschen und zu verstehen. Denn zwei Drittel aller beim Menschen neu auftretenden Infektionskrankheiten stammen ursprünglich von Nutz- oder Wildtieren. Wir müssen vieles von dem, was wir bisher akzeptiert haben, in Frage stellen. In der Tiernutzung wie auch in der Tierhaltung. Ein Umdenken in vielen Bereichen der Globalisierung ist notwendig.“

„Wenn es etwas Positives in dieser Krise gibt, dann vielleicht das: wir alle erleben einen Digitalisierungsschub.“

(Gerd Müller, Bundesminister für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, Spiegel Plus Interview "Brechen Entwicklungsländer zusammen, gibt es Chaos, Unruhen und Bürgerkrieg", 04.04.2020)

#### [Umweltbundesamt](#)

Vielleicht hilft uns die Corona-Krise dabei, **kulturelle Innovationen zu ermöglichen**: Lebensstile, die Wohlbefinden mit den Grenzen der Ökosysteme in Einklang bringen. Hinzu kommt: Wir reden immer auch über widerstandsfähige Gesellschaften. Und diese Widerstandskraft wird immer häufiger gefordert. 9/11 und Terror, die Sars-Krise in Asien, die Finanzmarktkrise, die Ebola-Epidemie in Afrika, Wanderungsbewegungen nach Europa. Wolfgang Schäuble hat mal vom "**Rendezvous mit der Globalisierung**" gesprochen. Solche Rendezvous haben wir ständig. Wir müssen also darüber nachdenken, wie wir mit solchen Ereignissen künftig umgehen. Wir lernen wieder, wie wichtig öffentliche Institutionen sind. Wir lernen den Rat der Wissenschaft neu zu schätzen, wir üben uns in Solidarität. Und wir sollten erkennen, dass globale Kooperation immer wichtiger wird, im Zeitalter globaler Vernetzungen. Man könnte auch sagen: **Wir rütteln gerade unsere Gesellschaften zurecht und sehen, was uns widerstandsfähiger macht.**" (Dirk Messner)

#### [Wissenschaftlichen Beirat der Bundesregierung Globale Umweltveränderungen \(WBGU\)](#)

"Schon nach der Finanzkrise 2008 wurden wichtige strukturelle Veränderungen für nachhaltiges Wirtschaften der kurzfristigen Symptombekämpfung geopfert. **Es ist aber fahrlässig, gerade Klimaschutzmaßnahmen - die ja der Vermeidung zukünftiger Krisen dienen - auszusetzen.**" (Politikökonomin und Beraterin der Bundesregierung für Globale Umweltveränderung Maja Göpel)

#### [European Union](#)

The Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative - **The Commission's proposal for an investment initiative of €37 billion has been approved. It consists of unused cohesion policy funds, and it involves the bringing forward of expenditure and redirecting it to the fight against the coronavirus:** About €8 billion of unspent EU cohesion money that Member States can keep instead of reimbursing to the EU €29 billion of co-financing from the EU budget. In addition, the Commission proposes to allow Member States to use for coronavirus-related expenditure up to €28 billion that had been allocated for spending under 2014-2020 structural funding, but not yet awarded to projects. (EU Coronavirus response, 28.03.2020)

In the [Joint statement of the Members of the European Council, no reference to climate or environmental synergies made](#)

#### [European Commission](#)

"As for the European Commission, we will not slow down our work domestically or internationally to prepare for an ambitious COP26, when it takes place. At home, we have put in place the key EU laws to meet our existing 2030 climate and energy targets. In the long-term, we have committed to climate neutrality by 2050 and proposed a climate law that will make this objective legally binding. The legislative work on this proposal has started, even in these challenging circumstances. [...] We will also continue to work intensively through all available channels with our partners around the world to share our plans and to encourage them to raise ambition too, and to work together on other key elements of the global climate agenda, like sustainable finance and adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change."

(Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, 01.04.2020)

#### [EU Global Response](#)

The European Union will continue to adapt its response to the evolving situation and focus on the most affected countries in need of health support, such as countries in Africa, the Neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa, parts of Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. **The EU's response will focus on the most vulnerable people, including migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and their host communities and integrate its strategic objectives set out in the Green Deal and the Digital Agenda.** (08.04.2020)

## 8. Positioning of International Organizations

### International Organizations

#### [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#)

“Monitoring, containing and mitigating the effects of the corona virus are top priorities. Timely and decisive actions by health authorities, **central banks, fiscal, regulatory and supervisory authorities can help contain the virus outbreak and offset the economic impact of the pandemic.** Central banks must support demand and confidence by preventing a tightening of financial conditions, lowering borrowing costs for households and firms, and ensuring market liquidity. **Fiscal policy must step up to provide sizable support to the most affected people and firms, including in hard-to-reach informal sectors.** Regulatory and supervisory responses must aim to preserve financial stability and banking system soundness while sustaining economic activity.”

#### [OECD](#)

In developing immediate, short-term, sector-specific and macroeconomic policy responses to the COVID-19 emergency, the OECD urges governments to:

**Systematically evaluate possible unintended negative environmental impacts of new short-term fiscal and tax provisions.** While the priority is rightly on providing urgent relief to impacted businesses and individuals, a careful screening of the environmental impacts of stimulus measures would significantly add coherence to policies and avoid creating perverse and unintended environmental consequences that might damage the future resilience and environmental health of societies.

**Do not roll-back existing environmental standards as part of recovery plans.** As countries implement urgent measures to tackle the health and immediate economic impact of the crisis, it will be important not to retreat from the gains made in recent decades in addressing climate change, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss, and other environmental challenges.

**Make sector-specific financial support measures conditional on environmental improvements.** The use of financial support measures (e.g. loan guarantees, tax abatements) could be directed towards supporting stronger environmental commitments and performance in pollution-intensive sectors that may be particularly affected by the crisis.

Ensure that the measures will enhance levels of environmental health in order to **strengthen the resilience of societies.**

Evaluating the initial impact of COVID-19 containment measures on economic activity

#### [UN](#)

The irony that the current crisis is resulting in lower emissions and cleaner air is not lost on anyone – not least because **deforestation, pollution, biodiversity loss are all contributory factors to the spread of the virus.** Governments should not respond to the COVID-19 crisis by making policy and investment decisions that exacerbate existing crises such as air pollution and the climate emergency. [...] **The COVID-19 Pandemic is a defining moment for modern society,** and history will judge the efficacy of our response not by the actions of any single set of government actors taken in isolation, but by the degree to which the response is coordinated globally across all sectors

to the benefit of our human family. The United Nations global footprint at the national level is an asset for the global community to be leveraged to deliver the ambition needed to win the war against the virus. With the right actions, **the COVID-19 pandemic can mark the rebirthing of society as we know it today to one where we protect present and future generations.** It is the greatest test that we have faced since the formation of the United Nations, one that requires **all actors -governments, academia, businesses, employers and workers' organizations, civil society organizations, communities and individuals- to act in solidarity in new, creative, and deliberate ways for the common good** and based on the core United Nations values that we uphold for humanity. (March 2020)

Guterres' press conference on COVID-19, Espinosa on UNFCCC processes

#### [UNDP](#)

“Die Finanzpakete und Kredite, die Staaten aktuell als Corona-Hilfen auflegen, können die Handlungsfähigkeit bei den notwendigen Zukunftsinvestitionen tatsächlich stark beschränken. Aber so ein Entweder-Oder – entweder Unternehmen retten oder das Klima – ist nicht unweigerlich. Die massiven Investitionen können ebenso gut zur Chance werden. Damit ließe sich eine **zukunftsträchtige Energiewirtschaftspolitik finanzieren, die Landwirtschaft positiv beeinflussen, bäuerliche Betriebe oder digitale Technologieunternehmen fördern. Deshalb brauchen wir jetzt dringend einen öffentlichen Dialog** – auch mit den Führungspersönlichkeiten der Wirtschaft –, wie wir uns die Zukunft nach der Pandemie vorstellen und welche Prioritäten wir setzen.” (Achim Steiner, Administrator of the UNDP)

#### [UNEP](#)

“Every crisis provides the opportunity to learn. The outbreak of epidemics like **COVID-19 reveal the fundamental tenets of the trade-off** we consistently face: humans have unlimited needs, but the planet has limited capacity to satisfy them.” (Pushpam Kumar, United Nations Environment Programme, Chief Environmental Economist)

UNEP Executive Director, Inger Andersen has observed that, “[We are intimately interconnected with nature, whether we like it or not. If we don't take care of nature, we can't take care of ourselves.](#)”

#### [UNFCCC](#)

„Corona zeigt, wie stark uns eine globale Krise als Weltgemeinschaft treffen kann. Wir bekommen aber auch eine Vorstellung davon, was der Klimawandel als globale Krise in den nächsten Jahrzehnten zerstören könnte. Das sollte uns wachrütteln.“

„Wir müssen den Ländern jetzt zeigen, dass es nicht um ein "entweder Corona oder Klima" geht. Im Gegenteil: Der Klimaschutz und Investitionen in grüne Technologien könnten vielen Ländern auf längere Sicht dabei helfen, ihre Wirtschaft wieder auf Kurs zu bringen.“

(Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Generalsekretärin der Klimarahmenkonvention der Vereinten Nationen (UNFCCC))

#### [World Bank Group](#)

“We invite G20 leaders to task the WBG and the IMF to make these assessments, including identifying the countries with unsustainable debt situations, and to prepare a proposal for comprehensive action by official creditors to address both the financing and debt relief needs of IDA countries. We will seek endorsement for the proposal at the Development Committee during the Spring Meetings (April 16/17).”



**The World Bank Group and the IMF believe it is imperative at this moment to provide a global sense of relief for developing countries as well as a strong signal to financial markets. The international community would welcome G20 support for this Call to Action.”**

“Across the World Bank Group, efforts are underway to help governments respond to the crisis triggered by COVID-19. The priority today is to support overwhelmed health systems and the millions of workers and business owners who are being hit hard. **Thinking ahead, however, the response also offers a significant opportunity to build a more resilient and sustainable future.”**

#### WTO

“The immediate goal is to bring the pandemic under control and mitigate the economic damage to people, companies and countries. But policymakers must start planning for the aftermath of the pandemic”

“These numbers are ugly – there is no getting around that. But a rapid, vigorous rebound is possible. Decisions taken now will determine the future shape of the recovery and global growth prospects. **We need to lay the foundations for a strong, sustained and socially inclusive recovery.** Trade will be an important ingredient here, along with fiscal and monetary policy. Keeping markets open and predictable, as well as fostering a more generally favourable business environment, will be critical to spur the renewed investment we will need. And if countries work together, we will see a much faster recovery than if each country acts alone.” (WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo)

## 9. Resources

The following sections provide a selection of informative webinars, insightful reports, relevant newsletters and useful commentary.

### Webinars

Stockholm Environment Institute: [The Geopolitics of COVID-19 and Climate Change](#) (03.04.2020)

World Resources Institute (WRI): [Build Back Better Series](#) (several dates)

### Reports & Publications

Agora Energiewende: [Auswirkungen der Corona-Krise auf die Klimabilanz Deutschlands](#) (March 2020)

CEPR Policy Portal: [Economics in the Time of COVID-19](#) (06.03.2020)

Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS): [Several papers on COVID-19 in the EU](#) (March & April 2020)

Forum Ökologisch-Soziale Marktwirtschaft / Greenpeace: [Grüner Marshallplan für Deutschland](#) (23.03.2020)

International Labour Organization (ILO) Monitor: [COVID-19 and the World of Work. Estimates and Analysis](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 07.04.2020)

McKinsey: [Addressing climate change in a post-pandemic world](#) (April 2020)

Stanley Center for Peace and Security: [The Next Global Financial Crisis and Climate Change: A Policy Agenda to Align with the Paris Agreement](#) (October 2019)

UN: [SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, GLOBAL SOLIDARITY: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#) (March 2020)

Wuppertal Institut: [Folgen der Corona-Krise und Klimaschutz – Langfristige Zukunftsgestaltung im Blick behalten](#) (20.03.2020)

WWF European Policy Office: [Building Resilience: WWF recommendations for a just & sustainable recovery after Covid-19. Using the European Green Deal to drive Europe's recovery and transition to a fair, resource-efficient and resilient society](#) (07.04.2020)

## Newsletters

[Bloomberg Green Daily Newsletter](#)

Carbon Brief

Climate Fwd: Newsletter (The New York Times)

[Climate Weekly](#) (Climate Home News)

Grist

[POLITICO's Global Translations](#)

## Newspaper Articles & Commentary

Agora42: [Von der Corona-Krise zur nachhaltigen Wirtschaft: Was zukunftsorientierte Politik jetzt leisten muss](#) (n.d.)

Al Jazeera: [The coronavirus outbreak is part of the climate change crisis. Therefore, climate action should be central to our response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (30.03.2020)

CEN Universität Hamburg: [Ist die Coronakrise vergleichbar mit der Klimakrise?](#) (03.04.2020)

Climate Analytics: [Responding to a global crisis - the coronavirus pandemic and the climate emergency](#) (13.03.2020)

Climate Home News: [Coronavirus slows developing nations' plans to step up climate action in 2020](#) (18.03.2020)

Climate Weekly: [Historic opportunity](#) (20.03.2020)

Council on Foreign Relations: [Links between COVID-19 and other global challenges underscore the importance of multilateral cooperation across a broad array of issue areas](#) (24.03.2020)

Deutsches Komitee für Katastrophenvorsorge: [Bewertung des bisherigen Geschehens aus katastrophensoziologischer Perspektive und auf die weitere Entwicklung gerichtete Impulse](#) (16.03.2020)

Deutsches Komitee für Katastrophenvorsorge: [Politisch-ökonomische Bewertung des Risikomanagements in der Covid-19 Pandemie](#) (12.03.2020)

European Environment Agency: [Reflecting on climate-neutrality ambitions in Europe in times of Covid-19](#) (20.03.2020)

European Parliament: [COVID-19's impact on human rights outside the EU](#) (April 2020)

European Policy Centre (EPC): [Does Covid-19 pose a threat to the EU's climate neutrality efforts?](#) (31.03.2020)

E3G: [COVID-19: A New Era for Climate Action?](#)

E3G: [Financing the COVID 19 Recovery](#)

F20: [Open Letter to the President of the EU-Commission Ursula von der Leyen](#) (18.03.2020)

Forbes: [Want To Jump-Start The Economy? Include A Green New Deal In The Stimulus Package](#) (19.03.2020)

Forbes: [Blinded By Disbelief: COVID-19's Devastation Is A Mirror For Climate Change](#) (26.03.2020)

Frankfurter Rundschau: [Klimaforscher zur Coronakrise: „Niemand kann sich jetzt über einen positiven Klimateffekt freuen“](#) (26.03.2020)

IASS Potsdam: [Is the Coronavirus "good" for climate change? This question misses the point](#) (30.03.2020)

IDA-Seite der NaWi-Kolleg\*innen: [Cushioning economic consequences of the corona crisis in our partner countries](#)

Klimareporter: ["Wir brauchen einen Klima-Corona-Vertrag"](#) (23.04.2020)

MIT Technology

Review: [Why the coronavirus outbreak is terrible news for climate change](#) (09.03.2020)

The New York Times: [What the Coronavirus Means for Climate Change](#) (27.03.2020)

Scientific American:

[Destroyed Habitat Creates the Perfect Conditions for Coronavirus to Emerge](#) (18.03.2020)

Spiegel Online: [Krisenkommunikation der Regierung: Den Menschen die Wirklichkeit zumuten](#) (29.03.2020)

Spiegel Online: [Green Deal bedroht: Wie das Coronavirus die Klimapolitik ausbremst](#) (20.03.2020)

Sueddeutsche Online: [Dirk Messner, Präsident des Umweltbundesamts, darüber, wie Corona nicht nur die Gesellschaft widerstandsfähiger macht, sondern auch die Umweltpolitik verändern kann](#) (29.03.2020)

Tagesspiegel: [Dieses Virus ist auch der Preis unserer Ausbeutung der Natur](#) (24.03.2020)

Tagesspiegel: Gastbeitrag von Entwicklungsminister Müller: [Halbheiten kosten uns das ganze Leben. Wir müssen heute verhindern, dass die Entwicklungsländer um Jahrzehnte zurückgeworfen werden](#) (29.03.2020)

Tagesspiegel Background: [Ein klimagerechter Rettungsschirm](#) (06.04.2020)

Tagesschau online: [Corona als Chance für den Klimaschutz](#) (27.03.2020)

Tagesschau online: [Profitiert der Klimaschutz von der Krise?](#) (27.03.2020)

TAZ: [Corona-Finanzhilfen und Klimaschutz](#) (24.03.2020)

TAZ: [Corona und Klima: Mit zweierlei Maß](#) (01.04.2020)

The Guardian: [Delay is deadly: what Covid-19 tells us about tackling the climate crisis](#) (24.03.2020)

The Guardian: ['Nature is sending us a message', says UN environment chief](#)

The Guardian: [Covid-19 economic rescue plans must be green, say environmentalists](#)

UNDESA: [COVID-19: Disrupting lives, economies and societies](#) (01.04.2020)

UNDESA: [Corona crisis causes turmoil in financial markets](#) (01.04.2020)

UNDESA: [COVID-19: Addressing the social crisis through fiscal stimulus plans](#) (01.04.2020)

UNEP: [Coronaviruses: are they here to stay?](#) (03.04.2020)

We Mean Business: [COVID-19 stimulus should address health, the economy and climate together](#) (20.03.2020)

World Bank Blogs: [Thinking ahead: For a sustainable recovery from COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#) (30.03.2020)

World Bank Blogs: [The pandemic is an unexpected opportunity for climate action](#) (01.04.2020)

World Economic Forum: [Could COVID-19 give rise to a greener global future?](#)

World Economic Forum: [How COVID-19 might help us win the fight against climate change](#) (31.03.2020)

World Economic Forum: [How our responses to climate change and the coronavirus are linked](#) (02.04.2020)

World Resources Institute: [Responding to Coronavirus: Low-carbon Investments Can Help Economies Recover](#) (12.03.2020)

WWF: [Die Coro-na-Kri-se & ers-te Fol-gen für den Natur-schutz](#) (19.03.2020)

Die Zeit: [Warum die Coronakrise den Klimawandel auch nicht aufhält](#) (27.03.2020)

Die Zeit: [Der Mensch hat Pause, der Planet atmet auf](#) (27.03.2020)

Die Zeit: ["So funktioniert Klimaschutz doch nicht!"](#) (28.03.2020)

Die Zeit: [Investieren für den Tag X](#) (04.04.2020)