Webinar: Strengthening Science and Technology and Addressing Inequalities in the COVID-19 era

WEDNESDAY, 6 MAY 2020, 10 A.M.-12 P.M. EDT
Welcome!
The session will start shortly.

• Please, note that this meeting will be recorded.

• You can also connect via Facebook Live: https://www.facebook.com/joinundesa

• Please, make sure to connect your audio.

• Keep your microphone muted and camera turned off.

• Questions/Comments? – Please, use the chat boxes.
The webinar will be recorded and link to presentation posted at UN DESA’s website. We will be live-tweeting from @SustDev using #UNDESAWebinar.

For those on WebEx:
- Remember to connect your audio.
- Please, **maintain your microphone muted and camera off at all times**.
- Use chat boxes for questions and comments. Indicate your name, organization and country.

For those on Facebook Live:
- Please, **add your questions** directly in the comments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 10:05</td>
<td>Welcome remarks by Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN DESA</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:05 - 10:10</td>
<td>Brief remarks by Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild-Drummond, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Preparations for the Commemoration of the United Nations 75th Anniversary</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:10 - 10:30</td>
<td>Science, Technology and COVID-19 Responses</td>
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<td>10:10 - 10:30</td>
<td>1) “The COVID-19 pandemic: a wake-up call for better cooperation at the science-policy-society interface”, Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee, Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, UN DESA.</td>
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<td>10:10 - 10:30</td>
<td>2) “COVID-19: Embracing digital government during the pandemic and beyond”, Mr. Deniz Susar, Governance and Public Administration Officer, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN DESA.</td>
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<td>10:30 - 11:00</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:20</td>
<td><strong>COVID-19 and Inequality</strong></td>
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<td>“Responses to the COVID-19 catastrophe could turn the tide on inequality”, <strong>Ms. Marta Roig</strong>, Chief, Emerging Trends and Issues in Development Section, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN DESA and <strong>Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee</strong>, Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, UN DESA.</td>
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<td>11:20 – 11:50</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>11:50 – 12:00</td>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
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Ms. Spatolisano was appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in UN DESA on 20 December 2018.

Ms. Spatolisano has served as the EU Ambassador to the OECD and UNESCO, Monaco and Andorra.

She was a member of the EU Delegation to the UN, serving as the Head of its Economic and Trade Section. Since 2017, she was responsible for International Organizations and Development Dialogue with other Donors in the Commission’s Directorate General for Development Cooperation. In this capacity, she assured the EU presence and developed EU positions on development policy in a number of international fora including the United Nations, the World Bank and IMF, OECD, G-7 and the G-20, where she represented the EU in the G-20 Development Working Group.

Maria-Francesca Spatolisano
Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs
Mr. Hochschild has served as Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General since 2017.

He has served as Deputy Special Representative for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in 2016, UN Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Representative of UNDP in Colombia [2013-2016], Director of the Field Personnel Division in the UN Department of Field Support, New York [2010-2012]; and as Chief of Field Operations and Technical Cooperation in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Geneva [2005-2009].

He began his UN career in 1988 with UNHCR in Sudan and served in subsequent postings with UNHCR, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and in peacekeeping.
COVID-19: Trust in science saves lives
Pandemic exposes need for science-based policies that build trust and fight misinformation

Find out more in UN DESA Policy Brief No. 62

Available at: bit.ly/UNDESACovid
Shantanu Mukherjee is a micro-economist with interests in poverty, health and sustainability. His team works on cross-sectoral SDG analysis, and ways to enhance the impact of science, technology and innovation on the SDGs. They provide the UN support for the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM).

Prior to this, he helped write UNDP’s Human Development Report and, before that, led its global MDG policy work.

Shantanu began his career in India. He earned a PhD in Economics from Princeton University, and also holds advanced degrees in Public Policy and Physics.
Translating evidence to outcomes

Evidence/data information

Policy

Science

Society

Human well-being
Five recommendations - I

1) Strengthen national capacities for science-based decision making in all countries
   • Timely data for transparent, evidence-based decisions
   • Multi-sectoral and inclusive assessments for mitigating trade-offs
   • Institutional mechanisms and structures

2) Enhance public trust in science
   • Clear and direct communications from scientists
   • Actively refute disinformation
   • Motivate longer term trust building
Five recommendations - II

3) Share knowledge and data for collaborative research
   • Make research results and data widely available
   • Promote inclusion of developing country researchers and networks
   • Support shared norms and guidance for ‘open science’ beyond the pandemic

4) Ensure universal access to solutions
   • Continue multi-stakeholder, multilateral collaborations on treatments/vaccines
   • Establish mechanisms for universal access
   • Facilitate sharing of innovations and technology-based solutions

5) Act with greater urgency on global scientific assessments
   • Credible, independent mechanisms to present evidence and motivate action
   • Support national capacities for implementation
   • Reflect in global policy making and multi-stakeholder partnerships
Digital government in times of a pandemic
How COVID-19 teaches governments to embrace modern technologies for better public service

Find out more in UN/DESA Policy Brief No. 61

Available at: bit.ly/UNDESACovid
Deniz Susar
Governance and Public Administration Officer, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

- Deniz Susar’s main work areas include digital government and preparation of the biannual UNDESA flagship publication ‘United Nations E-Government Survey’. As part of his current role, he also supports the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).
- Deniz Susar’s main research areas include e-government, open government, citizen engagement, internet governance, artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies and open government data.
- Deniz Susar holds a Master Degree on International Political Economy and Development from Fordham University, New York, United States and a Computer Engineering degree from the Bosphorus University of Istanbul, Turkey.
Figure I - Percentage of Government portals with Covid-19 information and world total confirmed Covid-19 cases
## Government portals during COVID-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of transparency</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE</th>
<th>ADVANCED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of information</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>General health information (e.g. hygiene advice, emergency contacts)</td>
<td>COVID-19 statistics</td>
<td>Regular updates on policy developments and social distancing measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidential statements and other political announcements</td>
<td>Limited updates on policy developments and social distancing measures</td>
<td>Information on social, financial and mental support (e.g. initiatives, other portals, telephone numbers)</td>
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<td><strong>Use of digital platforms</strong></td>
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<td>Government portals (e.g. Central government, Ministry of Health)</td>
<td>Social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)</td>
<td>Dedicated public COVID-19 portals</td>
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<td>Government-supported apps</td>
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Call for E-Government COVID-19 Applications

United Nations E-Government Survey Questionnaire on COVID-19

Digital Government Branch (DGB) of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) prepared this questionnaire to capture the emerging trends and provide timely analysis of digital responses of the UN Member States against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The responses will facilitate exchange of information and knowledge on e-government projects and assist the DGB in preparing a section in the upcoming edition of the United Nations e-Government Survey. Please note that the Addendum will not be able to feature all submitted initiatives but they will all be highlighted online.

More than one entry per country is allowed and encouraged. Deadline for submissions is NOW EXTENDED TO 3 MAY 2020 due to requests from some member states.

Submissions can be seen here: https://bit.ly/EGOV_COVID19_APPS

Thank you for your attention.

Some examples

- Blue-tooth based Contact Tracing Apps and their extensions (SMS notification, Danger Heat Maps)
- Use of AI Chatbots on the website for self-diagnosis and/or advice
- Online permit during curfews
Partnerships

#EUvsVirus challenge

can you hack it?

COVID-19 Open Research Dataset Challenge (CORD-19)

An AI challenge with AI2, CZI, MSR, Georgetown, NIH & The White House

United Arab Emirates

Virtual Labour Market

Powered & Managed By BLOOVO
New technologies

SPOTON
A smart thermal scanner for safe, easy and fast temperature screening

Powered by Artificial Intelligence

✓ Advanced AI face detection capability
✓ Detects up to 10 faces at once
✓ ±0.3–0.5°C accuracy
✓ 2-meter detection range
✗ Not affected by masks, hats and headdresses
✗ Not affected by hot or cold items (e.g. drinks)
Some of the challenges

• Digital Divides
• Resource constraints
• Misinformation/fake information
• Privacy
• Surveillance
• Data protection
• User uptake / trust
Coronavirus tracking app to be rolled out in Australia only with privacy safeguards - minister

Paul Fletcher says app could be ‘very effective tool’ if significant portion of public sign up

There are privacy concerns over app that tracks the contacts of people who have Covid-19. Photograph: Barcroft Media via Getty Images
## Conclusions and Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time horizon</th>
<th>Policy action</th>
<th>Digital government response</th>
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| Short-term   | React         | • Use digital platforms for accurate and timely information-sharing  
• Lead two-way communication with people and foster e-participation  
• Protect people’s privacy and sensitive data and take into consideration unintended consequences of digital technologies |
| Mid-term     | Resolve       | • Form effective multi-stakeholder partnerships on regional, national and local levels  
• Provide technology education for digital literacy, specifically targeted at public officials, children, women/girls and MSMEs  
• Offer financial and technical support to cities and local governments for the implementation of digital tools and technologies  
• Leverage lessons learned and policy ideas from the ongoing crisis |
| Long-term    | Reinvent      | • Invest in innovative technologies and ICT infrastructure to increase resilience of the health economy and the public services delivery  
• Develop digital engagement tools for the most vulnerable groups in society  
• Revisit data protection and privacy legislation along with lessons learned |
Questions and answers

- If on WebEx: Please, use the Q&A or chat boxes.
- If on Facebook Live: Add your question in the comments.
- Let us know who you are: name, organization and country.
- Please, indicate to which speaker your question is addressed.
COVID-19: Are we all in this together?

The pandemic hits the most vulnerable hardest, but it’s a chance to turn the tide on inequalities

Find out more in UN DESA Policy Brief No. 65

Available at: bit.ly/UNDESACovid
Marta Roig is the Chief of the Emerging Issues and Trends Section at the Division for Inclusive Social Policy in DESA.

She coordinated the preparation of the World Social Report 2020 (The Challenge of Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World).

She has over 20 years of experience in conducting policy research and analysis on inequality, employment, international migration and their linkages to development.
What we know - estimated impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on:

**Employment:**
- Decline equivalent to 305 million full-time jobs by mid-2020.
- Own-account workers and small enterprises hardest hit.
- Informal workers: earnings’ decline of 60 per cent in the first month of crisis.

**Poverty:**
- Preliminary estimates: 50 to 450 million people could fall into extreme poverty.
Impact of COVID-19: first increase in poverty since 1998
Inequalities within and among countries in 1. Exposure, 2. Vulnerability, 3. Ability to cope

1. Unequal exposure to COVID-19

**Living conditions:**
* Poverty and density (small, crowded dwellings; slums; homes, institutions, refugees)
* Frequent handwashing (3 billion people without access to handwashing facilities)
* Access to information (digital divide!)

**Working conditions:**
* “Essential tasks”: disproportionate share of low-income workers
2. Vulnerability: Once infected, the outcomes of COVID-19 differ

* Unequal prevalence of pre-existing health conditions.
3. Unequal ability to cope with disease and policy measures to address it

* Savings
  (low-income workers less)

* Access to social protection
  (limited for workers in informal employment; barriers to access for people in poverty; migrants..).

Women are at disadvantage in several domains:
* Disproportionate share of informal employment;
* Health crisis, lockdown: Burden of care work; domestic violence.
What’s next

• The COVID-19 health and economic crises will affect low-wage workers, especially those in informal employment, people living in poverty, members of ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, older persons and women disproportionately.

• As a result, the crises and their aftermath are likely to push poverty and inequality upwards. These impacts can last for years. But they are not inevitable.

• A deciding moment (“fork in the road”).
Shantanu Mukherjee is a micro-economist with interests in poverty, health and sustainability. His team works on cross-sectoral SDG analysis, and ways to enhance the impact of science, technology and innovation on the SDGs. They provide the UN support for the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM).

Prior to this, he helped write UNDP’s Human Development Report and, before that, led its global MDG policy work.

Shantanu began his career in India. He earned a PhD in Economics from Princeton University, and also holds advanced degrees in Public Policy and Physics.
Inequalities across countries are evolving

COVID-19 could reverse gains and widen gaps
- Millions more in extreme poverty
- Hunger could almost double
- Millions of children out of school
- Slowdown in public health programmes

Toward convergence in wellbeing, 1990-2020
- Millions moved out of poverty
- Rising school enrollment
- Declines in hunger
- Increased coverage of public health programmes

Past crises indicate that big policy responses are possible
Turning the covid-19 crisis into a transformative moment for reducing inequality

Expand systems for the universal provision of quality public services

- Accelerate universal provision of quality services (health care, education, sanitation and social protection)
- Ensure that universal systems are accessible to all population groups - remove barriers
- Ready systems for a range of emergencies with surge response capacities
- Adopt policies to maintain sufficient fiscal space for consistent service delivery

Identify and empower vulnerable groups

- Ensure availability of adequately disaggregated data to identify inequalities
- Develop differentiated responses and strengthen communication
- Empower vulnerable groups through better access to information
Turning the covid-19 crisis into a transformative moment for reducing inequality

Invest in jobs and livelihoods

- Facilitate a safe return to service occupations (introduce necessary protocols, provide protective equipment and medical care)
- Create jobs in emerging, more resilient and sustainable economic sectors (health care, teaching, utilities, ‘green’ jobs)
- Prepare the workforce with the necessary skills

Act through the multilateral system to reduce disparities across countries

- United Nations can strengthen coordination, engage stakeholders, foster partnerships, strengthen support
- Alleviate restrictions on cross-border flows
- Meet international development cooperation commitments, increase concessional finance
Questions and answers

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Thank you