

Illustrative questions for seminar discussions and essays

Subject: What has been the impact of COVID-19 on Global Sustainable Development?



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COVID-19 has taken industries and sectors, government, citizens and all sections of society into uncharted territory. Here we have used the theme of global sustainable development and considered the impact through the eyes of current events.

Q. Has the social and economic aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic put the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals decidedly beyond our reach?

Half of the 193 countries that adopted the SDG agenda in 2015 are not on track to achieve the goal on eradicating poverty. At least 8.2% of the world's population was living in extreme poverty (ie, on less than 1.90 US dollars per day) in 2019 and optimistic estimates projected this would decrease to 6.0% by 2030.

Source: [Prospects for global development goals to end-2020](#)

SDG 1 – NO POVERTY

SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY

Q. Will recent progress in critical areas such as reducing poverty and increasing women's paid employment be reversed?

Surveys by the WHO indicate that women comprise 70% of the global healthcare workforce. In the United States, women hold 76% of healthcare jobs, according to the Census Bureau, are more than 85% of the nursing workforce, and form two-thirds of respiratory therapists -- all of these are categories of workers most likely to be interacting with patients suffering from COVID-19.

Source: [Pandemic will widen major gender gaps](#)

SDG 13 – CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 8 – DECENT WORK & ECONOMIC GROWTH

Q. How will the economic imperatives of the COVID-19 crisis compete with the existential challenge of climate change?

How governments construct stimulus and economic response packages to avoid recession will have a longer-lasting effect on climate change than reduced emissions for a few months or even a year. Political leaders will face competing demands from different sectors for state support, especially those that employ large numbers of people.

Source: [COVID-19 global climate impact may be brief](#)

SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH & WELLBEING

SDG 10 – REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Q. The COVID-19 crisis has affected almost everyone, but not everyone equally: Will COVID-19 widen the health gaps between the developed and developing world?

Many themes are multidisciplinary

Secondary impact and exploitation

In the coming months it is almost certain jihadists will exploit the psychological impacts of rising poverty, marginalisation and political frustrations resulting from the COVID-triggered global recession. Jihadists aim to fuel local insurgencies, call for terrorist attacks abroad and recruit members.

Source: [Jihadist groups will exploit COVID-19 societal effects](#)

The politics of health inequality

High-income countries already have agreements with pharmaceutical companies for guaranteed access to vaccine candidates, pricing out lower-income countries. This will be marginally countered by global health institutions that will facilitate some access for low-income countries but will not cover the majority of the world's population.

Source: [Vaccine nationalism could prolong pandemic](#)

A growing digital divide

Growing adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) solutions for public service delivery will widen the existing gap between more and less capable states. Better-prepared governments will become more efficient and responsive as a result, while others will struggle with poor technology infrastructure and the lack of a qualified workforce.

Source: [Digital services will widen gap among states globally](#)