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## Think Tanks & Pandemic Policy Advice (2020-21)

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## Think Tanks & Pandemic Policy Advice (2020-21)

### Abstract

On April 7, 2020 375 think tank executives and scholars from 163 think tanks and 86 countries came together at the start of the COVID19 crisis to demonstrate their solidarity and commitment to save lives and livelihoods for the first Global Think Tank Town Hall. The meeting was followed by a call for action from the leading think tanks around the world to support those on the front lines with innovative policies, programs, and action. Titled Saving Lives and Livelihoods, this series of conferences was a momentous effort to provide timely and the most up-to-date information to policymakers and extend innovative ideas on how to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. Over 1200 executives and 500 organizations from around the world participated in this endeavor to continue the shared objective of bridging knowledge and policy at a time when it is needed more than ever. This report outlines specific case examples of think tanks impacting governmental policies during the pandemic. It includes case descriptions from think tanks who facilitated government pandemic policies around the world, regional analysis of the input from participants in the Town Halls, including the concerns they raise, recommendations they make, and the role of their think tanks in impacting governmental policies in their respective regions. There are 63 cases from 37 countries in the following report. We hope you find them helpful as we continue to deal with the impact of this Hydrademic.

### Keywords

Think Tank, Civil Society, NGO, Pandemic, COVID-19, Policymaking, Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania

### Disciplines

International Relations | Public Policy

### Comments

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DEFYING THE IVORY-TOWER  
CHARACTERIZATION

# THINK TANKS & PANDEMIC POLICY ADVICE

2020 - 2021

DR. JAMES G. MCGANN



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



## Recognizing and thanking all TTCSP interns involved

Dr. James G. McGann, Director TTCSP

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# ABOUT THE THINK TANKS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES PROGRAM

The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the Lauder Institute of the University of Pennsylvania conducts research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world. Often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank,” TTCSP examines the evolving role and character of public policy research organizations.

Since its formation, TTCSP has laid the foundation for a global initiative that will help bridge the gap between knowledge and policy in critical policy areas such as international peace and security, globalization and governance, international economics, environment, information and society, poverty alleviation and health. This international collaborative effort is designed to establish regional and international networks of policy institutes and communities that will improve policy making as well as strengthen democratic institutions and civil societies around the world. TTCSP at the Lauder Institute works with leading scholars and practitioners from think tanks and universities in a variety of collaborative efforts and programs.

## About the Lauder Institute:

Founded by brothers Leonard and Ronald Lauder in 1983 in honor of their father, Joseph, the Joseph H. Lauder Institute for Management and International Studies provides a fully integrated business education to a new generation of leaders coming of age in a rapidly globalizing world.

## About the University of Pennsylvania:

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is an Ivy League school with highly selective admissions and a history of innovation in interdisciplinary education and scholarship. As a world-class research institution, The University of Pennsylvania peer institutions are Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Dartmouth, Cornell, Cambridge and Oxford. Penn was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1740 to push the frontiers of knowledge and benefit society by integrating study in the liberal arts and sciences with opportunities for research and practical, pre-professional training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Penn is committed to meeting the full demonstrated need of all undergraduates with grant-based financial aid, making this intellectually compelling integration of liberal and professional education accessible to talented students of all backgrounds and



empowering them to make an impact on the world. Penn boasts a picturesque campus in the middle of Philadelphia, a dynamic city that is conveniently located between Washington, D.C. and New York, New York.

### About the Director:

James G. McGann, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer at the Lauder Institute of the Wharton School and the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. He is also the Director of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania. He conducts research on developments and problems that think tanks and policymakers around the world face, and offers guidance and technical assistance to think tanks, governments and public and private donors on how to enhance the quality and effect of policy analysis. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a think tank based in Philadelphia. Prior to joining the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. McGann was an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Villanova, where he taught international relations, international organizations and international law.

His main research priorities include: analyzing global developments in research on safety and international affairs; influencing United States' foreign and domestic policies through think tanks; strategic advice to BRICS and G20 countries from think tanks and transnational and regional public policy challenges. He is the creator and author of the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index which ranks think tanks in every region of the world.

Dr. McGann has served as a consultant and advisor to the World Bank; the United Nations; the United States Agency for International Development; the Soros, Rockefeller, MacArthur, Hewlett and Gates foundations; the Carnegie Corporation; and foreign governments on the role of nongovernmental, public policy and public engagement organizations in the US and developing and transitional countries. He has also served as the Senior Vice President for the Executive Council on Foreign Diplomats, the Public Policy Program Officer for the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Assistant Director of the Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He has also served as a Senior Advisor to the Citizens' Network for Foreign Affairs and the Society for International Development.

*“Helping to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy”*

The mission of TTCSP is to increase the profile, capacity and performance of think tanks at the national, regional and global levels so they can better serve policymakers and the public.



TTCSP conducts research on the relationship between think tanks, politics and public policy, produces the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index, develops capacity-building resources and programs, manages and supports a global network of over 8,000 think tanks and trains future think tank scholars and executives.

TTCSP is often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank.”

Contact:

### **James G. McGann, Ph.D.**

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## Introduction

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On April 7, 2020 375 think tank executives and scholars from 163 think tanks and 86 countries came together at the start of the COVID19 crisis to demonstrate their solidarity and commitment to save lives and livelihoods for the first Global Think Tank Town Hall. The meeting was followed by a call for action from the leading think tanks around the world to support those on the front lines with innovative policies, programs, and action. Titled *Saving Lives and Livelihoods*, this series of conferences was a momentous effort to provide timely and the most up-to-date information to policymakers and extend innovative ideas on how to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. Over 1200 executives and 500 organizations from around the world participated in this endeavor to continue the shared objective of bridging knowledge and policy at a time when it is needed more than ever. These town halls produced five distinct Working Groups which produced action-oriented recommendations addressing a wide range of concerns and the roles and responsibilities of policymakers at all levels. These groups are as follows:

- Addressing the Public Health Crisis
- Preparing National and International Strategies for Economic Recovery and Revitalization
- Identifying innovative and inclusive, public and private intervention: Strategies to Help Vulnerable Groups
- Fostering International Cooperation--Creating Rapid, Responsive, and Resilient Systems to Respond to Future Crisis
- Being Fit for an Uncertain Future: New Operating Models for Think Tanks: Research, Communications and Funding

The strategic objective was to produce 5 short, action oriented, reports within 45 days following the 2nd Global Think Tank Town Hall. These reports were conveyed to national governments, regional and global IGOS, and the G7 and G20. The outcomes of the working groups were discussed at a third, and final, Global Think Tank Town Hall.

The Final report for the Town Hall Meetings can be found at the link below and findings and recommendations for each region are contained in this report:

<https://www.gotothinktank.com/town-hall-reports>

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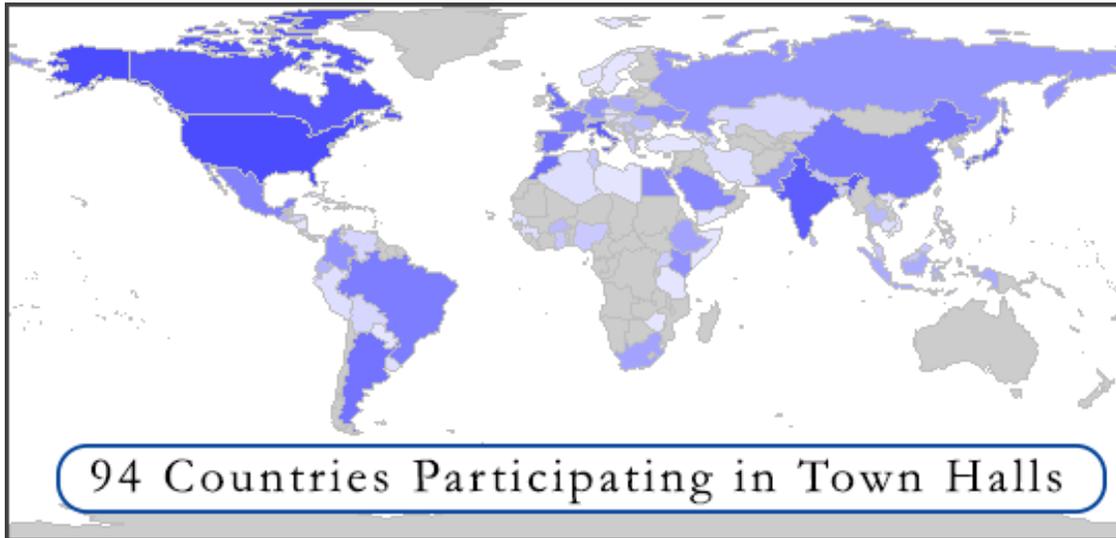


Our goal was to demonstrate how and why think tanks matter, especially in times of crisis by providing innovative ideas and interventions that can make a difference in the lives of the people in the countries where they are located. We then went a step further to collect case examples of specific programs and interventions that think tanks around the world have developed.

This report outlines specific case examples of think tanks impacting governmental policies during the pandemic. Below is the statistical breakdown of the aforementioned Town Hall participants and regional representation in the cases. This is followed by case descriptions, regional analysis of the input from participants in the Town Halls, including the concerns they raise, recommendations they make, and the role of their think tanks in impacting governmental policies in their respective regions. There are 63 cases from countries in the following report. We hope you find them helpful as we continue to deal with the impact of this Hydrademic.

**James G. McGann, Ph.D.**

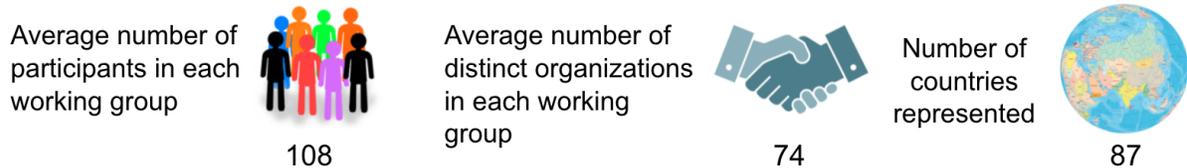
## Global Town Halls



### Global Townhall I - April 7, 2020



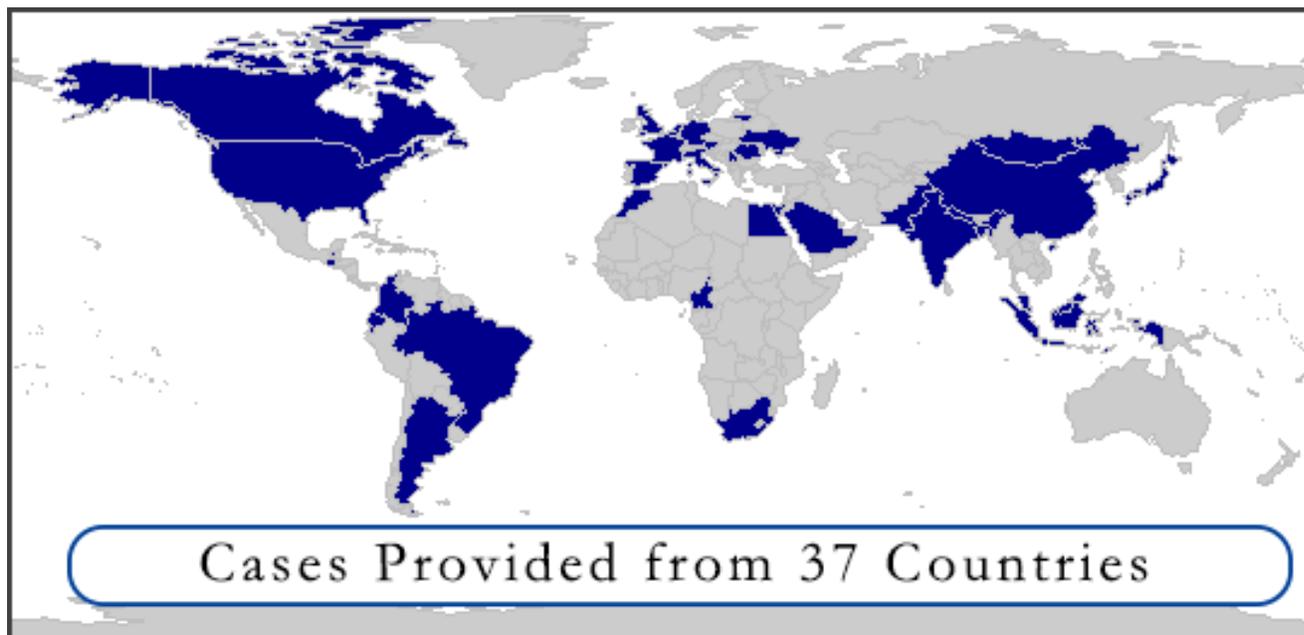
### Global Townhall II - May 13, 2020



### Global Townhall III - June 30, 2020



## Pandemic Policymaking: Case Submissions



Argentina	Colombia	India	Mongolia	The Netherlands
Austria	Ecuador	Indonesia	Morocco	Ukraine
Bangladesh	Egypt	Israel	Nepal	United Arab Emirates
Belgium	El Salvador	Italy	Pakistan	United Kingdom
Brazil	France	Japan	Romania	United States of America
Cameroon	Germany	Lebanon	Saudi Arabia	
Canada	Guatemala	Lithuania	Serbia	
China	Hong Kong	Malaysia	South Africa	

## Cases by Region<sup>1</sup>

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### NORTH AMERICA



BROOKINGS

#### 1. Brookings Institution, *United States*

**General John R. Allen, President**

Elliot Fleming | Chief of Staff | [EFleming@brookings.edu](mailto:EFleming@brookings.edu)

Website: [Link](#)

Launched a month after the 2020 election, and released over several months, Brookings scholars produced the *Blueprints for American Renewal and Prosperity* as a series of innovative, implementable federal policy ideas to inform a new presidency and Congress amid compounding historic challenges facing our society. The project welcomed federal policymakers to engage with the Blueprint content, which focuses on racial justice and worker mobility, economic growth and dynamism, domestic and international governance, international security, and climate and resilience. Across five primary ‘challenge areas’ of policy topics, 63 Brookings scholar authors and contributors published 39 policy briefs detailing federal policy recommendations related to these challenge areas, aimed at providing solutions accessible to the next administration and Congress that will benefit all Americans. This research directly contributed to several new initiatives and bills, including, but not limited to, President Biden’s American Jobs Plan, the Social and Economic Equity Promotion Act, the Housing Supply and Affordability Act, and the Affordable Housing Redevelopment Act. This contribution follows a history of policy advisory from Brookings, including helping craft the World War II Marshall Plan for European Recovery, and the institution has new opportunities, including the Blueprints project and other significant federal policy efforts, to influence the federal policy debate as the United States and the world enters a new chapter of policymaking.

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<sup>1</sup> Arranged in alphabetical order under each region.



## 2. Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, *United States*

### Bob Perciasepe, President

Brad Townsend | Vice President of Policy and Outreach | [townsendb@c2es.org](mailto:townsendb@c2es.org)

Website: [Link](#)

C2ES’ work on ambitious and durable climate policies continued throughout the pandemic, focusing on synergies between the nation’s post-pandemic recovery efforts and investments that can facilitate a rapid transition to a resilient, net-zero economy. Building on a policy [framework](#) developed with dozens of leading companies as part of our [Climate Innovation 2050](#) initiative, C2ES identified a set of [priorities](#) to address these [twin crises](#). These recommendations would create jobs and stimulate economic growth in the near term, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening climate resilience. C2ES has also underscored the urgent need for a [resilient energy grid](#) and emergency infrastructure, which would “strengthen the foundation for decarbonizing the U.S. economy, and create desperately needed jobs.”

C2ES also issued a [report](#) assessing how climate impacts are threatening the competitiveness of cities, including their ability to protect their finances, attract capital, and protect and attract residents and businesses. In late 2020, C2ES organized a [statement](#) signed by 47 leading companies urging the Biden Administration and Congress to work together to achieve ambitious, durable climate solutions, and in early 2021 released a set of climate policy [priorities](#) for the new administration and Congress that would accomplish that objective. This brief also emphasized policies that would support post-pandemic economic recovery by reducing emissions in key sectors, and building resilience—especially in vulnerable communities—while creating economic opportunities and strengthening the competitiveness of U.S. industries in a low-carbon future. Throughout the pandemic, C2ES has continued to work with stakeholders to identify and advance ambitious, just, and durable climate policies that can lay a foundation for sustained economic prosperity.



### 3. Centre for International Governance Innovation - CIGI, *Canada*

#### **Rohinton P. Medhora, President**

France Mathewson | Executive Assistant to President | [fmathewson@cigionline.org](mailto:fmathewson@cigionline.org)

Website: [Link](#)

In a recent CIGI essay series entitled Security, Intelligence and the Global Health Crisis, experts representing the Five Eyes security alliance countries convened to discuss the interface between health security and national security. Following the launch of the series, the Government of Canada's International Security Research and Outreach Programme (ISROP) partnered with CIGI on a three-part webinar series on COVID-19 security policy. In continuation of this work, CIGI began its major project on 'Re-Imagining a Canadian National Security Strategy for the 21st Century', led by Aaron Shull and Wesley Wark. It includes the 'Strong, Secure, Engaged Defence' policy, a separate 'National Cyber Security Strategy,' and a discrete 'Innovation and Skills Plan,' meant to make Canada a world-leading center for innovation. There is also an outdated 'National Security Strategy' first brought forward in 2004 and long since forgotten. This review highlights the need for a new doctrine that recognizes that adversarial states are moving in a concerted way that leverages all aspects of state power and influence and that all these enumerated areas of distinct policy spheres are deeply interconnected.

To this end, given the sprawling nature of what constitutes a broadly defined set of national security interests, this project is broken into various thematic verticals, each headed by Thematic Expert(s), and a Senior Government Liaison (SGL) who will serve as a sounding board, resource, and connector. Additionally, each thematic area will have a working group that includes members from government, industry, academia, and civil society in an effort to help set policy strategies and priorities. Currently, this initiative has been met with great enthusiasm on the part of senior government officials, led by the co-chairs of the ADM National Security Policy committee.

In support of this work, CIGI held a virtual event on February 9th, 2021 titled 'National Security, Economic Prosperity and Canada's Future' with Aaron Shull and David Vigneault, who is the Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). The discussion centered on the changing threat landscape and the ways in which Canada can contribute to an important strategic

discussion around national security and intelligence practices. The event was attended by over 700 participants and has received well over 600 post-event views. Following the success of the CSIS event, CIGI approached the office of Vincent Rigby, National Security, and Intelligence Advisor to Prime Minister Trudeau, to host an event to further explore the points raised during the conversation with CSIS. The subsequent event was held on March 30th, 2021 and is titled 'National Security Challenges in the 21st Century.' The discussion focused on non-traditional threats to Canadian security, such as climate change, pandemics, migration, and food insecurity.



#### 4. Center for Strategic and International Studies - CSIS, *United States*

**John J. Hamre, President & CEO**

Steve Morrison | Senior Vice President & Director Global Health Policy Center |

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On December 2, 2020, the CSIS Commission on Strengthening America's Health Security convened a meeting of its members and expert advisors. The commission was established in 2018 and in 2019, issued seven recommendations in its report 'Ending the Cycle of Crisis and Complacency in US Global Health Security.' The commission will continue its work through to 2022 and is supported by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. These recommendations were workshopped to incorporate the context of COVID-19 and were then integrated into the Biden administration's plan.



#### 5. Global Leaders in Unity and Evolvment, *United States*

**Paul McAllister, President**

Paul McAllister | President | [pmcallister@glolenders.org](mailto:pmcallister@glolenders.org)

Website: [Link](#)

In many countries, fiscal policy proposals in favor of more federal spending on small business and households that target the most vulnerable have been debated to varying degrees. In addition to participating in these discussions, Global Leaders in Unity and Evolvement has also engaged state policy makers on the need to expand unemployment benefits and broadband access, especially for K-12 education, and restrain the immense threat of evictions that would have an adverse impact in education, the housing market, and the criminal justice system. These interactions have influenced discussions on state grants for rural economies and the CARES Act that has been used as a supplement.



## 6. Heritage Foundation, *United States*

**Kay C. James, President**

Katie Tubb | Senior Policy Analyst | [katie.tubb@heritage.org](mailto:katie.tubb@heritage.org)

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A project of the Heritage Foundation, the National Coronavirus Recovery Commission, developed nearly 300 specific recommendations for federal, state, and local governments, businesses, churches, charities, and community organizations to navigate America prudently toward recovery. The commission has made more than 40,000 contacts with policymakers across the United States and 35 U.S. states adopted the commission's top recommendations under the Trump administration. Vice President Mike Pence also acknowledged the role of The Heritage Foundation and thanked them for their contribution in the US' plans to combat the effects of the pandemic.



## 7. Mackinac Center, *United States*

**Joseph G. Lehman, President**

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The Center made recommendations to their governor and these suggestions were incorporated into the governor's executive orders on COVID-19. The recommendations are also being considered for permanent adoption by policymakers. Among others, the recommendations included easing regulations, provided for waivers to state rules limiting the number of hospital beds and mobile health care facilities, allowing certified nursing aides to treat patients when needed with the same autonomy as certified nurses, loosening other government restrictions on workers who assist, coordinate, volunteer or feed patients, and expanding access to telemedicine.



## 8. Mercatus Center at George Mason University, *United States*

### Daniel Rothschild, Executive Director

Jennifer Zambone | Chief Operating Officer | [media@mercatus.gmu.edu](mailto:media@mercatus.gmu.edu)

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In early 2020, Mercatus Center researchers analyzed more than 855,000 state and federal health care regulations to identify opportunities to increase the supply and scope of health care provision during the COVID pandemic. Some of these reform ideas adopted by policymakers include the following.

- Freeing up lifesaving resources at hospitals nationwide - Mercatus researchers informed CON reform efforts across the US and, in 2020, 12 states introduced reform bills and 24 states temporarily suspended their restrictions to allow the rapid increase of hospital capacity.
- Increasing access to COVID-19 testing - HHS incorporated Mercatus recommendations in April guidance that permitted more than 300,000 pharmacists to administer COVID tests, significantly increasing testing capacity especially in underserved, low-income, and minority communities.
- Facilitating 'Warp Speed' vaccine production and distribution - Alex Tabarrok, chair at the Mercatus Center, has been a lead advisor to the administration's Operation Warp Speed since April. His suggestion on how to create, test, approve, and distribute a vaccine as quickly as possible helped ensure eight million doses were ready to ship immediately after FDA approval.



## 9. Montreal Economic Institute, *Canada*

**Michel Kelly-Gagnon, President & CEO**

Miguel Ouellette | Economist & Director of Operations | [mouellette@iedm.org](mailto:mouellette@iedm.org)

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The Montreal Economic Institute has provided practical and precise suggestions to the provincial government of Quebec on how to alleviate some of the pain suffered by small entrepreneurs, such as restaurant owners. One of these suggestions (a liberalization of the rules pertaining to the sale of alcohol by restaurants) was adopted toward the end of 2020 by Quebec's National Assembly. Their recommendations in this regard were sketched out in an April 2020 publication entitled 'Solutions to Help Restaurateurs,' which was accompanied by an opinion piece in La Presse, Quebec's newspaper of record, among other media coverage. In order to legalize restaurants selling take-out alcohol without food, the Institute engaged with Restaurants Canada as well as with a restaurant critic, Lesley Chesterman, who has a large following in the province. Restaurants Canada relayed their publication and television interviews on social media, and made the Institute's demand their own. The idea proved popular within the restaurant industry and garnered significant support.

The government included this regulatory change in an omnibus bill, but they had to drop it as opposition parties deemed that the bill was an overreach (for reasons other than the policy that was suggested). However, the government ended up adopting legislation in December 2020 to at least allow restaurants to sell alcoholic beverages alongside food through a third-party, such as a delivery app, and at prices that can differ from dining room prices. This is a partial win and a step in the right direction, and the Montreal Economic Institute is very pleased to have helped make it happen.



## 10. The Buckeye Institute, *United States*

**Robert Alt, President & CEO**

Lisa A. Gates | Vice President of Communications | [info@buckeyeinstitute.org](mailto:info@buckeyeinstitute.org)  
Website: [Link](#)

Since the earliest days of the coronavirus pandemic, The Buckeye Institute outlined immediate actions Ohio policymakers could take to ensure that Ohio was ready to fight and recover from the pandemic. The recommendations focused on policies to boost Ohio's health care system and support Ohio's workers, small businesses, and the economy.

Ohio has adopted many of Buckeye's policy recommendations on how to strengthen Ohio's health care system and provide for families and businesses facing unexpected economic hardship, including increasing telehealth access and monitoring; extending universal recognition of out-of-state medical licenses to doctors and physician assistants; extending universal recognition of out-of-state medical licenses to nurses; permitting pharmacists to test for COVID-19; enlisting medical and nursing students to support doctors and nurses fighting COVID-19; beginning to eliminate unnecessary budget commitments; instituting a hiring freeze in state government; allowing establishments with an existing liquor permit to sell and deliver alcohol on carryout menus; expanding broadband access to underserved areas of Ohio; and providing responsible businesses, schools, and workers with critical liability protections from COVID-19 lawsuits.

**STIMSON**

## 11. The Stimson Center, *United States*

**Brian Finlay, President & CEO**

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Website: [Link](#)

Launched on December 2, 2020, the Doha Forum Report 2020 titled 'Coping with New and Old Crises: Global and Regional Cooperation in an Age of Epidemic Uncertainty' found that the international response to the pandemic has often proven fragmented, delayed, ad hoc, and under-resourced, while pointing to promising new global public-private partnerships to spur innovation through new technologies and to promote decent job and wealth creation opportunities. With the arrival of multiple effective vaccines, the report recommends a three-year (2021–23) global green recovery effort with four critical dimensions of global-national-local

interaction: one, public health, human rights, and social protection; two, economies that are robust, efficient, fair, and opportunity-building, both for entrepreneurs and for youth; three economic recovery that doubles as effective climate action; and four, greater and more inclusive digital connectivity worldwide.

Timed as a substantive contribution to the December 2020 UN COVID-19 Recovery Heads of State Summit, the report's findings and recommendations will be shared and debated with senior policymakers in New York, Geneva, and major capitals worldwide in early 2021, in an effort to influence the relatively swift adoption of a more coordinated, comprehensive, and environmental-sensitive approach to COVID-19 recovery worldwide. Having consulted hundreds of organizations and governments on related themes in connection with the UN75 Global Governance Forum (Sept. 2020), the Doha Forum Report 2020 team offer path breaking ideas on how a post-UN75 global governance modernization program must go hand-in-hand with post-vaccine recovery efforts to achieve progress that is durable, green, and broad-based - reaching even the most vulnerable groups, including refugees and unemployed youth.

## MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA (MENA)



### 1. Arab Forum for Alternatives, *Lebanon*

**Mohammed ElAgati, Executive Director**

**Mohamed ElAgati | Director | [m.agati@afalebanon.org](mailto:m.agati@afalebanon.org)**

**Website: [Link](#)**

The forum released a comparative study titled ‘COVID-19 Pandemic: Does the Mainstream Public Policies System Achieve Protection for All?’ which aimed to provide information on civil society organizations that wish to engage with policies surrounding the pandemic.

This study analyzed seven gaps, including: the fragility of state institutions, particularly those related to public services such as health care; the centralization of crisis responses; the limited role of parliaments and elected municipal councils; and the lack of proper utilization of the resources of the private sector in public policy responses to the pandemic in Tunisia, Egypt, and Lebanon.

The study also made ten recommendations including: the revival of several industries during the pandemic is an example of unused resources that need to be utilized whether at times of crises or as part of an attempt to boost the economy and support production; the policymaking process has to be done in a democratic and participatory manner that guarantees the contribution of citizens who should identify their problems and needs and also monitor the performance of officials; a partnership needs to be created by civil society organizations in order to mobilize efforts for the purpose of achieving development, forming a lobbying bloc that can affect the decision making process, monitoring the implementation of projects, and submitting recommendations; and decentralization has become a substantial requirement in the Arab region. The recommendations were made to government officials and parliamentarians, as well as municipality members.



### 2. Asbar Center for Research and Studies, *Saudi Arabia*

### **Fahad Al-Orabi Al-Harhi, Chairman**

Fahad Al-Orabi Al-Harhi | Chairman | [alorabi111@gmail.com](mailto:alorabi111@gmail.com)

Website: [Link](#)

Asbar Research and Studies Center launched a webinar on the vaccines already produced to combat COVID-19. The webinar aimed to combat the rumors being spread on the possible side effects of the vaccines. Dr. Abdullah M. Asiri, the deputy assistant to the Saudi Minister of Health, stated that the unprecedented effort in research and cooperation among the organizations, as well as large amounts of financial support, have led to the registration of the vaccines with the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA). Dr. Amal Hazzani, the professor of molecular genetics at King Saud University, explained that the genetic material used in the Pfizer vaccine is injected into the body without interfering with the recipient's DNA, addressing a persistent rumor around the vaccine. Dr. Hazzani has accordingly urged people to take the vaccine, stressing that it is safe.

Dr. Khalaf N. Al-Harbi, an expert in microbiology and vaccines development, gave an overview about the manufacturing process for the coronavirus vaccines. He stated that the technology being used is a result of the expertise of the scientists and can produce an efficient vaccine without side effects. He stressed that the vaccine has a 95% efficacy, and has to be taken in two doses to achieve the highest possible level of immunity. Dr. Saleh Al-Ghamdi, professor of media at King Saud University, addressed some more of the rumors on the social media platforms, which he stated are baseless and the government should take legal actions if necessary.



### **3. Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy, United Arab Emirates**

#### **Bernardino León, President**

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The Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (formerly Emirates Diplomatic Academy) initiated in mid-2020 the 'Pandemic Diplomacy' project involving more than [15 serving and retired diplomats](#)

[from around the world](#). Their observations on the pandemic's impact on diplomacy was published in late 2020 as a contribution to diplomatic education and training. An executive summary was shared with the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to help guide governmental efforts to deal with the vast impacts of the pandemic, particularly in the foreign policy domain. The report, titled '[Reflections on Innovative Adaptations During the Covid-19 Crisis](#)', is now a recommended reading for trainee diplomats at the Academy.

An important finding of the project was the diplomatic call for collective action was overwhelming – only multilateral fora can ‘mitigate the imbalance that characterises the global distribution of power.’ Further, ‘working with others’ instead of ‘working over others’ would be necessary in the post-COVID reconstruction effort. To fulfil this, the report states ‘we will see an acceleration of diplomacy adapting, developing and refining into a stronger and more robust form.’



#### 4. Egyptian Center for Economic Studies - ECES, Egypt

##### Dr. Abla Abdel Latif, Executive Director

Magda Awadallah | Deputy Executive Director for Finance and Administration |

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ECES initiated a series of reports entitled ‘Views on Crisis’ in March 2020. The initial objective was to analyze the immediate impact of COVID-19 on various sectors of the Egyptian economy and project future scenarios through the life cycle of the pandemic. The sectors analyzed were: labor remittances, tourism, the Suez Canal, education, manufacturing industries, the informal sector, the communications and information technology sector, Egypt’s external debt, health, grocery retail trade, labor market, agriculture, cinema industry, restaurants and cafes, population growth, transportation, women, sports, and Egypt’s external position. This series was then developed in three groups of reports, each group of reports building on the analysis and recommendations of the previous group, effectively expanding the narrative on the Egyptian economy before, during and after the pandemic.

The first group of reports included a detailed analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on each of the aforementioned sectors, followed by recommended actions that need to be taken by the government to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic on all relevant stakeholders within these sectors. The second group of reports followed-up on the actual impact of COVID-19 on the same sectors, comparing reality to projected scenarios as reflected by official indicators of performance, while also monitoring adopted policy actions by the government against recommendations developed in the first group of studies. The third group of studies within the same series is on-going and is focused on the ‘drivers of change’ which are priority issues that, if properly addressed, are expected to cause major developmental strides for the Egyptian economy, both due to their importance in their own right as well as through their strong backward and forward linkages to other factors.

The ‘Views on Crisis’ series was well-received by stakeholders at all government levels. The strength of these reports was in being timely and involving specific policy recommendations at the sector level. The ECES studies were cited by many renowned entities including governmental, business and international agencies and partnerships with more than one entity such as the IFPRI took place, producing collaborative models and research. More importantly, specific ministries adopted the sectoral policy recommendations developed in the series, examples of which include the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Migration, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Culture among many others. Furthermore, a high authority of exports presided by the Egyptian President personally was also recently created, reflecting the importance of exports.



## 5. Emirates Policy Center - EPC, *United Arab Emirates*

### **Dr. Ebtasam Al Ketbi, President**

Dr. Ebtasam Al Ketbi | President | [info@epc.ae](mailto:info@epc.ae)

Website: [Link](#)

EPC has provided the UAE decision makers with a strategy to confront the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by recommending an action plan. On containment measures, EPC made

recommendations to calculate the reproduction rate index, to work to establish supplementary and temporary hospitals to isolate patients in the event of the worsening of the epidemic and the loss of control over the virus' spread, and to expand the laboratory examination system. EPC has also recommended conducting epidemiological investigations supported by satellite location data, using a supercomputer to track potential carriers of the virus and hotspots of the virus, and maintaining a direct database on the movements of patients.

Moreover, they recommended linking immigration, passports and health insurance databases to help identify people most at risk of infection by using 'big data analytics' to track recent travel history when they use their health insurance card at a clinic, hospital or pharmacy. On health care development and capacity building, EPC recommended strengthening the capabilities of the Infectious Diseases Center or the Epidemic Control Center. In addition, they recommended increasing the number of government and private hospital beds, intensive care units, medical laboratories, and epidemiological examination/rapid response teams. Finally, EPC made recommendations to make full use of all bilateral and multilateral mechanisms to enhance communication and cooperation to improve coordination of epidemic control efforts through regional and international collaboration.



## 6. Information and Decision Support Centre - IDSC, Egypt

### Osama El-Gohary, Director

Osama El-Gohary | Director | [info@idsc.net.eg](mailto:info@idsc.net.eg)

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IDSC initiated three projects to assist the government in combating the effects of the pandemic. The first project was the launch of 'CARE.gov.eg' website to support the Egyptian health care system. CARE provides Egyptian citizens with infographics and short informative videos, to ensure that credible information is delivered to end users in a friendly, easy and interactive way. The website was chosen by Google and Facebook to be the most reliable source of information on Egyptian COVID-19 information and directed the Egyptian people to IDSC's platform to seek

information about the virus. In addition, the Egyptian Cabinet promoted CARE.gov.eg as the one and only source of accurate and credible information.

IDSC's second project was the launch of the 'Ahalina' (Our People) website to contribute to securing adequate income for all affected workers during the pandemic and preserving their jobs. The website collected donations worth EGP 323 million (USD 20.59 million) from multiple entities and individuals, tripling its initial target of EGP 100 million (USD 6.38 million). IDSC also created a database for target groups to directly coordinate with the donors. Furthermore, IDSC worked cooperatively with the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Manpower to provide the affected labor with training programs to accommodate them into sectors not adversely affected by the pandemic. This initiative contributed to the success of the Egyptian government's efforts to disburse a grant of 500,000 Egyptian pounds for irregular employment, which met the needs of approximately 1 million families for cash support.



## 7. Institute for National Security Studies - INSS, *Israel*

### **Professor Manuel Trajtenberg, Executive Director**

Ms. Deborah Oppenheimer | External Relations Manager | [deborah@inss.org.il](mailto:deborah@inss.org.il)  
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With the outbreak of the pandemic the Institute formed a plan to work with the National Security Council (NSC), tasked with coordinating efforts to deal with the crisis. The Institute mapped the situation with an overall plan that highlighted the central issues to be addressed, the decisions that had to be made as part of the crisis management, and the timetable for making them. The special research study led by former IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. (ret.) Eisenkot, compiled recommendations for advancing opportunities and making required changes in Israel's essential systems, based on lessons learned during the pandemic. The report was presented to senior NSC figures.

In addition, INSS Director Amos Yadlin joined the small team of advisors to the head of the NSC that focused on the exit strategy. Early on in the pandemic the Institute positioned itself as a forward-thinking strategic advisor to decision makers in the government and the Knesset. Many

political figures, including senior ministers such as the Finance Minister, Foreign Minister, and Defense Minister, approached the Institute for briefings on foreign affairs, security, and strategies for handling the national security crisis.

In August 2020, as the coronavirus advanced, the Institute conducted an extensive poll as part of its National Security Index. Findings pointed to a number of important social phenomena that emerge from the difficulty of handling the pandemic and its consequences effectively. In addition, the Institute established a new research program in September 2020, “Climate Change, Pandemics, and National Security,” as the outbreak of the pandemic quickly underscored that the traditional, familiar definition of national security must be expanded. The Institute enjoyed extensive coverage on [Israeli](#) and [global media](#) over the past year, which enhanced its effort to influence public discourse and political security agenda.



## 8. Menassat For Research and Social Studies, Morocco

### Aziz Mechouat, Director

Aziz Mechouat | Director | [contact@menassat.org](mailto:contact@menassat.org)

Website: [Link](#)

The team of Menassat For Research and Social Studies has conducted research ([Arabic](#); [French](#)) to keep pace with the development of the epidemic situation in Morocco. Their research project that stretched between April and June 2020 aims at identifying to which extent individuals are aware of the nature of current sanitary conditions, in perceptions, attitudes or practices.

This qualitative research represents a sample of 2556 people and was conducted online. It continued from the 4th to the 28th of April, 2020, which corresponds with the first phase of the sanitary confinement. The study used a balanced sample in terms of representativeness of gender, background, place of residence, and national distribution. Women represent 49% versus 51% of men. 52.7% of the population interviewed live in urban areas while 39.1% are from rural ones, and 8.03% are from suburbs. The purpose of the survey is to understand how people view the current situation of the national health emergency.

The study received broad media coverage as it was picked up by major newspapers, Moroccan and Arabic websites. The [SkyNews TV](#) website has devoted an extensive report about the study based on what the [Hespress](#)' renowned website has shown. [Lakom](#), Akhbar Alyaoum and [Bannassa](#) websites and others have as well published excerpts of the report.



## 9. TRENDS Research & Advisory, *United Arab Emirates*

### **Dr. Mohammed Abdullah Al-Ali, CEO & Founder**

Sumaya Al-Hadhrani | Manager, Conferences Department | [sumaya@trendsresearch.org](mailto:sumaya@trendsresearch.org)  
Website: [Link](#)

As soon as the Covid-19 pandemic started crippling normal activities, TRENDS Research & Advisory began looking for ways to remain fully operational, productive, and efficient. They became the first think tank in the Middle East to organize a series of virtual events, beginning with the pandemic's medical, social, humanitarian, and economic fallouts. They were also the first in the region to go live, becoming a pioneer in virtual online events.

TRENDS realized the value of feeding accurate and updated information to policymakers. As a result, they produced more than 70 publications dealing with the pandemic ranging from insights to Strategic TRENDS and Policy Papers. They also compiled a book – The Road to Success, UAE Model in Confronting Covid-19 – in cooperation with the National Crisis and Emergency Management Authority (NCEMA). TRENDS has also contributed immensely in the fight against Covid-19 by conducting an Opinion Poll, also in partnership with NCEMA, to assess the country's level of preparedness, analyzing public awareness related to the pandemic, and respondents' views on the various vaccines that were then in different stages of development. The enthusiastic response to the poll helped policymakers understand the multiple dimensions of the challenges at hand and prepared them to deal with all eventualities. Their efforts to help decision-makers in this uphill struggle recently reached another milestone when organizing an in-person media summit in Dubai. This gave them and the participating media houses a platform to discuss the various challenges and opportunities associated with the pandemic and the path toward a global economic recovery. TRENDS Research & Advisory has followed a partnership

model throughout these endeavors, working alongside government and non-government entities to achieve mutual and desired objectives.

## WESTERN EUROPE



### 1. Barcelona Centre for International Affairs - CIDOB, Spain

#### Antoni Segura i Mas, President

Pol Morillas | Director | [pmorillas@cidob.org](mailto:pmorillas@cidob.org)

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CIDOB has analysed the role of global cities in handling the coronavirus and has reflected on the impact of the crisis on the future of urban areas, thus broadening the analytical scope to actors other than states and international institutions as managers of the pandemic. Based on analysis of COVID-19 management by 12 global cities, the CIDOB report ‘Cities on the Front Line: Managing the Coronavirus Crisis’ presents models for rethinking the city and the future of urban areas, and provides lessons for governing complex scenarios and tackling the deep economic recession and social emergency the coronavirus leaves behind. Published by CIDOB within the framework of its Global Cities Programme, the report highlights cities’ ability to respond and innovate in the face of the COVID-19 crisis and to generate collaboration and mobilise resources, talent and experience. It also underlines that more decentralised countries have had greater capacity to address the pandemic’s complexity and to articulate more context-specific responses.



### 2. Institut Montaigne, France

#### Henri de Castries, Chairman

Maud Guibert | Communications Officer | [mguibert@institutmontaigne.org](mailto:mguibert@institutmontaigne.org)

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In June, in the midst of the health crisis, Institut Montaigne produced an in-depth, thoroughly-researched report, ‘E-santé : augmentons la dose!’ pushing for an intensified

development of the e-health sector in France to face the issue of equipment and medical staff shortages. The data from the report has proved invaluable during the crisis to help monitor the evolution of the epidemic, identify clusters and stop cycles of infection. Since June, these proposals have successfully made their way in the public debate and into legislation. Days after the publication of this report, the French government issued an order extending the 100% reimbursement of teleconsultations (which had been partially reimbursed up to then) in order to improve access and limit the risk of spreading the disease.’

In July, after a nation-wide consultation of experts from the French health care system, the French Health Minister signed an agreement devoting 19 billion euros of investment in the health care system, with a sustained emphasis on developing greater interoperability, convergence and security of health care information systems, in direct response to our proposals. Finally, in September, members of the public and private sector signed, alongside the Ministerial Delegation for Digital Health, a charter committing them to completing several digital projects that are deemed essential to modernizing our health care system and the development of e-health, restating many elements we had put forward.



### 3. Institute of Development Studies, *United Kingdom*

**Melissa Leach, Director**

James Georgalakis | Director of Communications and Impact | [j.georgalakis@ids.ac.uk](mailto:j.georgalakis@ids.ac.uk)  
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The Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform (SSHAP), which is a collaboration between Institute of Development Studies, Anthrologica, and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, has been providing real-time, on-demand research to policymakers and practitioners globally on the social and political contexts of the COVID response. More than 20 briefs and accompanying infographics have been produced. These have influenced people including the WHO (via the R&D Roadmap and social science expert group), the UN inter-agency guidelines on addressing COVID in low-income communities, and the strategies of the UK FCDO.



#### 4. LSE IDEAS, *United Kingdom*

##### **Michael Cox, Founding Director**

Dr Mary Martin | Director of the UN Business and Human Security Initiative |

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As a university-affiliated think tank within the LSE, IDEAS has actively engaged with the key issues facing the UK and the wider international community in the ‘Age of COVID’. Our most direct intervention – led by Dr. Mary Martin - was to launch a ‘[Better Together](#)’ digital platform to showcase and promote the efforts of businesses who are tackling COVID-19. To increase its global impact, IDEAS launched its platform in conjunction with five other international bodies: Business and Human Rights (BHR); the UNDP in Colombia; the PeaceStartup Foundation; the Institute of Economics and Peace; and the Bureau van Dorp – experts in responsible business in fragile and conflict-affected areas. IDEAS was also invited to be a strategic partner for the Cascos de Vida initiative in Colombia in response to the coronavirus pandemic.’

The initiative organised by UNDP brought together key actors in the government, the UN system and civil society to address aspects of the crisis. Supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, IDEAS helped organise a four-day conference ‘Lessons of the Territorial Peace in Times of COVID-19’ from November 23-27 2020. Through a series of online conversations in three interactive working tables that included participants from local communities, business, civil society organisations, policymakers and scholars that culminated in a plenary session, the conference explored experiences and lessons learned from the peacebuilding process in Colombia amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

IDEAS was also invited by the UK government to present evidence to the recently launched Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy - one of the most extensive reviews in recent times. As the Review progressed, IDEAS took part in a number of virtual meetings organised by the Cabinet Office, with LSE IDEAS experts emphasising the continuing primacy of Euro-Atlantic security and the paramount importance of technological competition. In its final intervention in the formation of the Review, LSE IDEAS hosted a public

event in October 2020, on the topic of [The Integrated Review: Towards a Conclusion](#). In 2020 it then submitted a detailed set of recommendations on the UK’s Biosecurity Strategy to the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy. The resulting Committee report quotes LSE IDEAS at a number of points.



## 5. The Clingendael Institute, *The Netherlands*

**Monika Sie Dhian Ho, General Director**

Louise van Schaik | Head of Unit EU & Global Affairs | [lschaik@clingendael.org](mailto:lschaik@clingendael.org)

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Together with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), the Clingendael Institute aimed to influence the German EU Presidency with regard to its stance on WHO reform and EU-WHO relations. A webinar was organized under Chatham House Rule in the week after the EU managed to secure a resolution on COVID-19 in the World Health Assembly of May 2020. In the closed online meeting an open exchange took place among experts, representatives of the EU and several of its member states, the WHO, and the German EU Presidency. Inspired by this meeting and additional exchanges with key officials, a [SWP comment](#) was drafted and published in October 2020.’

In November 2020, the EU’s Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States officially adopted [conclusions on the role of the EU in strengthening the World Health Organization](#). Clingendael authors also contributed to [an academic journal article in a special issue on COVID-19 by the Journal of European Integration](#) that contrasts the EU’s current efforts to uphold the WHO to its lukewarm approach in the previous decades, because of the COVID-19 pandemic despite the withdrawal of the US.



## 6. The Royal Institute of International Affairs - Chatham House, *United Kingdom*

**Eliza Manningham-Buller; Alistair Darling; Sir John Major, Presidents**

Alistair Burnett | MD Communications & Publishing (interim) |

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Website: [Link](#)

On March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2021, Chatham House convened a Global C19 Vaccine Supply Chain and Manufacturing Summit of manufacturers, suppliers, international organizations and governments to discuss urgent issues threatening the global supply of vaccines. Held under the [Chatham House Rule](#), the meeting provided the opportunity for frank, open and problem-solving discussions to identify, understand, and debate potential solutions. The summit was co-sponsored by [COVAX](#), [BIO](#), [DVCMN](#) and [IFPMA](#), the key international organisations involved in promoting an equitable roll out of vaccines across the world.

One immediate tangible impact of the Summit was the establishment of a “[COVAX Manufacturing Task Force](#)” that will identify and resolve issues impeding equitable access to vaccines through COVAX. The Task Force is spearheaded by the co-leads of [COVAX](#) – the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), WHO, Gavi, and UNICEF and works in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and organisations representing vaccine manufacturers and their suppliers. The Task Force leverages the capabilities of the global vaccine community – from vaccine R&D stakeholders through to those working in the clinical development, manufacturing, and regulatory sectors – to address short- term, medium-term, and long-term COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing challenges and bottlenecks.



## 7. Transparency International, *Germany/International*

**Daniel Eriksson, CEO**

Maria Emilia Berazategui | Head of Policy and Advocacy | [mberazategui@transparency.org](mailto:mberazategui@transparency.org)

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In April, alongside the Human Rights Watch and Global Witness, Transparency International requested urgent action from the International Monetary Fund in order to make sure that the much needed funds given to member countries are actually used to safeguard public health and support livelihood. Then, the IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva sent a message to governments receiving COVID-19 financial assistance on the importance of ensuring that transparency and accountability are not lost during these challenging times. This message was reinforced in June through an exclusive interview with the IMF Managing Director to TI. In order to identify these measures as part of the financial assistance agreements, TI tracks publicly available information on IMF emergency funding to countries in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

To help anti-corruption analysts and activists around the world, TI has set up a tracker through which they flag the presence of anti-corruption and transparency measures in each loan agreement, classifying them under nine categories, including public procurement, beneficial ownership, expenditure reporting and audits. Through this tracker, details about each measure, including the original text of each government's commitment are provided. Additionally, TI looks at press releases issued for each financial agreement in order to see if the IMF includes in its communications mentions of key words such as (anti)corruption, transparency, and governance.

## LATIN AMERICA



### 1. Argentine Council for International Relations - CARI, *Argentina*

#### José Octavio Bordón, President Executive Committee

Gustavo Martínez ; Carla Gebetsberger | International Affairs and Managing Director;  
Academic Assistant | [gustavo.martinez@cari.org.ar](mailto:gustavo.martinez@cari.org.ar); [carla.gebetsberger@cari.org.ar](mailto:carla.gebetsberger@cari.org.ar)  
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CARI's Committee for the Internationalization of Cities aims to promote dialogue and cooperation between different Argentina's cities. The Committee is currently integrated in 16 cities across the country. In 2021, CARI launched an international webinar named "Cities and Great Powers."

Considering the need to build an agenda to face COVID-19 and the post-pandemic that focuses on environmentally sustainable urban societies, it recommended:

- Promote the visitor economy.
- Incorporate into the green agenda the consideration of three dimensions: the transition in mobility, energy efficient construction and the circular economy.
- Incorporate into the green agenda the consideration of three working areas: the transition in mobility, energy efficient construction and the circular economy.

Considering informal economy and structural inequity present in Latin American cities, it recommended:

- Fight informality and inequality in "two speeds:" articulate new and old agendas.
- Incorporate a social perspective in the agenda to face COVID-19 and the post-pandemic.

Considering the central role of international financing for the post-pandemic, it recommended:

- Build an international architecture that allows access to financing for the reconstruction process.
- Rethink many of the infrastructure investment policies and strategies to enhance resilience.
- Strengthen city diplomacy as a central tool with direct access to resources and investment.



## 2. Brazilian Center for International Relations - CEBRI, *Brazil*

**Julia Dias Leite, Executive Director**

Carla Duarte | Director of Institutional Relations and Communication |

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Website: [Link](#)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the following economic crisis, CEBRI's Infrastructure Program organised two closed-door meetings under Chatham House rule. The main purpose of the meetings was to discuss and influence the design of Brazilian response plans for the pandemic and economic crisis, with a focus on the infrastructure sector. Both closed-door meetings produced reports which were later circulated among participants and stakeholders and generated follow-up meetings between the public and private sectors. In addition, CEBRI, in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), promoted the project 'Reorienting Multilateralism' with the objective of influencing the international agenda on the importance of this topic in combating the crisis.

Throughout 2020, CEBRI held 6 webinars within the aforementioned project, in which national and international representatives from the public and private sectors, civil society and international organizations were engaged to discuss the urgency to promote multilateralism and international cooperation to effectively combat the impacts of the pandemic in the world. The discussions generated 11 publications, among policy notes and articles in which there are recommendations and proposals for policy formulation at national, regional and international levels. As a result, this project has so far reached a total audience of over 6,000 people in 30 countries on 5 continents, including distinguished individuals such as ambassadors, ministers, entrepreneurs, academics, and representatives of international organizations.



### 3. Centro de Pensamiento para el Desarrollo Sostenible - CEPEI, Argentina

#### Philipp Schönrock, CEO

Javier Surasky | Coordinator, Governance for Development Area | [j.surasky@cepei.org](mailto:j.surasky@cepei.org)

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Covid-19 Data and Innovation Center was created in a partnership between the UN COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), Tableau, and CEPEI. Launched in December, 2020, the Center's aims included:

1. Deliver information, evidence, knowledge, innovation strategies, territorial requirements, and policy recommendations for an evidence-based response to overcome the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, at global, regional, national and local levels.
2. Create a complete view of the status of recovery, country by country, linking recovery plans and Agenda 2030 implementation efforts.
3. Activate multi-stakeholder coalitions to overcome the barriers facing low- and middle-income countries in COVID-19 response.

CEPEI prepared periodic virtual meetings throughout the year with the UN Secretary-General's Designate COVID-19 Recover Better Fund, and with UN Regional Coordinators. At the local level, the Centre is providing open data to local government agencies and civic organizations in Colombia's pacific region. The Centre is also created a platform that enhances the capacity of NSOs, gives academia, CSO, and other stakeholders a voice in the reopening discussions in all countries, and opens up the dialogue through data.

Thematic policy recommendations were also produced for meetings and for publication. This level of advocacy has been achieved thanks to CEPEI's sustained engagement in data and evidence collection with the UN since 2009, and the organization's joint work with stakeholders from the private sector, academia, and civil society, translating data into timely insights. CEPEI has been recognized by the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who said "We engaged in an innovative partnership with a group of experts from different regions specialized on sustainable development

and familiar with the different regional contexts, under the overall coordination of CEPEI, a think tank based in Colombia and with a strong track record on the 2030 Agenda."



#### 4. Corporación de Estudios para el Desarrollo - CORDES, Ecuador

##### Oswaldo Hurtado Larrea, President & CEO

José Hidalgo | Founder/CEO | [cordes@cordes.org](mailto:cordes@cordes.org)  
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At the beginning of the pandemic, CORDES was part of a group of prominent Ecuadorian economists who developed public policy proposals to face the economic and social impacts caused by the lockdown. One of these proposals, included in the "[Humanitarian Support Law](#)", allows companies and their workers to reach agreements to reduce working hours (with the consequent reduction in wages) in order to avoid the closure of companies and the massive destruction of jobs. Another proposal, although this was not approved, was to impose an extraordinary tax on people with higher incomes, in order to generate resources that would allow the State to cover health expenses and serve the most vulnerable population.

On the other hand, in Ecuador the statistics on deaths and infections by Covid-19 are not reliable, because in the country few tests are carried out in relation to the size of the population. In this context, CORDES developed a fortnightly bulletin that shows the evolution of excess deaths compared to the months prior to the pandemic. This bulletin, which has been cited in various media, provides the public with more precise information on the deaths caused by the pandemic or the collapse of the health system. The newsletter is available [here](#).



#### 5. Fedesarrollo, Colombia

##### Luis Fernando Mejía, Executive Director

Ximena Cadena Ordonez | Deputy Director | [xcadena@fedesarrollo.org.co](mailto:xcadena@fedesarrollo.org.co)

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Fedesarrollo provided the first estimates of both health and economic costs of COVID-19 in Colombia in April 2020, which were determined to be around \$13-\$17 USD billion per month of strict lockdown measures. Aligned with these results, our economic growth forecast was set around -2.0% to -7.5%. This led to sharp revisions of growth forecasts which were quickly adopted by the government (-5.5% in June 2020) and market analysts. Fedesarrollo also contributed with the estimation of the economic effects of the pandemic at a regional and sectoral level, which served as an input for reactivation plans in different cities of the country.

Fedesarrollo also provided a roadmap of the measures to cope with the effects of the pandemic, most of them adopted by the national government. Among the measures recommended for the short and medium term were social transfers to poor and vulnerable households and wage subsidies for firms, an initiative that was implemented by the government in May 2020. After evaluating the program, we concluded that the subsidies reached 67% of formal firms, but they were mainly concentrated in big and small-medium firms (74% and 62%, respectively) while micro enterprises only had a 47% coverage. The government enhanced specific procedures to increase the coverage of the program and in January 2021 announced the second round of subsidies.

Since May 2020, Fedesarrollo also pointed out the importance of infrastructure investment, especially in small projects and tertiary roads. In August 2020, the government implemented this recommendation, creating a reactivation package with an investment close to \$3 USD billion destined to infrastructure projects. Regarding long-term recommendations, Fedesarrollo drew attention over the importance of structural reforms to obtain higher economic growth. These reforms include a tax reform, a labor market reform, and a social security reform. We also pointed out the importance of strengthening institutions, deepening competition, and increasing public investment in infrastructure projects, among others.



## 6. Fundação Getulio Vargas - FGV, Brazil

**Marlos Lima, Director**

Marlos Lima | Director | [assessoria.fgv@insightnet.com.br](mailto:assessoria.fgv@insightnet.com.br)

Website: [Link](#)

FGV collaborated with the Brazilian government to help 66 million people survive during the pandemic, fighting against poverty and aiming to save lives. They helped design and implement public policies by providing research to support decision makers in their understanding of the impacts of the COVID crisis on the Brazilian [labor market](#) and helped avoid the increase of Brazilian [social inequality](#). Throughout 2020, FGV has published a [series of studies](#) on the impact of the pandemic on the Brazilian economy. FGV has received widespread media coverage, and has access to decision makers in key ministries and the private sector. This access made FGV's data and analysis key for recommendations that helped facilitate the approval of legislation regarding [emergency economic recovery measures](#) and strategies for assisting vulnerable populations. Brazil's emergency income program helped avoid a major social and economic crisis. FGV's focus on creating solutions made it possible for them to be at the forefront of the creation of knowledge supporting Brazil's socio-economic policies.



## 7. FUSADES, *El Salvador*

### **Claudia Umaña Araujo, President**

Jose Rodolfo Villamariona | Operations Director | [jvillamariona@fusades.org](mailto:jvillamariona@fusades.org)

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2020 has been a year of great challenges, not only because of COVID-19 Pandemic but also because of the economic, social, political and legal challenges El Salvador is facing; with new Government in the public administration and a pre-election year in the legislative and municipal power, the country's challenges have been greater.

Some of FUSADES work during the pandemic are the following:

1. Defense of the Constitution in the institutional crises of 2020, in the face of the events of February 9 and during the pandemic. Practices contrary to the rule of law continued during the pandemic and the Department of Legal Studies was permanently demanding respect for the Constitution, the principle of separation of powers, and the fundamental rights of the population.

2. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the management of the health crisis. The Department of Social Studies developed research and analysis on the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has generated on the life quality of Salvadorans.
3. Central American School of Government and Democracy and its impact on civic training and the leadership of its students. The School was born in 2015 as a strategic project of the Department of Political Studies of FUSADES in response to the training gaps that exist within the area of government, democracy, and public management.
4. Proposal for a resilient economic reopening in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Economic Studies presented the Research Series "Seven proposals for public policies to move towards a sustained economic opening to COVID-19 in El Salvador"



## 8. Instituto de Ciencia Política Hernán Echavarría Olózaga - ICP, Colombia

### María Clara Escobar, Executive Director

Leonardo Linares | Administrative and Financial Coordinator |  
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Website: [Link](#)

In March, the Instituto de Ciencia Política Hernán Echavarría Olózaga - ICP sent a proposal for actions to confront the crisis to President Iván Duque and his ministers with a series of public policy proposals to support the productive sectors. Many of those proposals were implemented. During the pandemic, within the framework of the Legislative Observatory, ICP held 8 monthly expert meetings with the participation of more than 25 congressmen to present proposals on current bills. They participated in more than 6 public hearings in Congress on the Escazú Agreement and the bill project about political reform. In the presentation of the draft law on the Escazú Agreement, the recommendations of the ICP were cited. ICP also participated in a public hearing at the Bogotá Council on digital economy.



## 9. National Economic Research Center (CIEN), Guatemala

### Jorge Lavarreda, President

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The National Economic Research Center - CIEN in Guatemala is a think tank that, for the past three decades, has focused on developing public policy to improve the development of the country. The year 2020 presented a particular challenge because of the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the economy and health sectors particularly heavily, in a country with less than one hospital bed per each thousand inhabitants (last place in Latin America). CIEN concentrated in analyzing the programs that the Government designed with the aim to save lives and livelihoods. There were two specific actions that CIEN took: the first one was to launch an Observatory to study and present proposals regarding decisions and improvements to be made around the COVID-19 programs, and the second one was to seize the opportunity that arose from the crisis and promote modernization and digitalization of the Government.

On the one hand, CIEN was able to exert influence in the improvement of the programs, specifically the Family Bonus Fund (Fondo Bono Familia) which covered about 50% of the COVID-19 resources (Q6,494 million or USD811.75 million). On the other hand, the team worked closely with the Presidential Commission for Open and Electronic Government (GAE in Spanish) and cooperated in a Plan for Digital Government 2020-2026 in Guatemala. Moreover, CIEN signed a letter of agreement with the GAE, so that in the year 2021, the team will participate in designing specific programs within the Route Map of the Digital Agenda of the current Government. This is an ongoing effort of active involvement in public policy planning. The team is also currently working with the Vice President around the topic of the new 2021 Budget of the State and other programs related to the much-needed economic reactivation in the country after the COVID-19 crisis.

## CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE



### 1. Bruegel, *Belgium*

#### **Guntram Wolff , Executive Director**

Giuseppe Porcaro | Head of Outreach and Governance | [giuseppe.porcaro@bruegel.org](mailto:giuseppe.porcaro@bruegel.org)  
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In late January/early February 2020, when it started to become clear that the world and Europe would be faced with a pandemic, Bruegel researchers started working on how an economic response to the pandemic could look like. They contacted the relevant authorities in Europe, which asked them to prepare a paper for the discussion of EU finance ministers. The paper was discussed at the EU finance ministers meeting (ECOFIN) on March 11 2020 and was instrumental in forging consensus that a bold fiscal and monetary response was needed alongside a strict health response. "Whatever it takes" was the leitmotif successfully put forward. The paper is available [here](#).



### 2. European Policy Centre - CEP, *Serbia*

#### **Ranka Miljenović, Executive Director**

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CEP realised that the lockdown would have a significant impact on the economy, especially small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs (SMEs). For the purposes of providing evidence-based proposals on how to combat economic consequences of the pandemic, they gathered a group of experienced and renowned economists who developed an extensive proposal with a set of 10 key policy measures. These ranged from temporary suspension of payment of taxes, including flat-rate taxes on entrepreneurs, contributions in all active private companies, utility bills for SMEs, housing loan payments for citizens, loans and lease payments and advance corporate

taxes for all business entities to reducing the cost of leasing public office space by 50% for crisis-hit retail stores. The proposal also suggested refunding the fiscal part of fuel costs for freight transport companies and the provision of a National Bank of Serbia credit line for additional bank liquidity of up to €2 billion without interest. Almost all of these proposals were taken into account by the Government of Serbia and received prime time national television coverage. These proposals were introduced in April 2020 and additional support to the most vulnerable industries was approved in summer 2020.



### 3. Institute for International Political Studies - ISPI, *Italy*

#### **Giampiero Massolo, President**

Paolo Magri | Executive Vice President | [paolo.magri@ispionline.it](mailto:paolo.magri@ispionline.it)  
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In March 2020, Italy became one of the epicenters of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the crisis, ISPI immediately mobilized its staff and network of experts to help policymakers and the public respond to the crisis. ISPI also issued a public statement to communicate that the think tank was "keeping its lights on" and launched #ThinkTanksReact, a worldwide solidarity campaign that brought together 126 think tank leaders and showed the resilience of the think tank community. In the darkest days of the crisis, ISPI advised the national commission that was tasked by the government to draft the plan 'Initiatives for recovery – Italy 2020-2022'. In particular, ISPI provided direct expertise to the commission (through virtual closed-door meetings) and collected proposals from the business community, civil society and other experts on key measures such as state aid to economic sectors hit by the crisis and other support measures for Italian households and companies. ISPI also contributed to the design and fine-tuning of the idea of a 'travel permit' to be issued to air travelers who had undergone rapid COVID testing or had been tested or vaccinated against COVID-19 and provided expertise - and raised awareness - on the size and actual lethality of the pandemic ([example](#)) which also enabled to set up an early warning system on ICU occupancy. Overall, ISPI carved out a role as producer and disseminator of scientific and policy findings on both the health and economic emergencies, and - together with other national players - facilitated the release of crucial, timely and useful data points by regional and national authorities.

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#### **4. Julius Raab Foundation, Austria**

##### **Martha Schultz, President**

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Since the pandemic started, the Julius Raab Foundation in cooperation with FASresearch, has gone on a quest looking for answers to the following scientific question ‘Who in Europe, especially in the German-speaking region (Austria, Germany, Switzerland), is currently providing significant ideas and bringing about changes tackling the important (economic, social, ecological, technological and geopolitical) challenges of our time?’.

The think tank believes that knowing which organization can add value in times of a crisis is key to come out stronger. #NAVIGATEUR is a visualised network comprising of 370 organizations (think tanks, research institutes, universities, NGOs, public and state-affiliated institutions, supranational organizations, platforms, initiatives, interest groups, etc.) on the basis of 55 in-depth interviews with leading experts and decision-makers in politics, public administration, business, science & research, NGOs and think tanks. A data-derived changemaker index reveals those organizations that were often considered to bring about change (ranked by an ‘Authority Value’) and that enjoy significant attention in both traditional and social media (ranked by a ‘media attention’).

In the interviews, questions were asked on how the political system and administration become more adaptive and open for ideas to be implemented, what is necessary to establish unconventional collaborations and what are the most pressing challenges of our time. The research gives an in-depth possibility to see through the shallow problems and to tackle the ones deep down – the systemic ones that have been around for a while, being intensified by the crisis especially now. The results show that the work of think tanks are needed more than ever to tackle today’s challenges.



## 5. Lithuanian Free Market Institute, *Lithuania*

### **Elena Leontjeva, President & Chair of the Board**

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Immediately after Lithuanian government's decision of March 12, 2020 to introduce the first lockdown from March 16, 2020, LFMI called on the government to allow immediate business tax deferrals and to suspend automatic freezing of bank accounts for tax payment noncompliance. Business and payroll taxes were due on March 15, within three days following the government's lock-down resolution. The business sector was already experiencing serious disruptions in supply and sales, and without changes to the pending tax obligations a chain reaction would have accelerated. The government immediately endorsed the said tax suspension proposals. Tax deferrals were allowed and automatic freezing of bank accounts was suspended. This helped to prevent massive business operation disruptions and closures. A total of 21,000 companies had benefited from the tax "holiday" by mid-2020. The same rules have applied during the second lock-down.

While these first policy responses to the emerging challenges were expedient, the whole state apparatus, legislature and government agencies continued to make their way on the public spending and regulatory journey. LFMI submitted a memorandum to the President, parliamentary speaker and the Cabinet calling to revise the 2020 spring legislative agenda. LFMI pinpointed 20+ public spending and regulatory initiatives and draft laws which ran counter to the challenges of the moment and would impose excessive regulatory and tax burdens the nation could not afford.

These included tax hikes for self-employed individuals, an increase in the cap on social security contributions and the minimum wage, additional working hours restrictions, etc. LFMI called on the state leadership to replace this legislative inertia with an anti-crisis strategy. As a result, the parliament's spring agenda was revised accordingly and most of the legislative initiatives were withheld. Thirdly, in a position note submitted to the Government in March 2020, LFMI challenged pending proposals to regulate wholesale and retail prices and to impose restrictions on sales and supply of goods. These price regulation proposals were turned down.



## 6. National Administration Association, Romania

### Petre-Claudiu Platon, Secretary General

Petre-Claudiu Platon | Secretary General | [petre.platon@administration.ro](mailto:petre.platon@administration.ro)  
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Transparency in taking decisions is a key element for functioning of a democratic state. During the state of emergency Romanian Government adopted the Emergency Ordinance no. 34/26 March 2020, which modified the Government Emergency Ordinance - GEO no. 1/1999 on state of emergency due to the covid crisis. The new normative act, stated in article 33.1, that “during the period of the siege or during the state of emergency, the legal provisions regarding the decisional transparency and the social dialogue do not apply in the case of the draft normative acts establishing measures applicable during the state of siege or during the state of emergency or which are a consequence of establishing of the state of siege or state of emergency”.

In the light of our organisational mandate of civil service professionalization, public administration reform and accountability, National Administration Association triggered the alarm at national level and at strategic European Union level. We have asked the Romanian Government to provide public information on the procedural steps taken in order to adopt the above mentioned GEO. We have stated in our position documents and requests that transparency is essential in democratic governance. Our actions proved to be in line with those of the Constitutional Court of Romania who declared (Decision of the Romanian Constitutional Court no. 152/2020) that the above mentioned GEO was not constitutional.



## 7. Razumkov Centre, Ukraine

### Yuriy Yakymenko, President

Andriy Khopta | Public Relations Officer | [yakimenko@razumkov.org.ua](mailto:yakimenko@razumkov.org.ua)  
Website: [Link](#)

The Razumkov Centre produced anti-crisis recommendations for the Ukrainian Government and became one of the founders of the Center of Economic Recovery (CER) of Ukraine. CER has been designed as a platform where experts from different spheres can jointly elaborate proposals for the government, in order to respond to economic challenges caused by COVID-19 pandemic and to find effective solutions. Currently, 21 think tanks, 34 business associations and trade unions, 37 business structures, and 40 ministries and government agencies are among members of CER.

Within two months, CER managed to carry out extensive research aimed at improvement of the extremely difficult socio-economic situation in Ukraine caused by the strategic miscalculations of previous governments together with COVID-19 pandemic. The Razumkov Center also coordinated the CER's task force on energy issues. They developed proposals, included in the state program, and addressed key issues in the energy sector. Currently, CER is working on development of the [National Economic Strategy 2030 \(NES\)](#) at the request of the government, which should be presented in the first quarter of 2021.

## ASIA



### 1. ANBOUND Consulting, *China*

#### **Dato' Ong Chong Yi, Regional Chief Representative ASEAN**

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On 7 May 2020, the ANBOUND Regional Chief Representative in ASEAN and ANBOUND Malaysia Advisor presented a report to Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed of Malaysia, together with a donation of 3000 face masks for researchers in the Minister's Office. The report on 'Post COVID-19 Development Strategies and Options for Malaysia' analyzed the current economic status of Malaysia and its competitive advantages in Asia. ANBOUND researchers suggested a balanced geo-strategy plan that set the foundation for Malaysia's cooperation with the world in the post-pandemic era. The report also suggested the Malaysian government to focus on four key economic policies, i.e the industrial sector, energy, welfare and open economy for its long-term development in the post-pandemic era.



### 2. Asian Development Bank Institute - ADBI, *Japan*

#### **Tetsushi Sonobe, CEO**

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ADBI led survey-based research illustrating COVID-19's impacts in developing Asia and informing policy recommendations emphasizing digitalization's role in facilitating sustainable recovery. A Southeast Asian households survey spotlighted online education penetration and widening digital divides. ADBI provided extensive capacity building and training support to help policymakers in developing economies across Asia and the Pacific deploy timely COVID-19 resilience measures. Focuses included ways to rapidly expand social safety nets to reach the most

vulnerable, with inputs from officials such as Pakistan’s Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety.

Improving sanitation services and water-related disaster mitigation during the COVID-19 crisis and post-pandemic infrastructure policy making with Stanford University’s Francis Fukuyama were among other highlighted areas. ADBI championed evidence-based proposals to help Group of 20 (G20) leaders navigate COVID-19 challenges and advance sustainable and inclusive global recovery. Addressing sustainable energy transition, quality infrastructure investment, digital financial education, demographic change, and fiscal stimulus, the policy briefs were spotlighted during the 2020 T20 Summit and related meetings and provided guidance for the G20 Leaders’ Summit.



### **3. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (India), *India***

**William J. Burns, President (Carnegie International)**

Rudra Chaudhuri | Director Carnegie India | Rudra.Chaudhuri@ceip.org

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Carnegie India has long worked on the challenges around global vaccine manufacturing and distribution as well as pandemic preparedness. This work has been [showcased](#) at our annual [Global Technology Summit](#) (co-hosted with the Indian Ministry of External Affairs) since at least 2018. Through this platform, we engaged with those heading major vaccine manufacturers, virologists, and those in leading positions at the [Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations \(CEPI\)](#). In fact, as early as the first week of March 2020, Carnegie India hosted a policy education session sensitizing audiences to the challenge of [tackling the coronavirus](#). This workshop was led by scientists and virologists, all of whom have been the primary source of information in India in the past year. A part of their team worked alongside Indian officials to evaluate India’s state of preparedness. Carnegie India staff spoke to district magistrates, local officials, and others across India, as well as domain experts, to get a clearer sense of the level of preparedness (numbers of ventilators, oximeters, ICU rooms, and so on) in and outside of India’s metropolitan areas. The study was sent to the government, so it could compare numbers and estimates with official figures.

As a part of the team at Carnegie India focused on these more immediate issues and concerns, six scholars from the team started thinking about the larger economic and geopolitical effects of the first wave of the pandemic. The team spoke with over forty industrialists, technologists, government officials, and other workers. The objective was to capture the impact of the first wave on factor markets of production—land, labor, and capital. The result was a major framing note titled “[Recovery, Resilience, and Adaption: India From 2020 to 2030.](#)” On technology, the aim was to focus on the [future of data](#) and set out a range of options when, toward the end of 2020, trade-related competition between the United States and China was slipping into something more structural, and permanent. By way of several closed-door discussions, and many public sessions, Carnegie India’s [Global Technology Summit 2020](#) dealt directly with the geopolitics of technology. The Summit also made sure to keep the conversation alive with vaccine manufacturers and senior officials from the World Health Organization.

As relief supplies and emergency equipment began to pour into India at the peak of a challenging time, at the end of April 2021, our team members helped to facilitate, coordinate, and connect with different parts of the government, the private sector, and a range of foreign missions in New Delhi. Other parts of the team focused on India’s large-scale vaccination drive. One of the limiting factors to vaccinating India’s large population have been the restrictions placed by Donald Trump’s, and then Joe Biden’s, administration on the supply of crucial ingredients. These ingredients were desperately needed by Indian manufacturers. For the following forty days, a part of Carnegie India’s team spent every single day working only on this issue: [unclogging the vaccine supply chain](#). These efforts, alongside others, contributed to the Biden administration removing these restrictions.



#### 4. CAREC Institute, *China*

**Syed Shakeel Shah, Director**

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CAREC Institute released country specific briefs, one of which highlighted the issue of closure of borders between Pakistan and Afghanistan due to the pandemic. This led to a critical situation as over 4000 containers were held up on Pakistan's side of the border, some containing essential supplies for landlocked Afghanistan. On the basis of the CAREC Institute Brief, the Government of Pakistan took urgent measures to clear the backlog. As a result, border crossing time was brought down from over 40 days in July to less than four days in early November. CAREC Institute also developed a number of economic briefs covering various themes related to the impact of COVID-19. It ranged from emerging economic fallout, fiscal and monetary responses, scenarios of possible recoveries, and the scramble for a vaccine.



## 5. Center for China and Globalization (CCG), *China*

**Wang Huiyao, President**

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Center for China And Globalization (CCG) has reached out to the Chinese government with a recent policy briefing. Regarding the economic revitalization in the post-pandemic era, the CCG suggested a relaxing of the entry restriction for foreigners such as executives of multinational enterprises and compatriots abroad. In the briefing, the CCG argued that multinational companies had contributed roughly 20% of China's total industrial output in recent years, while the entry ban employed in 2020 had put those firms in a dilemma. Therefore, the authority should consider an increase in inbound flights, as well as to soften the custom controls. As a result, since September 28, 2020, the Chinese government gradually switched to more flexible entry restrictions in which foreigners with valid Chinese residence permits for work, private affairs, and reunion were allowed to enter the country without a new visa.



## 6. Center for Enterprise and Society - CES, *Bangladesh*

**Sajid Amit, Director**

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The Bangladesh-based Center for Enterprise and Society (CES) at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) realized the need for policies that are more friendly and supportive of digital credit, since people were avoiding using cash and remote transactions were the need of the hour. Realizing this, they partnered with institutions like the Central Bank of Bangladesh affiliated institutions and private sector organizations and launched an advocacy initiative via six high-level webinars and a policy paper, which involved participation from leaders in the government. This resulted in creation of digital credit policies that raised the ceiling on transaction limits per day using mobile money and also allowed mobile wallets to disburse digital credit.



## 7. Centre For Social And Economic Progress, India

### Rakesh Mohan, President & Distinguished Fellow

Zehra Kazmi | senior Communications Manager | [ZKazmi@csep.org](mailto:ZKazmi@csep.org)

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CSEP members Shaonlee Patranabis, Sahil Gandhi, and Vaidehi Tandel authored a blog titled *“Are Slums More Vulnerable to the COVID-19 Pandemic?”* The paper examines whether legal frameworks for provision of property rights to slum-dwellers matter for better amenities and, hence, for health outcomes and offers recommendations, which will be presented to the Maharashtra government and the ministry of housing and urban affairs.

Another op-ed piece co-authored by Sahil Gandhi focused on how COVID-19 has amplified gender inequalities in India, arguing for a gender-sensitive pandemic response. The pieces are an outcome of the authors' research on the slum communities in Mumbai and finds that because of the pandemic, women have spent more time on queuing up for water, cooking and cleaning houses, have lost out on education and employment opportunities and have faced an increase in harassment.

In the early days of the pandemic, our researchers wrote three important pieces evaluating India's medical capacity to handle the increasing patients, the health infrastructure in the country, and plotting a timeline of COVID-19 spread and government interventions. The pieces were cited by Indian and international media.



## 8. Centre for South Asian Studies, Nepal



### **Nishchalnath Pandey, Director**

Mahesh Bahatta | Research and Program Officer | [mahesh\\_bhatta01@yahoo.com](mailto:mahesh_bhatta01@yahoo.com)

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The Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS) has been working on various issues that are concerned at the national and regional level. CSAS has organized some national and regional webinars on various contemporary issues like the Indo-Pacific and its security and economic challenges, 'Afghanistan: The Way Forward,' 'US elections 2020: and Its Implications for South Asia,' 'Discussions on Why Think Tanks Matter?' and others where participants from Nepal and the South Asia region participated and spoke on the issues at hand. The reports were published as an outcome of the webinars and have been submitted to the respective countries.

Some of these events were well-covered by national news outlets. With active participation from multiple stakeholders, the evidence-based discourse took place and key outcomes of the events were well taken by these stakeholders. We believe that the outcomes and the recommendations of these discourses will have an essential impact on the policymaking level at the national as well as regional level. Moreover, these events have been also shared with the SAARC secretariat and we have received positive response and cooperation from them. Some of our past publications have been also shared and kept at the SAARC Secretariat.



## 9. China Science Center of International Eurasian Academy of Sciences - IEAS, China

### Jiang Zhenghua, President

Xinli Zhao | Senior Fellow | [zhaoxl@cstec.org.cn](mailto:zhaoxl@cstec.org.cn)

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One of the central roles of CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) is to solicit reports about significant issues around COVID-19 and proposals on mitigating strategies. In response to the surge of COVID-19, CPPCC established a quick lane to guarantee rapid responses for high-valued reports and proposals, such as those related to controlling the spread of the virus or those that affect the economy and society at large. On February 4, 2020, the CPPCC proposal office received a proposal from Professor Liu Xin, which identified that medical sewage and waste could be a transmission channel of the virus and proposed to closely monitor hospitals and related facilities for sewage and waste treatment. After receiving the proposal, CPPCC sent it to the relevant government agencies for their immediate consideration.

During the 2020 annual session of the National People's Congress, CPPCC members submitted proposals for improving the public health system. For example, members proposed to establish a multi-point triggering mechanism for early warning, increase the admission capacity in transformable infectious disease treatment areas and ICUs, and provide more support to the education and professional training of public health workers. On September 4, those proposals were discussed in depth with representatives from ministries and commissions of the central government.



## 10. CUTS International, India

### Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General

Alka Singh | Director | [als@cuts.org](mailto:als@cuts.org)

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CUTS International Washington DC Center (CUTS-WDC) issued a policy memo which emphasized the need to salvage and resurrect multilateralism during the COVID pandemic. The paper outlined India's significant potential role in manufacturing and distributing vaccines and made recommendations on how to promote coordination and collective action among countries to efficiently combat the many crises originating from the pandemic. The memo specifically addressed policymakers in Washington and India and sought to promote US-India collective efforts to promote a multilateral approach to countering the prevalent crisis. The policy note can be found [here](#).



## **11. Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, *Indonesia***

**Koji Hachiyama, Chief Operating Officer**

Lydia Ruddy | Director of Communications | [Lydia.ruddy@eria.org](mailto:Lydia.ruddy@eria.org)

Website: [Link](#)

ERIA presented research findings to ASEAN Energy Ministers at a special session to discuss the energy sector's response to the pandemic and contributions to sustainable recovery. ERIA was recognized with three other research institutes in the Chairman's Statement for the 23rd ASEAN+3 Summit for its research on ASEAN+3 Supply Chain Connectivity that will advance the region's recovery from the adverse socio-economic effects of the pandemic. The EAS Economic Ministers officially recognized ERIA's paper in the EAS Economic Ministers Meeting Joint Media Statement - "Accelerating restoration of economic growth, maintaining market stability and strengthening resilience of the EAS region in response to the COVID-19 pandemic" - and asked ERIA to continue providing policy-based research.



## 12. EdLab Asia, Vietnam

### Anh-Duc Hoang, Director

Anh-Duc Hoang | Director | [duc@edlabasia.org](mailto:duc@edlabasia.org)

Website: [Link](#)

Since early 2020, when the COVID-19 started spreading over many countries, EdLab Asia had been involved in various dialogues with Vietnamese local and central government entities to minimize and prevent the impact of the pandemic on education. On 15 Feb 2020, the think tank first issued the [“Handbook of Mental Health during disease”](#) as a guideline to support teachers, students, and any citizen to overcome their individual mental health issues during COVID-19. They also [operated a mental support portal](#) with 35+ volunteer therapists across the nation. Overall, the handbook reached more than 3,500 schools and 3 million K-12 students. Besides, they also conducted several studies to measure the impacts of COVID-19 on Vietnamese K-12 students [\[1, 2\]](#), Vietnamese teachers [\[3\]](#), expat teachers across Southeast Asia [\[4\]](#), and Vietnamese students who study abroad [\[5\]](#).



## 13. IDFC Institute, India

### Koji Hachiyama, CEO & Senior Fellow

Sofia Imad | Senior Associate | [Sofia.imad@idfcinstitute.org](mailto:Sofia.imad@idfcinstitute.org)

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In March 2020, IDFC Institute rapidly assembled an interdisciplinary group of experts to help the government respond to the unprecedented crisis of the pandemic. Within a month, they had 165+ experts across disciplines, from influenza specialists and supply chain experts to senior police officers and communications gurus. Over the past eight months, the group has lent capacity to the

Union Government and 12 state governments. This includes running amongst the first and largest serological surveys in the country, implementing a contact tracing solution in several cities and designing a communications toolkit for the state of Punjab to encourage early testing.

The findings – showing a COVID-19 positivity rate well over 50% in Mumbai’s slums by July 2020 – were widely covered in the domestic and international media and helped shift the debate about prevalence and the infection fatality rate. Some highlights include:

1. Contact tracing: members developed an IFA-based contact tracing solution that received over 50,000 GBP in funding from ACT Funds and the Mercatus Center, and was implemented in 7 cities and 3 states.
2. Remote monitoring of ICUs: Cloud Physician, an ICU monitoring company and task force member, was deployed to monitor ICUs in several states and was overseeing Mumbai’s largest makeshift ICU ward.
3. The Slum Assistance Group raised funding to make and distribute over 3,000 masks in slum communities, in the early days of the outbreak.
4. The group helped draft a data sharing ordinance for the Government of Kerala, to protect citizen data collected as part of the pandemic response.
5. IDFC Institute built and helped maintain the tracker used by the Maharashtra’s Chief Minister’s Office for weekly briefings with district officials.
6. Members prepared one of the first ‘exit from lockdown’ strategies for the Prime Minister’s Office and lockdown advisory notes for the states of Nagaland, Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka.



#### **14. KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific, Malaysia**

**Tan Sri Michael Yeoh, President**

Zaim Mohzani | Director, Government, Diplomacy and Youth Engagement | [zaim@kasi.asia](mailto:zaim@kasi.asia)  
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KSI submitted a number of recommendations to the [Minister of Finance \(MOF\)](#) as part of MOF's consultation to formulate the [government budget for 2021](#). Some of the recommendations which were incorporated into the budget were:

- a. Digitalisation: urging the government to accelerate digitisation to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas by providing computers and internet access for the bottom 40 (B40) income earners.
- b. ESG: to encourage more companies to strengthen their ESG reporting and accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



## 15. Observer Research Foundation, *India*

### **Samir Saran, President**

Mihir Sharma | Senior Fellow and head of Economy and Growth | [mihir.sharma@orfonline.org](mailto:mihir.sharma@orfonline.org)  
Website: [Link](#)

The Observer Research Foundation mobilised staff to respond to the crisis on multiple fronts. Its public health team sought to disseminate timely information about the nature and spread of the virus, and to properly inform and advise the overburdened health administration. ORF's security and strategy divisions sought to decode what a post-pandemic world order would look like for India and the emerging world, and its tech team examined pandemic-related disinformation online.

The Foundation's website ran a closely-followed case and test counter. ORF sought to find a third way that policy makers could adopt. They zeroed in on creating a mechanism that would link Indian recovery priorities with appropriate global financing – specifically with pools of capital seeking out opportunities for investment that met ESG (environmental, social and governance) standards. This pipeline would take the form of a new institution – they called it a “Green Investment Bank” - that could channel these investments, with both public and private participation. Following ORF's work and outreach to the government, it has been reported that the government is expected to announce soon the formation of new Indian development finance institutions, for the first time since the 1990s. Further, we have consciously designed our

suggestions for India's policy architecture to be replicable across the emerging world, as is our mandate.



## 16. Our Hong Kong Foundation - OHKF, Hong Kong

### Eva Cheng Li Kam-Fun, President

Stephen Wong | Deputy Executive Director | [stephen.wong@ourhkfoundation.org.hk](mailto:stephen.wong@ourhkfoundation.org.hk)  
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The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Hong Kong's economy hard, with 2020's GDP expected to have contracted by at least 6%; the worst since the 1998's Asian financial crisis. OHKF developed an effective response to help reboot the local economy by government infrastructure investment, which effectively acts as a counter-cyclical fiscal policy to create jobs and investment opportunities. OHKF provided research for policymakers and the public which demonstrated that infrastructure investment like roads and railways also have the additional benefit of releasing development potential of land along the routes, something that the city is most in need of.

To that end, OHKF has been advocating the development of various transport infrastructure projects including the Northern Link Railway, as well as the Tuen Mun Bypass and Route 11 Highway. HKSAR Chief Executive, Mrs. Carrie Lam, has announced in her latest policy address in November 2020 that the government will commission the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) to start the detailed design and engineering study of the Northern Link. It is expected that the construction of the railway would release the development potential of 90 hectares of land in North New Territories, which would provide around 70,000 residential units. The government has expedited the development of Tuen Mun Bypass and Route 11 Highway. The three infrastructure projects combined would involve an estimated capital investment of at least \$70 billion USD.



## 17. Sustainable Development Policy Institute - SDPI, *Pakistan*

### **Abid Suleri, Executive Director**

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Website: [Link](#)

During the early phase of COVID-19, amid strict lockdowns across the country, food supply chains were disrupted due to panic buying that encouraged hoarding, resulting in a price hike. Urban food systems were particularly affected because of the poor's high dependence on informal markets. Disruption of the informal food sector aggravated the situation that ultimately led to food inflation.

In this backdrop, the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR), in early March 2020, sought SDPI's recommendations on how to keep the food supply chain intact. The ministry also needed SDPI's input in the preparation of a Food Security Crisis Management plan for the smooth functioning of food supply chains that connects producers, processors, marketers, transporters, and retailers to consumers. SDPI emphasized the importance of the compilation and visualization of data on supply, stock, and prices of essential food commodities. In this regard, an online dashboard was advised to readily inform decision-makers about: first, the food surplus and food deficit districts (subnational administrative units); second, the need for transportation of food from surplus districts to deficit districts; third, the arrangements for imports, if domestic food stocks deplete; and fourth to check food hoarding.

In September 2020, SDPI presented the Food Security Dashboard to the highest office of the government. Prime Minister Imran Khan, in a meeting in late December, has approved the prototype of the Food Security Dashboard. The Dashboard was developed by the SDPI team with the support of experts from the Food Security Advisory Council, of which SDPI hosts the secretariat as well.



## 18. Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, India

### Arghya Sengupta, Founder & Research Director

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Vidhi came out with a publication titled ‘Towards A Post-Covid India’ in July 2020 suggesting critical legal reforms to address the unique challenges the pandemic posed. As an immediate response, it assisted the Government of India (GoI) in developing the Data Access and Sharing Protocol for the Aarogya Setu application launched by the GoI in April, 2020. The application analysed data related to contact between citizens in an effort to slow the spread of the pandemic and has been a game changer.

Currently, the ongoing work by Vidhi will impact post pandemic public health governance, expedite technological integration in the Indian legal system, and help stakeholders deal with the economic fallout of COVID-19.

COVID-19 has led to an unprecedented need for the judiciary to adapt to technological solutions for dispute resolution. Vidhi is currently working with the Expert Committee established by the NITI Aayog, the Government of India’s Think Tank, to build an actionable framework for online dispute resolution (ODR) in India, the first of its kind in the country. It is also working towards developing an action plan to integrate ODR in the various departments of the GoI to ensure faster, efficient small-disputes resolution.

Vidhi is advising the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) to prepare for both near-term and long-term economic implications of the pandemic, especially the expected rise in business and personal defaults on loans, through facilitating swift resolution by using the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC or Code). Vidhi played a significant role in the drafting of the IBC, viewed as one of India’s most successful economic reforms, and will now be working with the MCA on both substantive and procedural matters under the Code to help stakeholders in tiding over the economic disruptions caused by the crisis.

## AFRICA



### 1. Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection - MISTRA, *South Africa*

#### Joel Netshitenzhe, Executive Director

Zamazima Mazibuko | Co-editor of MISTRA's book *Epidemics* | [zamazimam@mistra.org.za](mailto:zamazimam@mistra.org.za)

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MISTRA has been leading the conversation on COVID-19 as it launched research on [Epidemics in Africa at the end of 2019](#). The research findings on the role of community health care workers and the syndemic approach in managing epidemics were revealing about the African situation. Other findings had to do with financing, regulatory frameworks, alternative knowledge systems and the like. The research paved the way toward beginning commissioned research with the government, several businesses and featured on numerous media engagements. Zamazima Mazibuko and Xolelwa Kashe-Katiya have appeared on several media platforms throughout the South African lockdown, examples of these are the top three outlets: SABC, Newzroom Africa and ENCA. Other MISTRA researchers have also written opinion pieces and hosted [webinars](#) on challenges facing basic education and post-COVID economic recovery strategies.



### 2. Public Policy in Africa Initiative (PPiAI), *Cameroon*

#### Hugue Nkoutchou, Founder

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One of the contributors of PPiAI, Thabang L. Rakoena, produced a paper on how COVID-19 is shifting priority amid lack of agility in implementing infrastructure investments in South Africa. In his paper, Rakoena made a policy prescription that the focus to rebuild the economy should be on infrastructure investments capable of creating jobs in large quantities in the short term. His

recommendations were shared with a Nigerian government infrastructure investment advisor and a South African Member of parliament.

## Regional Analysis: Global Think Tank Town Halls - *Saving Lives and Livelihoods*

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### Concerns

#### Africa

Countries throughout Africa share concerns about the fiscal reform necessary to afford COVID-19 health infrastructure and policies. Many nations were under severe budgetary stress due to struggles against corruption, food and water insecurity, state-guided development and climate change; now, states must rework budgets to prioritize the myriad of issues presented and magnified by the pandemic. Think tanks in Nigeria argued for an examination of deficit financing policies in the midst of increased social spending. Elhabib Eddaqqaq, President of the Moroccan Centre for Citizenship, Democracy and Human Rights, expects similar challenges due to a reduction in revenue from corporate taxation. The Economic and Social Research Foundation of Tanzania, acknowledges that debt relief programs will be required to deal with the state's mounting debt.

In addition to financing relief policies, most states have issues with the coordination of public-private programs for control and mitigation of the pandemic. These programs include food distribution efforts and industry subsidization. Uganda has cited issues with health care infrastructure management at a time when the state is attempting to assist private actors in building field hospitals and testing capability for most of the population. The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis has found similar issues rooted in weak mechanisms of coordination for targeting vulnerable populations. The private sector, including nonprofits, plays a key role in providing for populations in times of crisis through government grant funding that relies on a tight working relationship with regulators and health officials.

Most concerning for a multitude of African states is the economic insecurity that the virus has created amongst its most vulnerable populations. Helping vulnerable groups was the top priority of 60% of states in poll data. The Cercle d'Action et de Réflexion Autour de l'Entreprise of Algeria has advocated for public-private strategies to help vulnerable populations. Burkina Faso's Centre National d'Analyse des Politiques Économiques et Sociales (CAPES) advocates for financial assistance in the form of social protections provided for by an expanded spending program. Guinea's IPED Think Tank has stated that economic crises have resulted in a rise in unemployment among young populations and food

insecurity. Tunisia shares this concern about the labor force, especially with a sizable foreign labor force in the Arab Gulf region. The University of Pretoria, in South Africa, believes that monetary policy should be used to stimulate economic activity after shutdowns.

## Asia

Note briefly: For the purposes of this report, Myanmar is included in South Asia instead of Southeast Asia.

### I. South Asia

Think tanks from Pakistan overwhelmingly cited the concern of debt management. This implies that prevalent concerns in South Asian countries were heavily aggravated by the pandemic. The concerns about debt traps were coupled with the burden of providing stimulus packages. The sharp decline in remittances from overseas Pakistanis would exacerbate these issues. Another popular concern was food insecurity. Keeping informal and transitional food supply chains intact was mentioned frequently. Bangladeshi think tanks also pointed towards the threat of government failure to ensure food security for marginal groups for which government support is already found to be insignificant. Indian think tanks mentioned policy issues with regards to agriculture as primary concerns. With a bumper crop, minimal procurement and reduced marketing, the government would have to decide effective strategies to help farmers and all involved in agriculture. Nepalese think tanks also considered the welfare of the poor and marginalized sections of the population, procurement of medical supplies, and food security as major policy issues.

Deeksha Pandr, who is a Research Analyst at the Institute of Economic Growth (India), stated that India was already grappling with the issue of slow growth and declining GDP before the pandemic. The pandemic had added increased burden (social, economic and in terms of public policy) on the shoulders of the Indian government. According to him, the top policy issues in India are the following:

- The country saw a large migration of its workforce back from urban centres to villages when the lockdown was imposed. The issue of how the migrants will get back to their work in the cities is a challenge as well as an opportunity for the government. It will no doubt be a precarious issue since these migrants will move the wheels of the economic activity in the country.

- The MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) sector is the largest employer for the maximum number of people in the urban and semi-urban areas. This sector is the worst hit in the country due to the pandemic. Low liquidity, loss of labour and absolutely no revenue from sales for over one month are some of the concerns facing this sector. Policies to combat this ailing sector will become instrumental in driving economic activity in the country.

Another common concern was political instability during the pandemic. Pakistani think tanks pointed towards an overburdened health sector with very limited financial, managerial, administrative and infrastructural resources which would be difficult to navigate amidst political issues. Think tanks from Myanmar mentioned averting political instability as a result of super-power rivalries in the region. Sri Lankan think tanks also raised concerns regarding the organization of elections during the pandemic. Finally, all South Asian countries considered the provision of medical remedies to Covid and non-Covid patients to be of paramount importance.

## II. Central Asia

Think tanks from Azerbaijan considered the impact of the pandemic on the national economy, particularly on SMEs, an economic strategy for the post-pandemic period, and the regional order of particular concern. Like most Asian think tanks, think tanks from Kazakhstan mentioned fiscal stability (stemming from volatility in exchange rates), economic diversification and food security as being among its key issues.

## III. East and Southeast Asia

Think tanks in East Asia shared concerns regarding economic recovery. Vietnamese think tanks mentioned the issue of reopening the economy to effectively implement free trade agreements (including CPTPP, EVFTA, RCEP, etc.) in the context of geopolitical tensions in a post-COVID period. Lydia Ruddy, Director of Communications at Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (Indonesia) mentioned the following concerns for ASEAN:

- Addressing the needs of vulnerable populations
- Avoiding pitfalls of populism and nationalism

- Tapping the potential of the private sector to help address the aforementioned concerns.

Think tanks from China mentioned the issues of reopening as well as revitalizing the economy, improving and reforming the public health system so that it can effectively tackle a future crisis like COVID-19, and coordinating and cooperating with partners around the world to jointly fight the pandemic. Promoting international cooperation, a global value chain, and addressing concerns of transparency of national publicity were other issues mentioned by Chinese think tanks. Malaysian think tanks mentioned the immediate need to introduce an education model based on social distancing and a post-pandemic world demanding new expertise. Think tanks from Hong Kong cautioned against nationalism which would hinder global solidarity and the need to balance great power competition. Other think tanks spoke about preparedness plans and public health measures that need to be in place to combat the risk of a Covid-19 resurgence. The integration of infection prevention and control into businesses and social lives in establishing a 'new normalcy' while encouraging multi-sectoral collaboration in achieving a Covid-19-contained Hong Kong were also among top policy concerns. There was a consensus on taking social responsibility along the route to recovery, such that the disadvantaged and those most vulnerable in the society are not left out. Indonesian and Korean think tanks mentioned the issue of wealth gaps and macroeconomic stability as well as addressing the need for better legislation to cope with natural and non-natural disasters. Duangthip Chomprang, Director of the International Institute for Trade and Development (ITD) (Thailand) mentioned the following key issues:

- Public Health Public Policy Integration into national, social and economic development planning
- Risk Management Framework for public fiscal measures (Pandemic and Other Force Majeure)
- Alternative public health funding in times of poor economic environment, i.e. Equity vs. Debt based funding vs. Taxation
- International Trade rules on public health and medical products and services rules and regulations (public goods and IPR)

## Latin America

Latin American think tanks also shared a large number and wide range of economic concerns. While think tanks in virtually every country were concerned about economic stability and recovery, some had more specific economic concerns. For example, think tanks in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba and Mexico all listed concerns focused more on GDP decreases and fiscal policy. Furthermore, Dr. Pablo Ava from the Argentinian Council for International Relations mentions Argentina's debt crisis that will be exacerbated by COVID-related economic crises. Compounding health and economic crises is a major concern for Argentina, as well as these other countries. Private enterprises and labor related issues were also a major concern for think tanks in many different countries. Maria Clara Escobar of the Instituto de Ciencia Política Hernán Echavarría Olózaga in Columbia listed both labor market flexibility and protection of liquidity and credit for enterprises as two of the top three policy issues Colombia faces. Think tanks in Argentina, Mexico, and Uruguay also listed similar policy issues. Finally, unemployment was listed as a major concern by think tanks in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and El Salvador. Helga Cuéllar-Marchelli of the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development links unemployment and food insecurity as a major policy issue, especially because 70% of the people in El Salvador work as part of the informal economy.

Policy issues related to Latin America's health systems were also frequently mentioned. Think tanks in Bolivia and Guatemala listed these health systems as a general concern, but think tanks in other countries specified their concerns. For example, Columbian, Mexican, and Costa Rican think tanks cited their countries' current health system capacity as a major policy issue that their country will face. These capacities would be bolstered in order to slow down the spread of the virus, help those who do get sick recover, and maintain the availability of beds in hospitals across Latin America. On the other hand, Gustavo Martinez of the Argentine Council for International Relations listed future global and local preparedness and cooperation from health systems to deal with future pandemic. Despite COVID being frequently described as "unprecedented times," many think tanks overall are concerned with preparing for the next pandemic.

Finally, the various governmental assistance programs were listed as a policy issue priority by many think tanks. Overall, policy issues calling for governmental assistance can be broken down into 3

categories: the need for social programs, the need to help vulnerable populations and prevent inequalities, and food security.

Think tanks in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico mention the need for social programs as a major policy issue in their countries. Wilson Jimenez of the Aru Foundation in Bolivia sees this need as a result of COVID's distributive impacts. Because of COVID's shock on agriculture and peasants specifically, social programming is needed to counteract these asymmetric impacts. Scholars at the Centro de Estudios Estratégicos Transfronterizo Ecuador Colombia see social programming as a way to counteract the social and economic crisis that generates unemployment and economic depression.

Think tanks in Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay also see a need for social programs, but they specifically need to protect the most vulnerable in their countries. Scholars in Brazil specifically mention rising unemployment, economic inequality, and educational inequalities as major policy issues facing the nation. Elaine Ford of D&D International - Digital Democracy focuses on education programs and food baskets of necessities for the most vulnerable populations in Peru. Overall, scholars understand how the virus will affect lower classes of their countries, and it is clearly a policy issue on their minds.

Dr. Ford is not the only individual to mention food insecurity either. Think tanks in Cuba, El Salvador, and Mexico also see food insecurity as a major issue needing to be addressed. Given that Cuba imports so much food into its country and has an inefficient agricultural center, COVID greatly threatens their way of life according to Jorge Guillen of the Centro de Estudios Convivencia. El Salvador's concerns had already been mentioned by Helga Cuéllar-Marchelli, and Mexico's concerns have been discussed in the previous section as a part of North America, but the link between food insecurity and informal economies should not be ignored by policy makers in countries where it exists on a large scale.

### **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)**

Think tanks in the MENA region highlighted a host of policy concerns with Gulf countries frequently mentioning the decline in revenue. Organizations from Saudi Arabia spoke about the hurdles the current pandemic will yield for its Vision 2030. As such, they mentioned the need to diversify the Saudi economy to enhance its long-term growth potential and stabilize its debt. The UAE and Bahrain

also raised concerns about the implications of plummeting oil prices. The impact of the pandemic on UAE's Expo 2020 was the primary concern of the country along with a need to diversify the economy to reduce dependency on oil. President of the Moroccan Centre for Citizenship, Democracy & Human Rights (Morocco), Elhabib Eddaqaq, detailed the economic repercussions of the pandemic for his country which will be exacerbated by a sharp slowdown in exports, tourism receipts and remittances from Moroccans abroad. He stated that the expected increase in the budget deficit due to the increase in social spending and a drop in tax revenues, in particular from businesses and customs duties, would put intense pressure on the Moroccan economy. The country saw some relief, owed to a management fund created in Morocco which was fed by donations from companies, foundations and individuals (headed by the King of Morocco). This has the potential to prevent a large number of companies from declaring bankruptcy and would help maintain employment levels.

The pandemic aggravated regional issues such as the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and highlighted the existing discrepancies in navigating the conflict. Founder and Head of Mitvim - The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies (Israel), Nimrod Goren, cited international criticism over policies regarding the Palestine-Israel conflict as a top policy concern resulting from the pandemic. Other think tanks mentioned the threat to Israeli national interests which may benefit from the environment created by the pandemic. Think tanks from Egypt considered shortage of foreign exchange earnings as a significant worry. Director of Research at Brookings Doha Center (Qatar), Nader Kabbani stated that the restrictions on mobility, economic woes of the Qatari workforce including migrant workers, and low oil and natural gas prices were major government concerns for the country. There was an overwhelming consensus on the need to work together and promote dialogue to exchange crucial information which could save lives and livelihoods. Turkish think tanks particularly emphasized the need to work with Gulf partners to enhance cooperation at a time when it is more critical than ever.

## North-America

Countries in the North-American region shared concerns of economic recovery during and after the pandemic. These concerns were elevated by the prevalent threat of a deadlier second wave which governments will find even harder to navigate as stimulus packages and social programs see rising demand. Think tanks from Canada emphasized the importance of developing a sound federal-provincial strategy which devotes proportionate resources to all regions in the country. Gerard Lucyshyn, Vice President Research Frontier Centre for Public Policy (Canada) pointed to the political

maneuvering which will accompany the crisis as health care budget allocations to provinces will increase and affect spending in other sectors. Think tanks in Canada, USA, and Mexico mentioned that the COVID crisis has illuminated cracks in public health systems. Lack of faith in institutions persists and places a hefty responsibility on state institutions to reestablish their credibility. Collapsing state and local tax bases will intensify this distrust and lead to public unrest and discord.

Many organizations showed concerns regarding the development of deployment of vaccines. They highlighted the need to look into intellectual property laws which may hinder the progress of pharmaceutical efforts from different companies. Multiple Canadian think tanks stated that vulnerable populations, especially the elderly, require care with appropriate training which must be prioritized by the government. Think tanks from Mexico mentioned the brunt restaurants and hospitality industry had to bear and emphasized the need to address their concerns. Jose Luis Chicoma, Executive director Ethos Public Policy Lab (Mexico) said combating food insecurity must be the primary objective along with expanding social programs for small scale farmers and fishermen. Multiple organizations mentioned the need to have inclusive and collaborative public policies with a viable strategy to balance the twin goals of reopening the economy and addressing public health concerns.

Think tanks in the United States showed particular concerns regarding the election period. They cited choosing a national leadership and cabinet as their top policy concerns. John Head, Distinguished Professor of International Law at the University of Kansas stated the need to return the US to the international community to address global issues - not just COVID-19, but also climate disruption. Many participants highlighted the intersectionality of these issues and said they were concerned about the approach the new government would take to both climate change and the pandemic. Other issues were also brought to light as a result of the pandemic. Andrea Tanco, Associate Policy Analyst & Special Assistant to the President at Migration Policy Institute (USA) considered the role of immigration in the road to economic recovery, future of protection systems (asylum and refugee resettlement), and tackling xenophobia the primary off-shoots of this pandemic. Jeff Hornstein, Executive Director of the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia mentioned the racial disparities in the US which have been amplified as a result of the pandemic. Some participants also mentioned the current cybersecurity issues of the US with China and Iran and how they might be aggravated as a result of the pandemic. Finally, debt management was a top concern among many think tanks in North-America. Pierre Siklos, Professor of Economics and Senior Fellow at Centre for International

Governance Innovation (CIGI) stated the burgeoning problem of managing the exit from pandemic related large deficits and central bank interventions in private financial markets.

## Europe

### I. Western Europe

Western European think tanks list and foresee their country facing many of the same policy issues. Think tanks in virtually all countries are worried about their economies surviving and recovering from the pandemic. French think tanks talk about their budgetary crisis as being exacerbated by COVID, and British think tanks mention the need to rebuild the economy without spiking cases. A measured and slow reopening strategy could prevent a second wave of the virus from sending recovery efforts to square one. Some of the think tanks also shared a concern for financially supporting the people in their countries. Think tanks in France and Spain mentioned rising unemployment and supporting vulnerable groups. One policy issue that British think tanks listed was strengthening the social care system to deal with future pandemics, similar to how many think tanks talk about bolstering health care capacities to deal with future crises.

Western European think tanks mentioned policy issues related to health care in many different ways. Some of French and Italian think tanks' top policy issues were managing the crisis and updating monitoring systems, but Francis Verillaud of the Institut Montaigne in France and Dr. Matteo Villa of the Italian Institute for International Political Studies both prioritized adapting to life during COVID as the "new normal". German, Spanish, and British think tanks listed more common policy issues such as making health systems more robust, strengthening systems for future pandemics, and health policy in general.

One unique policy issue presented by Western European think tanks was sustainability and climate change. Sylvie Matelly of the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs and Dr. Florence Gaub of the EU Institute for Security Studies in France mention that social policies to support unemployed individuals is a major policy issue facing France, but that any policy to address this should improve the fight against climate change as well as encouraging social inclusion. Sabina Woelkner of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Germany also states that economic recovery from COVID should be tied to climate change. Given the nature and

immediacy of these crises, tying them together could help countries resolve both crises at the same time.

Finally, these think tanks list various policy issues related to political questions in their respective countries. These political questions may have existed pre-COVID, but the virus surely exacerbated them all. For example, Dr. Florence Gaub gives populist unrest as a major policy issue that France faces in addition to suggesting France ties pandemic recovery to climate change reforms. Katie Hamilton of Fondation pour l'innovation politique also discussed the rise of populism in France due to the pandemic because of their upcoming elections in 2022. Camilla Bausch of the Ecologic Institute and Ronja Scheler of the Körber-Stiftung in Germany mention Germany's unique position of having to navigate the EU Council Presidency from July-December 2020 during the COVID pandemic. At the same time Germany is in a unique position to lead Europe through the pandemic, there is also much more pressure because of it. Brexit, which is listed by a few of the British think tanks, presents a similarly unique political policy issue to navigate during COVID. Finally, Pol Morillas of the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs in Spain and Michael Cox of IDEAS from the London School of Economics both mention political polarization being a major policy concern facing their nations.

## **II. Eastern Europe**

Eastern European think tanks also shared similar concerns about the economic crisis and health crisis. Think tanks in Czechia, Russia, and Ukraine all mentioned something about preventing economic collapse or encouraging economic recovery from COVID in some way. Grzegorz Poniowski of the Centrum Analiz Społeczno-Ekonomicznych in Poland specifically listed liquidity provision to SMEs as a policy issue priority. Think tanks in Romania and Slovakia mentioned restructuring their industrial sectors in addition to economic recovery. Petre Claudiu Platon of the National Administration Association in Romania prioritized the need to rebuild Romania's industrial capacity which has been lacking since 1990. A major goal of this policy would be to also limit dependence on Chinese goods, which is a major concern in Romania. Finally, Alena Kudzko of GLOBSEC Policy Institute in Slovakia stated that economic recovery alongside a broader modernization of the economy is a top policy issue for the country.

COVID-related health policy issues were also frequently mentioned. While think tanks in Poland, Serbia, and Ukraine generally mentioned managing the crisis, Nadezhda Gaponenko of the Millennium Project in Russia specifically listed developing a vaccine. For Slovaka, Alena Kudzko thinks that a top policy issue is upgrading and bolstering current health capacities to deal with future pandemics.

Romania, Russia, and Serbia mentioned rule of law principles and upholding civil and human rights. For Petre Claudiu Platon, COVID isn't mentioned alongside improving the application of the rule of law principles in Romania. Russian think tanks also generally mentioned limiting state intervention in the field of civil rights and resisting authoritarian temptations. Only Milena Lazarevic of the European Policy Centre in Serbia listed this policy issue alongside COVID problems. For Lazarevic, restoring the function of basic democratic institutions, rule of law, and the respect for human rights post-COVID-state-of-emergency was a policy priority for Serbia.

Two other policy issues worth mentioning are digitalization and Russia. Think tanks in Russia and Slovakia listed digitalization of education and public services respectively as a way to combat the COVID pandemic. Finally, think tanks in Romania and Ukraine mention Russia as a top policy issue. For Petre Claudiu Paton in Romania, Russia is more a concern vis-a-vis Russian and Chinese corruption networks created in Romania to exert political influence. For Ukrainian think tanks, a more immediate resolution to conflict between the two nations is important.

## Recommendations

### Africa

At the core of most recommendations for African states was the need to support health care expansion and protection efforts. There was consensus on the need to provide health care for those suffering from COVID-19. The International Women’s Centre for Empowerment in Uganda has stressed the importance of harnessing technology instead of analogue systems. Paper money is a proven vector for contagious disease transmission; the ability to engage in mobile money transfers would prevent this issue.

Additionally, Uganda’s Centre for Multilateral Affairs has argued in favor of increased awareness programs to bolster compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols. Libya’s Sadeq Institute has argued that these safety protocols should include social distancing in religious institutions, supermarkets, and ministries. Also, the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis believes in public hygiene programmes especially in the informal settlements such as the “Kibera Slum.” However, support for research and development for treatments and vaccines seems low priority in all but Egypt and Morocco. Instead, most states appear to acknowledge the virus as an indefinite challenge, and think tank solutions are primarily geared towards mitigating the health and economic impacts rather than eliminating them completely.

While organizations across African nations seem to agree that public health infrastructure must be strengthened and supported, they do not agree with using lockdown or semi-lockdown policies that would hurt businesses. There exists a general understanding that the coronavirus’ impacts will be seen for years after a significant portion of the world receives a vaccine; therefore, a economic shutdown would endanger the lives and livelihoods of a large group of people that may have already been struggling with food and water insecurity prior to the pandemic. Most solutions presented by African think tank organizations focus on stimulating the private sector.

Dr. Thabo Sacolo of ESEPARC of Eswatini believes that semi or partial lockdowns do more harm than good in terms of both health and financial impacts. Jacob Nato of the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRRA) further cites a need for a gradual reopening of economies through a government guided process. This is a sentiment shared by both Egyptian, Moroccan, and

South African think tanks. However, a multitude of states acknowledge that during this process, the best solution will continue to be to stay home. Therefore, The Egyptian Cabinet’s Information and Decision Support Center, has argued in favor of continuing to encourage and incentivize remote working programs and opportunities to limit potential office place spread.

## Asia

Note briefly: For the purposes of this report, Myanmar is included in South Asia instead of Southeast Asia.

### I. South Asia

Many think tanks made recommendations regarding stimulus packages. Some from India considered provision of some form of a universal basic income or livable income support a priority. Awareness campaigns coupled with contact-tracing and increase in the level of testing to mitigate the spread of COVID were also among key recommendations. This could be enhanced by keeping records of age-group, comorbidities, vital heads of medical history, etc. At the same time, Indian think tanks also considered promotion of multilateral policies catering to all sections of the society important. Think tanks from Nepal made recommendations to repatriate and reintegrate foreign migrant workers, ensure social protection, employment protection of the vulnerable groups, and to create livelihood and employment opportunities to increased unemployed populations due to the pandemic.

Shahid Minhas, Director and Head of Training at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (Pakistan) recommended a smart lockdown with a timeline. A “smart lockdown” was a strategy implemented in many places including Pakistan where there was no blanket policy of a lockdown, but rather, it differed across regions and industries in timings, intensity, permits to continue work, regional particularities etc. to achieve the aim of saving lives and livelihoods.’

Other recommendations included a comprehensive health strategy, an economic policy for the revival and survival of small enterprises and a youth task force based on volunteer work to ensure public awareness campaigns. This would take pressure off scarce government resources and promote civic engagement in times of crises. Other recommendations from Pakistani think tanks included putting more financial resources in the health sector to prevent recurrence of COVID-19 or any other pandemic, using digital resources for economic modeling and

recovery, and taking agricultural and agriculture-based industrial economic initiatives with the use of Geo-spatial and Big Data tools. Mahfuz Kabir, Research Director of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) (Bangladesh) made the following recommendations:’

- Redirect the public financing program to recover the economy of Bangladesh
- Revisit the relationship between financial services and production side of the economy
- Strengthen the cooperation with the international financial institutions (e.g., World Bank, IMF, and ADB) and global knowledge centers to fight economic losses of Covid-19 and how to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Other key recommendations from most South Asian countries included ensuring food security for the vulnerable, facilitating and creating job opportunities for the labor class, facilitating education for the poor, and ensuring mitigation of crises particularly for women and marginal communities. Think tanks from Sri Lanka particularly mentioned facilitating people with public welfare facilities, securing the freedom of right to live with dignity, considering digitization of institutions to maintain social distancing while continuing work without disruption. Center for Policy Research (India) noted the following recommendations for the Indian government:

- The first major challenge facing the government is preventing a loss in gains made on universal education and basic immunisation/early childhood development. The Accountability Initiative at the Centre for Policy Research is tracking the COVID-19 response at India’s lowest tier of administration, the districts. It seems like people are already feeling reluctant to immunise their children. The government will need to press into service more frontline workers who can convince them, and will need to motivate and incentivise the workers.
- Linked to this will be steering a shift in public attitudes and behaviour by establishing COVID-19 as a new normal. While most welfare programmes have a strong Information, Education and Communications component, funds remain largely unutilised. Behaviour change is complex, and thus the government’s public engagement strategy needs to be thoroughly thought out, and should make use of multiple, existing welfare programmes on health, education and sanitation.

- The third action will tie the above two and is linked to finances. With a sluggish economy comes the danger of eroding social gains. While the Government of India holds the purse strings, state governments are the primary spenders on welfare and last mile delivery. This arrangement is unsustainable, and hence a thorough review of the fiscal architecture will need to be acted on and the system be made more agile and responsive to local needs that fit a crisis.

## II. Central Asia

Various think tanks from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan made the following recommendations:

- Construction of additional hospitals
- More specialists in the National health system
- Support SMEs
- Stimulating consumer and business demand
- Providing strong support for basic industries
- Maintain a prudential fiscal policy for the government spending control
- Enhance testing capacity and provide social assistance, particularly to entrepreneurs.

## III. East and Southeast Asia

Various think tanks recommended formulating a well thought out strategy to combat a second-wave. Think tanks from Japan recommended strengthening hospital capacity, securing sufficient Personal Protective Equipment for medical workers and other essential workers, and regulating hospital procedures to prevent in-hospital infections. Malaysian think tanks suggested new economic stimulus measures to enable businesses to operate in the new normal - this includes financial subsidies to remodel the workspace to facilitate social distancing, implement e-commerce systems (cloud-based POS, webstore, etc), and e-wallet solutions. They also advocated for the development and implementation of new public infrastructure for the specific purpose of enabling social distancing in public areas and to carry out sterilization processes in a more efficient manner is necessary to facilitate the new normal - not only for the preservation of life, but also to create a renewed sense of confidence necessary to revitalize the economy.

Think tanks from Singapore and Hong Kong recommended better management of cross border flows of goods and people and international cooperation on financial and economic

support. Other recommendations from these organizations included focusing on addressing health and safety challenges and balancing this out with implementation of policy measures that help the society establish a 'new normalcy' while facilitating recovery of the economy. Anthea Haryoko, Head of External Relations at the Center for Indonesian Policy Studies (Indonesia) made the following recommendations regarding specific policy concerns:

- On food security: relax food import laws that ban imports of specific staple food commodities and/or require ministerial approval and numerous permits to import.
- On economic recovery: pass the 'Omnibus Bill' that aims to reduce regulatory barriers that prevent investors from entering and investing in the Indonesia market.
- Increase COVID19 testing and data collection of infections that will better inform policy decision making.'

On a similar note, Tetsushi Sonobe, Dean of the Asian Development Bank Institute (Japan), also made some recommendations:

- Managing waves of coronavirus infection by reinforcing the inspection system and boosting the mass production and delivery of curative drugs
- Accelerating the implementation of job retention and income support schemes and large and small business support schemes by the government and the central bank
- Planning large scale investments in infrastructure and human capital toward further digitalization and a new economic landscape that mitigates urban congestion.

## North America

The recommendations ranged from immediate to long-term and more sustainable solutions. There was a consensus on the need to incentivize the development of a vaccine. Nicolas Moës, Head of Operations of The Future Society suggested innovation prizes for scientists and innovators working on vaccines. Multiple organizations recommended different methods for contact tracing, expanding testing capabilities and geo-fencing active cases to contain the unprecedented spread in the region, particularly in the United States.

Think tanks from the United States specifically stressed the importance of valuing scientific recommendations and policies and establishing a permanent national pandemic authority. Stuart Umpleby, past President of the Executive Board of the American Society for Cybernetics, mentioned the need to improve the capacity to coordinate multidisciplinary scientific work by recognizing and supporting transdisciplinary scientific education and research. He specifically pointed towards involving representatives from systems science, cybernetics and other transdisciplinary fields in the work of National Academies of Science.

Echoing similar needs, think tanks from Mexico recommended formulating a comprehensive recovery plan including transfers and fiscal incentives for vulnerable families, the unemployed and SMEs, restructuring public finances, and implementing innovative social policies to tackle poverty and informal sector unemployment. American think tanks emphasized the need to address racial inequalities which have been accentuated by the pandemic. Think tanks from Canada also mentioned the need to address the unequal circumstances that make some populations more vulnerable to diseases.

Other recommendations included finding a way to counterbalance the cost induced by pandemic recovery without steep austerity measures and the need for greater transparency and accountability. To shoulder the economic shock, recommendations included reduction of income taxes for the bottom 90% of the population, loosening of monetary policy to stimulate consumption and investment, borrowing and validating investment plans to finance most proposed public works and advancing the start date of the public work in the timeline to avert an unnecessary demand-led deepening of the recession. Viv Nijhawan of New Canadian Media also suggested relaxing taxes and corporate reporting requirements to make it easier to comply with filing stipulations.

The Heritage Foundation (US) released a comprehensive plan of over 200 recommendations, including gradually returning to work, avoiding mass transit, self-isolation to reduce pressure on public resources, and raising awareness because civic freedoms in the US encourage citizens to do so. Some participants made specific recommendations to streamline the process of returning to work. Lisa Kaess, President of Atrium Advisors (US) suggested encouraging ongoing workforce flexibility and moving toward a 4-day standard workweek. She also suggested increasing support for energy and transport sectors to clean energy transformation as well as promoting short-term borrowing to combat the decline in consumption.

Some observers made more long-term recommendations. Brock Hinzmann, Chair of Silicon Valley Node of The Millennium Project highlighted the significance of re-establishing funding for critical thinking skills, empirical evidence, civics, and ethics in the national public educational system. He also suggested re-writing financial and securities regulations in a way that continues to encourage entrepreneurialism without resulting in disproportionate accumulation of wealth from ownership of intellectual property rights in the hands of the few.

Such measures would ensure that the current generation has the adequate tools to prevent and successfully combat future crises. Finally, another common theme was the emphasis on fostering global cooperation and improving social cohesion and the movement of ideas. This would be coupled with filtering an overload of information to glean useful and relevant information. Professor Emerita Anita Summers of The Wharton School suggested imposition of severe penalties for disinformation on the media to reduce this problem.

## Latin America

The most frequent recommendations from Latin American think tanks had to do with controlling the virus and economic recovery. With regards to controlling the virus, many responses were geared specifically towards bolstering the existing health systems that exist in the region. Think tanks gave this recommendation in order to deal with the current crisis in addition to helping deal with future pandemics. Clear and transparent communication of information about COVID and re-opening strategies was also recommended quite frequently to deal with the virus. With regards to economic recovery, a number of responses from think tanks in Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, and Guatemala mentioned SMEs specifically.

The focus on SMEs from these Latin American think tanks was consistent with another recommendation that was given by think tanks in a number of countries: supporting the most vulnerable populations from the virus. In addition to general economic recovery of the country at large by dealing with debt crises and GDP decreases, the focus of the Latin American think tanks overall was more on the common people. Think tanks in Argentina, Brazil, Curacao, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico all shared the recommendation of protecting vulnerable populations in various ways. Ana Lucia Blas of the Asociacion de Investigacion y Estudios Sociales in Guatemala and Jose Luis Chicoma

of the Ethos Public Policy Lab specifically mentioned securing the food supply of the country to achieve this end.

Finally, a handful of think tanks in Colombia, Curacao, Ecuador, and Peru suggested using various technological solutions in order to deal with COVID-related issues. Carlos Augusto Chacón of the Instituto de Ciencia Política in Colombia suggested the authorization of new gig-economy platforms such as Uber as part of a larger effort to open new sources of income and liberalize the economy in Colombia. This recommendation could provide an alternative way to protect the most vulnerable while also generating economic activity at the same time. In a similar vein, Bonnie Benesh of Think To Do Institute in Curacao and Elaine Ford of D&D International - Digital Democracy in Peru see closing the digital divide and access to the internet as a path to providing opportunity to vulnerable populations in the face of the pandemic. Benesh explicitly includes access to education during the pandemic being increased. Overall, Latin American think tanks recommend that technological innovations can help solve the problems of their countries.

### **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)**

Intersectional issues were the central theme of recommendations from the MENA region. Saudi Arabian think tanks stressed the importance of establishing an integrated energy, economy, and climate strategy in the wake of the problems caused by the pandemic. Saudi Arabian organizations also suggested encouraging G20 countries and other UN members to allocate the money and resources needed to foster international cooperation for the purpose of expediting virus vaccine processes. Participants from Libya and Tunisia discussed quarantine regulation in international travel and made recommendations to streamline it. Executive Director of Maghreb Economic Forum (MEF) (Tunisia), Mohamed Slim Bahrini, recommended designing a coherent and engaging crisis management plan with shared responsibilities between the government, private sector, and national organizations. This plan would include:

- Design and implementation of a National Business Continuity Plan to better prepare for a possible second wave of confinement.
- Consolidation of the country's resilience during the period after confinement and which could last more than 12 months. This medium-term crisis management plan should be followed by the adoption of a national recovery plan from late 2021 in alignment with the expected recovery on a global scale.

- Development of new primary sectors for the countries of the Maghreb (North Africa) to not lean on the traditional ones, i.e., tourism for Morocco and Tunisia, dependence on oil for Algeria, etc. Diversification of major economic sectors would avoid the collapse of the economy if faced in the future with the same tragedy and same restrictions we are living today.

Other recommendations from Tunisia included temporary exemption of taxes and credit facilitation to stimulate consumption and spending. Think tanks from Egypt also highlighted the importance of diversifying the economy and moving towards and supporting businesses to adapt to the ‘new normal’. This could be made possible by cultivating a bold occupational health and safety ecosystem all over the country.

Menassat for Research and Social Studies, a think tank based in Morocco, conducted research that is reflective of the health emergency development in Morocco. The survey aimed to understand the extent of individuals' awareness of the nature of the status quo, be it in terms of their perceptions, attitudes, or practices. Their team is currently pursuing research on the second wave which is accompanied by the second period of quarantine. The Moroccan Centre for Citizenship, Democracy, and Human Rights (Morocco) made the following recommendations:

- Provide the national economy with all the means to resist this crisis.
- Restoration of economic activity and conditions for an economic take-off in the post-crisis phase, both for businesses, as well as the benefit of vulnerable social strata: employees and households
- Create the conditions for a plan to revive the national economy by creating an amended Finance Bill.

Other recommendations from the country included a strategic recovery program which includes various social programs to deal with unemployment and action to reinforce the national research and development sector. The cause of supporting vulnerable populations was highlighted by all countries.

## Europe

### I. Western Europe

The main recommendations from Western European think tanks revolved around controlling the virus and economic recovery. Controlling the virus included recommendations such as increasing testing and monitoring to deal with current spikes and the “second wave” of COVID, funding for vaccines to overcome the current pandemic, and bolstering health capacities to help prevent future pandemics. Think tanks from Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, and Spain also gave recommendations for re-opening the economy, stressing the need to keep the virus in check while opening the economy safely.

Another recommendation many think tanks gave was for countries to unite and collaborate, both within their respective countries as well as with other governments. For example, Dr. Joachim Klerx of Austrian Institute of Technology recommended that Austria foster collaboration and knowledge sharing of public financed COVID-19 research, Virginia Mucchi of the European Centre for Development Policy Management in the Netherlands called for global solidarity, and Dr. Hans Born of Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance called for the Swiss government to unite the nation. Think tanks in Spain and the United Kingdom joined these institutions with varying calls for collaboration.

Other recommendations included asking governments to ensure democracy, the rule of law, and pushing back against populist reactions to lockdown measures from think tanks in France, Germany, and Greece respectively. French and German think tanks, joined by Dutch, Swiss, and British think tanks also recommended that governments take care of the disadvantaged or vulnerable populations in their country. In Germany, Rui Marques Pinto recommended support for immigrant workers in the country and Martina Kaiser recommended a more general “no person left behind” approach.

### II. Eastern Europe

For Eastern European think tanks, recommendations of health-related policies such as bolstering health care systems, containing the virus, and preparing for a second wave were ubiquitous. General economic recovery was also frequently recommended in vague terms. Think tanks were more specific in ways to help the most vulnerable in society. Georgia,

Hungary, Kosovo, Romania, Russia, and Serbia all recommended policies related to this goal. For example, Sena Maric of the European Policy Centre in Serbia recommended that Serbia address the growing socio-economic inequalities of Serbian society. Kosovo, Romania, and Russia all recommended policies related to dispersing benefits as quickly as possible, improving civil services, and providing comprehensive social support for those who could not support themselves.

Polish, Romanian, Russian, and Ukrainian think tanks all recommended policies specifically to help businesses. This assistance was usually geared towards SMEs and hard-hit industries. For example Malgorzata Bonikowska of the Centre for International Relations in Poland recommended direct support for SMEs and Polish tourism in the form of all tax reductions first before grants. Also in Poland, Paulina Gomulak of the Casimir Pulaski Foundation specifically recommended help for businesses in order to prevent layoffs. Oksana Kuziakiv of the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting in Ukraine mentioned support for microfirms and the self-employed, which was the only time self-employed individuals were mentioned by Eastern European think tanks.

Given the emergence of remote work and remote learning during the pandemic, it was unsurprising to see Romanian and Russian think tanks recommending policies related to it. For Cristian Ghinghes of the Romanian Academic Society in Romania, it is important that Romania provide the means for children to learn remotely. Assuring these capacities would assure education for these children. Alexey Kuznetsov of the Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences in Russia doesn't recommend any specific policies, but promotes the need for changes in legislation. Because remote work and learning is a new phenomenon, Russian law on the subject must be elaborated in order to meet any legal challenges the country may face related to it.

