

Greening the COVID-19 Response, Recovery and Redesign

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COVID-19 is one of many zoonotic diseases

- Viruses
- Bacteria
- Protozoans
- Multicellular organisms



Zoonotic disease is not a new phenomenon

- The Plague (fleas)
- 🕴 Rabies (dogs)
- 🎽 SARS (palm civets ightarrow bats)
- Bird flu (ducks, chickens)
- Swine flu (pigs)
- Lyme disease (ticks)
 - Malaria (mosquitos)
- Dengue fever (mosquitos)
- Ebola (various animals)
- Toxoplasmosis (cats)

- Human beings are less and less a part of nature
- Human exposure to zoonoses was previously constant and localized
 - Constant \rightarrow adaptation
 - Localized \rightarrow limitation
- Over time people became urbanized and more globally connected

 \rightarrow less constant exposure

 \rightarrow globalized \rightarrow rapid transmission

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- "Infodemic" accompanies the COVID-19 pandemic
- Problematic because response requires sorting likely from unlikely
- Likely:
 - Bats involved in transmission
 - Transmission to human beings at a wet market in Wuhan
 - Transmission involved the harvest of wild species
- Possible:
 - Pangolins involved in transmission
- Unlikely:
 - Labs or rogue labs involved in transmission
- Arguable
 - Habitat destruction is to blame

Triple R Planning Framework: Rationale

- Many countries have adopted policies and allocated resources to manage the wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19
- There is an opportunity to ensure that policies and resources not only address COVID-19's impacts...
- ...but lead to a more sustainable and resilient future
- However, the goals and outlooks of these policies and resources allocation must be coherent and forward-looking

Triple R Planning Framework: The Current Status

- Currently many of the plans to manage COVID-19 appear piecemeal and shortsighted
- For example, often countries are allocating some funds to promote green industries while providing even more resources to fossil fuel and brown industries
- Further, often there are not strong links between narrow interventions that address COVID-19 and structural changes to key systems and policymaking institutions
- We argue that a sustainable and resilient future requires need for a coherent and forward-looking planning framework

Cross-national Evidence of Incoherence



Source: https://www.energypolicytracker.org/, 2020



Incoherence: The Case of the United States CARES Act



- Main Street Lending Program for small and medium businesses
- COVID-19-related changes to use of public lands
- COVID-19-related regulatory rollbacks



Source: DeConcini and Neuberger, 2020; https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/06/coronavirus-stimulus-packages-clean-energy



Triple R Planning Framework: Key Building Blocks

1. Respond-adopt **targeted interventions** to address direct pandemic health and livelihood impacts as well as possible underlying causes (including environmental causes)

2. Recover -reform **broader policies** and **redirect fiscal stimulus** to allocate resources to sustainable and resilient policies and investments

3. Redesign-transform energy, transport, and urban and socioeconomic systems as well as policymaking institutions to break unsustainable lock-ins

IGES Triple R Planning Framework

RESPONSE

Targeted interventions to address direct impacts

Short-term

Sustainable policies and stimulus with an environmental focus

RECOVERY

Sustainable & Resilient World

JUST TRANSITION

Transformation of socioeconomic systems and institutions

REDESIGN



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Medium-term

Long-term

Motivation for the Triple-R Framework



Lock-ins

Sources: Unruh, 2002; Brown, et al, 2007

Multilevel transitions



Sources: Geels, 2010

Increasing structuration

The Case of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

- Concerns "systemic change, decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and applying a lifecycle thinking approach, taking into account all phases of resource use in order to do more and better with less" (UN One Planet Network)
- Closely aligned with principles of Green Productivity, resource efficiency & Circular Economy
- Encompasses all aspects of Response, Recovery, & Redesign



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Response: Waste Management & Pollution Control

- COVID-19 has led to a significant increase in the production and disposal of healthcare waste (gloves, masks, etc.)
- Waste management systems have been burdened by increased demand and disposal of single-use products across multiple sectors
- On the other hand, lockdowns associated with the pandemic have also led to reductions in certain types of waste and pollution



Source: Reuters

New Delhi: Before and After COVID-19



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Source: Reuters







Recovery: Investing in "Building Back Better"

- Ensure economic stimulus packages flow to circular economy and low-carbon sectors and industries while moving away from "brown" alternatives
- Some countries have used stimulus funding to carry forward shovel-ready projects focused on pollution abatement and waste management
- Fiscal stimulus can have positive knock on effects for employment



Recovery: Investing in "Building Back Better"

- Recently approved, *Greater Cairo Air Pollution Management and Climate Change Project* aims to improve air quality and address greenhouse gas emissions in the greater Cairo area
 - Six year, 200 Million USD World Bank Project
 - Focus on reducing vehicle emissions, improving the management of solid waste, and strengthening the air and climate decision-making system
 - Aligned with Egypt's efforts to reduce both air pollution and climate pollutant emissions in line with the country's Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030.



Source: https://moderndiplomacy.eu/

Redesign: Shift towards Sustainability & Resilience

- Involves building more circular, inclusive and resilient consumption and production systems
- Global examples from industrializing and industrialized countries and regions



Source: Ramboll, 2020

Redesign: Shift towards Sustainability & Resilience

- Pakistan: "Clean-Green Cities Index" has been initiated in 20 cities to trigger a shift towards improved waste management and sanitation
- EU: "Next Generation EU" and Circular Economy Action Plan outlines areas for reducing dependency on foreign materials by preventing waste, boosting recycling and increasing the use of secondary raw materials

It's time to step up, not step back.



Source: Ellen Macarthur Foundation

- Redesign needs to include how to reduce "spillover"
- A new take on buffer zones
- Treatment of animals is also relevant



www.mongabay.com

- We must make a robust case for conserving nature in response to pandemics
- That means clearly establishing the facts and avoiding claims that could discredit us in future
- We live in an age of disinformation as well as information
- Effort is required to distinguish one from the other, and *swiftly*

- Trade in wild species is an obvious risk area
- But zoonotic pandemics will not help to motivate for increased control of threatened species because they are not well represented
- Legislation may stimulate the informal market if it is not carefully applied

www.earth.org



- Habitat degradation needs to be more carefully explained if zoonotic pandemics are to be used as a motivation for conservation.
- Habitat *fragmentation* does, however, increase the porosity of the natural landscape
- There are countless other reasons to preserve our natural heritage and its diversity of ecosystems and species
 - "Baskets" of ecosystem services
 - Biodiversity itself has enabled thousands of technological innovations, even though science has barely scratched the surface

Looking ahead

- Prevention is more productive than cure
- Monitoring of potential spillover points can save trillions
- IGES Triple R planning framework can help strengthen coherence and consistency of COVID actions
- The Triple R framework underlines the importance of using resources for both policy and systemic changes
- The Triple R framework can be applied to areas that call for both changing policies as well as broader systems
- The Triple R framework can be flexibly applied to other policy areas where multiple barriers frustrate large scale change
- Need for addressing skills gaps, finance, trade and other barriers
- Regulations in wildlife trade