

Gulf Center for Development

Call for input: Report on COVID-19 and multilateralism

1. **What are the key obstacles to a more effective, inclusive and networked multilateralism to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of both health response and economic recovery?**
 - Political systems and governments' structure in developing and least developed countries are the main obstacle in that regard since countries with less democratic system lack efficiency, accountability, transparency and freedom of expression to raise and discuss issues of urgent and sensitive matters. These inefficient political systems, in how its institutions are built and managed, are also very slow in detecting, decision making and reporting events of serious outcomes.
 - These inefficient political systems and governments' institutions will reflect in the emergencies in health care systems and the economic response and financial situation of these countries since these systems are already exhausted and can't cope with emergencies. The health care system will be unable to deal and treat these cases and in turn will be overwhelmed by the number of affected individuals.
 - The economic and financial institutions will already be burdened by debt. The populations of these governments are mostly poor and less educated which will reflect negatively on the situation. No doubt that these circumstances will spoil to other countries especially in globalised open borders world, as we saw and still see in the rapid spread of COVID-19.
 - The U.N. and its various specialized agencies should, and in cooperation and coordination with developing and least developed countries, encourage these countries to gradually, and upon each state circumstances, implement institutional reforms to pave the way to more democratic process, strong good governance and initiate legitimate transparency mechanisms.
 - Although democratic process and institutional reforms are extremely difficult to implement in developing and least developed countries and will take a long time, as an alternative and in urgent measure, there have to be an independent and neutral body to monitor urgent international crisis.
 - Finally, developed countries and specialized organisations could help by offering to establish permanent presence at developing and least developed countries which are at risk to help in training, funding, raising awareness and as centres for early warning. Where these centres are available now it should be equipped and strengthened in cooperation with host country.
2. **What are the solutions to overcome such obstacles in a fair and sustainable manner (including targeted reforms)?**
 - First it is highly recommended to know all the facts of the origins and causes of COVID-19 to make it possible to formulate an opinion and action plan to handle the current and eventual future pandemics. This must be conducted by independent, neutral and highly specialized committee.
 - Second, and as an urgent matter, States must exert all efforts to cooperate in the vaccination process. Developed countries should supply all developing

countries by vaccines to limit the growing negative effect of spread of the pandemic in developing and least developing countries. Priority should be to individuals at risk such as medical staff, people with acute medical problems and the elderly.

- Also, transparency and efficient and effective sharing of information is key in that regard. All countries spent huge sums of money in the process of protecting the community and shutting down business and lockdown.
- Developed nations should ease the financial burden of developing nations by helping in easing the terms of loans.
- Finally, the International Financial Institutions should also participate in this respect by giving loans and financial incentives to developing and least developed nations

3. What are your views on a new international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response?

- World Health Organisation is one of the most important organisations that plays a central and primary role in people's health, wellbeing and safety. There is a noticeable difference on how WHO acted in SARS pandemic in Hong Kong 2002-2003 and COVID-19 pandemic. For SARS the negative effects were very minimal mainly because WHO acted quickly and decisively and strictly implementing a travel ban, which wasn't the case for COVID-19. But It is highly recommended to thoroughly study both events to evaluate the WHO responses to determine if the deficiencies are in Governments' responses, the WHO instruments or structure or of the way of the WHO high level management response or the nature of COVID-19 in comparison to SARS.
- A new international treaty will be highly valuable if it is going to include accountability and responsibility of States in cases of negligence and in cases of severe illnesses and death which will oblige States to be liable for compensation or indemnity issued by international courts after thorough investigation.