



A Quarterly Newsletter



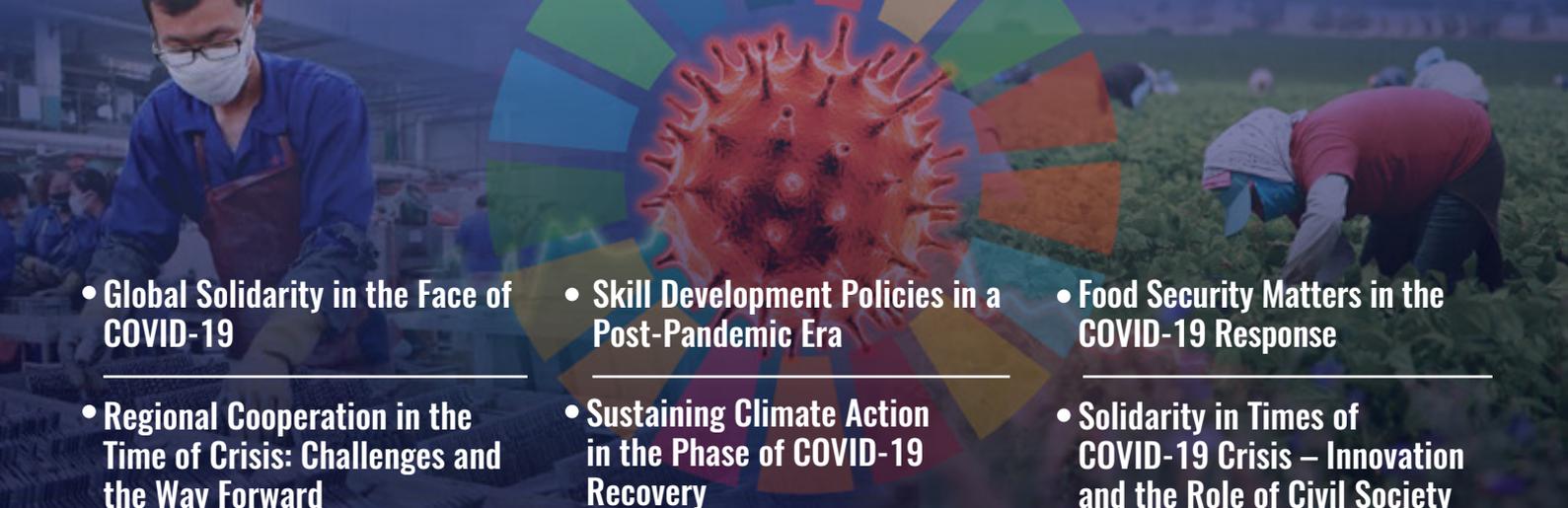
# SDGs DIGEST

The voice of the IsDB Community of Practice (CoP) on SDGs

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## DEVELOPMENT IN A POST-COVID-19 WORLD: MOVING BEYOND RECOVERY TOWARDS 2030



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- Regional Cooperation in the Time of Crisis: Challenges and the Way Forward

- Skill Development Policies in a Post-Pandemic Era
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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 12th edition of the SDGs Digest. We hope you had a safe and sound Eid Al-Adha break with your loved ones.

A century ago, the world was overtaken by two catastrophes. The well-known event—World War 1—which lasted roughly between 1914 and 1918, destroyed 13 million civilian lives while around 9 million perished in the battlefields. The war uprooted old regimes and led to the creation of a new global socio-economic system. Around the same time, the world was ravaged by a more sinister and invisible catastrophe: The Spanish Flu pandemic. Estimates suggest anywhere between 50 to 100 million lost their lives during this deadly pandemic.

Today, the world is grappling with a similar challenge, this time with a new insidious enemy called COVID-19. While the infection rate is nowhere near that of the Spanish Flu, COVID-19 has still disrupted all aspects of life, strangled many economies so far, and will likely cause further damage to the global economy before we start seeing any respite. Countries across the globe are experiencing the pandemic at varying intensities depending on the kinds of precautions they are enacting to combat it. But even those that were doing alright at first have slid into subsequent waves, leading the scientific community to reconsider the lessons learned from the early phases of the pandemic. This has created more uncertainty about the immediate future.

As the SDGs Community of Practice, we issued the 11th Newsletter with articles from you on the immediate disruption that the pandemic was causing, with predictions on how our business as a development institution may get affected. Many articles also looked into how various SDGs may be impacted in the short to medium term.

Three additional months further into the pandemic, the situation remains precarious. During this time, the Bank has continued to support the member countries under many disciplines by delivering critical resources to many countries through relevant "Response packages" under the SPRP, working with NGOs to address immediate needs and facilitating countries to share experiences and expertise through Reverse Linkages, among others.

In this context, the 12th Issue of the SDGs Digest is continuing to build on the theme of COVID-19, this time by providing a platform for colleagues and guest writers to share their articles on how they are responding to the fallout from the pandemic from their own sectoral vantage points. This issue's rich content includes articles on the Bank's efforts to raise additional financial resources to combat COVID-19 through the issuance of the Sustainability Sukuk, what entities like ICIEC are doing to restore trade and investment through their insurance schemes, what the future holds for SDGs related to poverty and hunger and how regional cooperation may be impacted in the near future due to the pandemic. In addition, guest writers from UN agencies such as UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Economic and Social Commission have provided their perspectives on the future of development as well as how progress on SDGs achievement may be impacted for regions like the Arab States.

We hope this issue will add value to the ongoing conversation about how development may be impacted in the short, medium and long terms and how this "Decade of Action" may be shaped due to the pandemic. We thank all the authors for their articles and look forward to more contributions for future editions.

SDGs Digest is a Newsletter published by the SDGs Community of Practice (CoP) in IsDB Group. You can submit your articles, feedback, book reviews, reports and other topics related to the SDGs via [SDGsCoP@isdb.org](mailto:SDGsCoP@isdb.org)

# Development in a Post-COVID-19 World: Moving Beyond Recovery Towards 2030

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a fresh dimension in the global effort towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for development. It has strengthened the effort of leading policymakers, development experts and all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to engage in more soul-searching for answers to the questions that keep arising since the outbreak of the pandemic.

At least from the perspective of the Community of Practice on SDGs at the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, there is a lot of momentum in discussing how the development community can contribute in scaling-up the debate about recovery Post-COVID-19. This debate partly informed the decision to organize the 12th Open Dialogue of the SDGs Community of Practice with theme "Development in a Post-COVID-19 World: Moving Beyond Recovery Towards 2030."

The virtual Open Dialogue was a worthwhile journey with the participation of two leaders from the development community; President of IsDB, Dr. Bandar Hajjar, and the Administrator of UNDP, Mr. Achim Steiner as the keynote speaker. The session was moderated by the IsDB Special Envoy on SDGs, Dr. Rami Ahmad.

The webinar kicked-off with a cordial conversation between the president of IsDB Dr. Bandar Hajjar and the UNDP Administrator Mr. Achim Steiner. "The world is facing unprecedented challenges, and we have a duty to ensure that no one is left behind," stated Dr. Hajjar in his opening remarks. He highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic is a turning point in our lives, as such, we need a paradigm shift on how we approach development.

MDBs must focus on enhancing global citizenship. The world in post COVID-19 needs an individual who is aware of the challenges and opportunities facing the world

- IsDB President



Dr. Bandar Hajjar, IsDB President



Mr. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator



Dr. Rami Ahmad, IsDB Special Envoy on SDGs

To do that successfully, the IsDB president opined that focus should be on vulnerable populations, working on building capacity and resilience as well as ensuring an integrated and coordinated approach that is needed to achieve this onerous objective.



As chair of the meetings of heads of MDBs, Dr. Hajjar had a valuable suggestion for multilateral financial institutions. "MDBs must focus on enhancing global citizenship. It is becoming a wide subject of discussion especially in education," he said. But who are the global citizens? Dr. Hajjar proposed an answer: "global citizen is becoming a widespread topic in higher education. The world



in post COVID-19 needs an individual who is aware of the challenges and opportunities facing the world, and has a sense of his role in his inbuilt knowledge and skills."

Such a citizen is an important player in transforming our world into a more sustainable and habitable environment. Partnerships and resource mobilization are essential pillars in oiling the machinery for the realization of the global goals. Several institutions have deployed the power of what is traditionally called Public, Private, Partnership (PPP). But the president of IsDB felt that we need to

**It should not be normal to go back to normal beyond COVID-19**

- Rami Ahmad

transition from PPP to 5Ps, meaning, Public, Private, Philanthropic, People, Partnership. The view of Dr. Hajjar is that we have been focusing on government too much in addressing development challenges; looking forward we should invest our effort in building individuals who believe that we are working as a global community rather than focusing on nations only.



Following the opening remarks by the IsDB President, Dr. Bandar Hajjar, it was the turn of Mr. Achim Steiner who started the discussion by appreciating the effort of IsDB in adopting the SDGs as a development priority. He then dwelled into the challenges posed by COVID-19 globally.

"The year 2020 will be a watershed in the history books. COVID19 is a health crisis, it is an economic crisis. For the first time in 30 years we are seeing human development going down. The schooling of 1.5 billion children is affected globally," Mr. Steiner stated.



He went on to elaborate by saying that what is happening with COVID-19 is a remarkable fast-forward of the digitization of the global economy and services, e-government and the use of artificial intelligence. We are seeing the explosion of digital opportunities which will be useful in tracking vulnerable communities for initiatives like cash transfer programs. This according to Mr. Steiner will

**The year 2020 will be a watershed in the history books. COVID-19 is a health crisis, it is an economic crisis. For the first time in 30 years we are seeing human development going down**

- Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator

help in maintaining the functionality of government in the middle of lockdown. We need to realize that



technology during COVID-19 should not be something that is available to some and not others.

He particularly lamented that online learning opportunities do not exist in many developing countries. As a solution to this important question on digital divide, Mr. Steiner asks what prevents the development community from coming up with an initiative in 2020 that will say we will connect all schools in the next five years with digital broadband. It is perfectly achievable and will change the face of education and will address the challenge of inequality

The UNDP Administrator queried those who are becoming pessimistic about the prospects of the SDGs; stating that those who think it is time to bury the SDGs and put them in their grave have missed the moment. The SDGs are a compass that can help lead us out of this crisis.

# IsDB's Debut Sustainability Sukuk: Countering the Impact of COVID-19



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In a world reeling with the global impact of the novel coronavirus, the response by IsDB was swift and multi-pronged. The robust 3Rs - Respond, Restore and Restart – serve as an integrated approach for Member Countries to fight against COVID-19 and counter the short, medium and long-term impacts of the virus.

In the search for innovative financing instruments that could mobilize resources from the global capital markets and complement the 3Rs approach, the Finance Complex pursued the development of a Sustainability Sukuk concept for the first time ever. This initiative was powered by the Sustainable Finance Framework (SFF) of IsDB, which was created in late 2019 in close collaboration with the Country Programs Complex and enabled us to issue the Bank's inaugural Green Sukuk which raised €1 billion for green projects in Member Countries. The Green Sukuk was a breakthrough transaction and was recently awarded as a Market Pioneering trade by the London-based Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI).

The Sustainability Sukuk was the second innovative issuance under the SFF, mobilizing US\$ 1.5 billion from a wide range of investors. The proceeds will be earmarked to finance 'social' projects of IsDB under the 3Rs approach, specifically



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for projects that enhance healthcare systems (R1 and SDG-3) as well as support employment generation in the Member Countries (R2 and SDG-8).

For eligibility under the Sustainability Sukuk, the projects are screened and selected as per the stringent criteria of the 'Sustainability Bond Principles' as set by the International Capital Market Association (ICMA). In fact, the SFF was created in line with ICMA's globally accepted standards and it was awarded a Medium-Green Shading by an external rating provider. This rating is in line with our global MDB peers such as the IFC and AfDB. At the same time, IsDB also secured a strong (low) ESG risk-rating from another external rating provider, which evaluated the Bank on its Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) policies. These high credentials demonstrate to investors, the strong commitment of IsDB towards mainstreaming SDG-financing with innovative marketable instruments such as the Sustainability Sukuk.

As the global leader in Islamic finance, IsDB has yet again played a pioneering role, this time by creating a solution that provides a platform to global investors to make a return on their investment along with social impact on the ground in IsDB Member Countries. This is another successful example of an Islamic financial product that caters to investor demands and makes a positive impact at the same time. At the industry level, Islamic financial institutions would do well with similar offerings to further deepen the thematic Sukuk market segment and attract Socially Responsible Investments (SRI) and ESG investors who prefer to deploy their cash for impact and development.

The supposed "Decade of Action" for the Global Goals has commenced with a pandemic, one which has wrought unprecedented health and financial crises across IsDB Member Countries, threatening to cut back the progress made by them towards the SDGs. This extraordinary circumstance calls for innovative solutions to tackle the aftermath of the disease by (a) boosting the response capacity of Member Countries, (b) ensuring their recovery on the path to the SDGs, and (c) investing to improve preparedness for future crises with the ultimate objective of building resilient economies.

With the first-ever Sustainability Sukuk issuance in the global capital markets, IsDB has progressively answered this call.

## IsDB Recognized as Market Pioneer for Green Sukuk



The 5<sup>th</sup> Green Bond Pioneer Awards by the London-based Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI) recognized the debut Green Sukuk of IsDB as a market-making trade in the region as IsDB was awarded a **"New Market Pioneer – Saudi Arabia"** for the industry milestone.



The Green Sukuk, which raised €1 billion in November 2019, is the first AAA-rated Green Sukuk in the global capital markets, and it was issued based on the newly created Sustainable Finance Framework of the Bank. The Framework was built around the global standards of Green Bond Principles, Social Bond Principles and Sustainability Bond Principles. It enables IsDB to issue various labelled Sukuk to mobilize funds towards specific SDG-focused interventions in IsDB member countries.

The recognition by CBI is yet another endorsement of IsDB's determination in pursuing innovative Islamic financial instruments and mainstreaming them for the resource mobilization track towards achieving the SDGs.

# Global Solidarity in the Face of COVID-19



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The COVID-19 pandemic has upended almost every aspects of life as we know it. Even those countries that are supposed to have the means to manage the spread and mitigate the effects are struggling.

Besides the US\$5 trillion stimulus package that the G20 economies agreed to deal with the pandemic, individual countries are also devising various measures to shore up their health care systems, stabilize their economies, and assist affected workers and businesses.

Even before the full brunt of the coronavirus outbreak reached some of the poorest countries, the economic impacts are already being felt. With declining global demand for raw materials, breakdown of global supply chain, and mounting debt burden, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to exceed US\$220 billion.

## The urgent shouldn't crowd out the important

With greater uncertainty and fear of global recession looming, governments are looking for resources needed to lessen the socio-economic pains of the crisis. In this process, official development assistance (ODA) won't be spared and could come under increased scrutiny.

Decisions made now will have potentially devastating – or transformative – impact for years to come. Despite the economic and political pressure, we must protect ODA, which is needed more than ever.

The spread of COVID-19, especially in places with weak governance and health infrastructures is expected to be overwhelming if the international community does not act now.

In sub-Saharan Africa, many countries have the lowest number of physicians per

capita in the world while some experience ongoing conflicts, making it difficult to fight the virus.

## Collateral impact

The collateral impact of COVID-19 on health, education and nutrition systems will be extremely damaging, and in many cases irreversible, for children and society at large. And when the world opens up again, the resilience of the weakest health systems will dictate how well we do against future threats.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres, argued that, “this human crisis demands coordinated, decisive, inclusive and innovative policy action—and maximum financial and technical support for the poorest and most vulnerable people and countries.”

It is critical for the international community to fulfil the humanitarian appeal for COVID-19 response while protecting existing commitments to long-term development and other ‘silent’ emergencies.

Doing so will help protect the most vulnerable people from being exposed to the effects of COVID-19 and preserve hard-earned development gains in fighting global poverty and expanding basic services.

Left to their own devices, fragile nations may risk the breakdown of socio-political order, civil unrest and state collapse, further exacerbating the dire situation.

## A humanitarian and development crisis

COVID-19 is not only a humanitarian crisis, but also a development crisis. Development agencies are supporting countries to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the crisis.

The effectiveness of their response to certain degree depends on the flexibility afforded to them in funding and operational procedures.

To tackle this uniquely complex health and development crisis, the adequacy and flexibility of funding to development agencies are pivotal. Flexible “core” funding is already making a difference in the COVID-19 response to reach people in need faster, empower local actors, deploy essential supplies to the frontline, and protect the most vulnerable – children, refugees, women.

## Immediately responding to threats

This enabled the communities to practice due diligence and self-driven discretion to immediately respond to threats of the pandemic, while waiting for the pledged assistance to arrive. For instance, in Nigeria, funding flexibility allowed UNICEF to come up with an innovative solution to fight misinformation around COVID-19 while UNDP was able to support the government double the ventilator capacity in the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a devastating crisis in history. But it also posits an opportunity to remind the global community why multilateralism is vital to securing the world's peace, security, and prosperity.

We witness how the health crisis of today's globalized world interlinks global economy, geopolitics, and social values.



Offloading ventilators and medical supplies at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja, Nigeria, April 2020. Funding flexibility allowed UNDP to support the government to double the ventilator capacity in the country. Photo: UNDP Nigeria/Ngele Ali

# Why the Arab Region Will Not Achieve the SDGs by 2030 Without a Transformation



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Despite significant differences between Arab economies, their natural resources or security situation, they share many barriers to the achievement of the SDGs. In the first report of its kind in the region, the Arab Sustainable Development Report 2020 argues that the region will not achieve the SDGs by 2030 if these structural barriers are not dismantled. While the region will need to mobilize additional resources, both domestic and external, those will not accelerate progress without transformation in the approach to development.

In reviewing the 17 SDGs for the region's 22 countries, the report provides a quantitative and qualitative assessment, using the SDGs indicator framework and building on the expert knowledge of UN entities and development practitioners working in the region. For each SDG the report presents striking facts, reviews the data coverage, identifies the barriers to progress and the groups and categories at risk of being left behind, and provides entry points to accelerate progress.

While progress has been made in the region on some SDG targets, the situational analysis shows that the region is not on track. This diagnosis is

in line with the global picture. However, the region is lagging significantly behind on a number of critical targets and indicators, including those related to employment, the economic and political participation of women, renewable energy (despite notable efforts in some countries), clean cities, violence against children, and reducing inequality. The report is full of numbers and facts that set the region woefully behind others on the global stage. In addition, conflict and displacement have had a devastating impact on development gains and the damage to lives, livelihoods communities and infrastructure will continue to reverberate for generations to come.

Taking a regional lens, the report formulates six entry points for transformation. Among them is enhancing integrated policy making. SDG by SDG, the analysis shows where the interlinkages are among the goals and dimensions and how policies must address those interlinkages to achieve targets. Another entry point is full adherence to human rights not only in the legal and political impediments to equal participation and access, but also in addressing social and cultural norms that marginalize or exclude individuals and groups. And in a region with the highest levels of youth unemployment and one of the lowest rates of expenditure on Research and Development globally, the report calls for a re-envisioning of education to prioritize critical thinking, individual-led learning and innovation, and allow people to co-lead the transformation towards more sustainable and inclusive societies.

As COVID-19 amplifies development needs and challenges across the globe, the structural weaknesses in Arab economies and governance structures become more striking. The need is even

This will require political will and additional resources. But in practice, it also demands a different approach to development thinking, planning and implementation. ASDR 2020 offers the initial analysis and points the way forward goal by goal. The region cannot wait.

more urgent now to dismantle barriers to achieving the SDGs and transform the approach to development. Rentier economies of the region have proven particularly vulnerable to the crises caused by this pandemic. Limited and fragmented social protection systems will push millions more into poverty. Health systems that have long under-prioritized primary preventative care are struggling to cope. And millions of refugees and the displaced, in addition to millions in rural areas and urban slums, cannot access adequate water and sanitation services.

Therefore, the region cannot aim only to accelerate. It must dismantle the barriers that cut across the SDGs and block or slow down progress. This will require political will and additional resources. But in practice, it also demands a different approach to development thinking, planning and implementation. ASDR 2020 offers the initial analysis and points the way forward goal by goal. The region cannot wait.

Our effective response to the public health crisis should be key to resolving the ensuing economic, humanitarian and development challenges.

## A complex reality

Understanding this interlinked and complex reality of COVID-19, governments need to work together closely to take coordinated actions and share scientific information, resources and expertise.

It is this strong motion for collaboration that underpins the UN agencies commitment to reinforce the humanitarian-development nexus to jointly respond to the COVID-19 crisis, working closely through the UN Crisis team, humanitarian response plan, UN Response and Recovery Fund for COVID-19.

In Guinea-Bissau, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, and IOM joined hands to help build isolation facilities and triage space,

and procure necessary equipment for COVID-19, both for the national hospital as well as for the re-modelling of the UN clinic.

With strong solidarity and effective cooperation, the international community will not only arrest COVID-19, but also use the emergency to build back better health systems and a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

# Finding Opportunity in Crisis: ICIEC Pushes to Restore Trade and Investment



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The COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to the trajectory of sustainable development in the OIC Member Countries and beyond. The economic shocks have been manifold, including a dramatic drop in demand, disrupted supply chains, and plummeting energy prices, all of which have had significant effects on commodity driven OIC economies. ICIEC is committed to supporting OIC countries and companies through this unprecedented crisis.

ICIEC's trade credit and political risk insurance solutions will play a crucial role in helping OIC economies respond to the crisis, restore economic activity, and restart international trade, in support of the IsDB Group's 3 R's approach to tackling the social and economic effects of COVID-19. In doing so, we will work towards ensuring that the pace of development in OIC countries is restored, and that progress along the path towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is not derailed.

With a global GDP contraction of 3% and a trade contraction between 13 and 32% estimated for the year 2020, trade credit and political risk insurance, is more important than ever. Heightened perception of risk by financial institutions and trade partners has resulted in financing from private banks to tighten and trade volumes to plummet. The role of export credit agencies (ECAs) and multilateral financial institutions is vital in this environment, as they unlock finance for strategic exports, imports and investments, which otherwise would not make their way across borders. This unique function provided by ECAs in particular is essential to ensure that the stress on cashflow is alleviated and

that defaults on loans are minimized. To this effect, ICIEC, as part of the IsDB's Strategic Preparedness and Response Facility, has extended an initial amount of USD 150 million of credit and political risk insurance to sustain imports of strategic commodities, provide investment protection, and to minimize volatility. These funds will provide enhanced support to its 47 member countries.

In addition to its enhanced insurance coverage, many of ICIEC's recent transactions are directly supporting the immediate need for better access to healthcare, which is very critical in fighting the pandemic. In Côte d'Ivoire, ICIEC has signed an EUR 143 million deal with Deutsche Bank to fund the construction of two new hospitals and 5 new medical units across five hospitals. The project supports Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan and ensures that the Ivorian people have better access to quality healthcare.

ICIEC has also provided USD 2.3 million of non-payment insurance as part of an ongoing program with the Government of Punjab in Pakistan to enable the state to purchase and install high-end medical equipment to District Headquarters hospitals. Through enhancing medical and healthcare facilities, ICIEC is directly contributing to the Punjab Health Reforms Roadmap, which was initiated to improve the quality of healthcare facilities in Pakistan's most populous province.

ICIEC's trade credit and political risk insurance solutions will play a crucial role in helping OIC economies respond to the crisis, restore economic activity, and restart international trade, in support of the IsDB Group's 3 R's approach to tackling the social and economic effects of COVID-19

These projects highlight our tangible efforts towards a sustainable recovery and a return to vibrancy in international trade and investment. ICIEC's decades of experience working in the field of risk show us that in crisis there is opportunity, and if we come together in solidarity and shared purpose, we can use this challenge to redouble our efforts. As we move forward as an institution, and as part of a global community, we have the rare opportunity to choose the type of economy we want to rebuild. For our part, we will push forward with a focus on developing a healthier, more sustainable, and prosperous future.



# Supporting Member Countries (MCs) to Achieve Low Carbon, Climate Resilient Development



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Leading to the Paris Agreement, reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) clearly indicate that without a global response to the threat of climate change, any current or future efforts for poverty eradication and sustainable development will be largely jeopardized by such a multi-faceted threat. In the process of developing the IsDB Climate Change Policy (CCP), the key climate vulnerabilities related to MCs were identified, clearly stressing the serious challenges to sustainable development faced by these MCs of which 56 out of the 57 are signatory to the Paris Agreement.

As a Multilateral Development Bank (MDB), IsDB is working with its peers to ensure that as part of its core development mandate, climate action in its operations is expanded and deepened, in alignment with the Paris Agreement, and that it actively supports a future of low-carbon and climate resilient development for its MCs. It is therefore imperative that IsDB support to countries is informed by reliable climate information, including on climate-related risks and opportunities. Being Climate informed entails having credible science-based climate scenarios at

country and local level, in addition to project and sector-level climate risks analyses and vulnerability assessments. The assessment of the costs of climate change at country, sector or project level also provides essential information to ensure that the most cost-effective investments are made for low-carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable development in member countries.

Despite the global momentum and all commitments made to curb the current trends of greenhouse gas emissions and increase the resilience of human and natural systems, the need for making the business case for "green" low-emission and climate resilient investments to decision-makers in IsDB member countries is increasingly relevant. The achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) requires large investments in many sectors, with the constraints of limited government budgets, and the reality of climate change should not only be dealt with by IsDB MCs as the threat it is but also as an opportunity for a more sustainable economic growth.

Climate resilient pathways should be understood as development trajectories that combine both adaptation and mitigation through effective institutional structures and shall:

- (i) be a continuous, iterative and evolving process that promotes innovation;
- (ii) be aimed at managing changes in the climate that affect development, by strengthening adaptive capacity and reducing present and future vulnerability;
- (iii) use participatory mechanisms to achieve effectiveness in mitigating and adapting to climate change; and
- (iv) facilitate and promote transformational changes in threatened systems.

The concept of Low Carbon Development Strategies (LCDS) has been introduced by the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC as a common but differentiated approach to meet the overall emissions reduction objectives. This has been part of the foundational articles of the convention: "Policies and measures to protect the climate system against human-induced change should be appropriate for the specific conditions of each Party and should be integrated with national development programmes, taking into account that economic development is essential for adopting measures to address climate change."

There may be intersections – positive and negative – between climate-resilient development and the general objective of the Paris Agreement and low-carbon development, e.g. projects in the context of energy security, land use for biofuels, desalination, etc. In response to this, MDBs will have to carefully prioritize and design their projects in a manner that causes no harm for both climate-resilient and low-carbon development. There may also be intersections with the Agenda for Sustainable Development and respective SDGs. Sustainable development is inherently connected with climate-resilient development pathways, since it requires managing threats and risks to development, including climate change. In many places, sustainable development will only be achieved if the pursued development pathways are resilient to the negative effects of climate change.

For activities to be consistent with a climate resilient development pathway, they should contribute to: (i) tackle the long-term effects of climate change and reduce current and future climate-related vulnerabilities or (ii) ensure an effective and sustained management of climate-related risks. A few principles for long-term climate-resilient pathways could be:

- (i) Information and flexibility: support to countries should be informed by



integrated climate scenario planning catering for long time frames, sound cost-benefit and trade-offs analyses to address slow-onset climate impacts and extreme events while recognizing uncertainties;

- (ii) Measurement and Learning: long-term (sustainable) development monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be supported, which should integrate resilience metrics while enabling learning and knowledge capture and dissemination;
- (iii) Capacities: the enhancement of national institutions to increase their capacities to mainstream adaptation and mitigation in development plans and policies including at sector level and implement climate action with adequate knowledge on available tools and technologies;
- (iv) Finance: mobilization of financial resources to support long-term climate-resilient development strategies including leveraging opportunities for climate finance from sovereign and non-sovereign funding as well as private investment.

To help MCs move towards greener low carbon and resilient economic development pathways, and as part of its upstream country dialogue and engagement, IsDB will work to support its MCs in developing their low carbon development strategies and investment plans at different levels. This upstream work is expected to contribute to shifting IsDB's projects pipeline towards more green investments to further support MCs in their low-carbon, climate-resilient development. Such support would be in line with Pillars 2 and 3 of IsDB Climate Change Policy and 2020-2025 Action Plan. Namely, "Promoting Member Country Climate Change Resilience" and "Supporting Member Countries Transition to Green Economy/Low-Carbon Transition".



## Evaluations During COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Opportunities



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The COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant imposition of travel restrictions as well as IsDB's administrative arrangement for staff to work from home since March 2020, posed new challenges to the Operations Evaluation Department, the main challenge being inability to conduct site visits to collect primary data. The challenge is exacerbated by the fact that the IsDB is working in diversified constituency of four continents with different pandemic levels and response measures adopted by the member countries of the IsDB. Meanwhile, in crisis situations, program managers are concerned about keeping program activities on track in the mist of the crisis, the short-term reaction to the crisis distracts their attention from pursuing their long-term operational goals. This development makes evaluation even much more needed to provide strategic guidance.

In view of the challenges and measures to mitigate the impact of current crisis on its business, the OED accordingly revised its annual work program to refocus on priority evaluations and knowledge products, while putting on hold all evaluation efforts requiring travel. In its stead, the focus is being shifted to desk-based reviews, although the option of collecting data through virtual means has been explored for few cases. Moreover, the use of online tools to disseminate evaluation knowledge

has been intensified with many dissemination fora for high level evaluations being conducted virtually. The use of online tools to disseminate evaluation knowledge has been intensified with many dissemination events for high level evaluations conducted virtually.

The above notwithstanding, the crisis has provided the OED a greater opportunity to share with leadership of the Bank, what has worked, what did not, and what has been learnt, and most importantly, an opportunity to look in to how the Bank can engage with the clients better moving forward. In this regard, a synthesis of lessons learnt from the Bank's past experiences over the last five years was timeously prepared upon management request. These lessons provided guidance to operations on design of impactful interventions in MCs. The trigger by the increased demand from the management side for evidences and lessons from our previous emergency responses also led to the preparation of a flyer on Lessons Learned from the Special Evaluation of the Bank's emergency response to the Ebola Crisis in West Africa to guide the design of the COVID-19 response interventions and their successful implementation. As the Bank is shaping its crisis response, there is also a clear need for shaping the results measurement framework for the crisis response program so that we can precisely know whether the crisis response is going to be successful.

Overall, beyond the immediate crisis response, the COVID-19 Pandemic should be the impetus to sustain the gains and accelerate the implementation of long overdue results based measures to set the world on a more sustainable development path and make the global economy more resilient to future shocks.

# New Frontier of Islamic Banking & Finance is a Prodigy of SDGs Agenda



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Nowadays, Islamic banking and finance industry witnesses a great evolution, moving away steadily from form to substance orientation. Many offerings of Islamic financial institutions are now progressively inclined to bring Waqf, Zakat and Sadaqah as complementary components to the existing Shariah compliant products. It demonstrates the life cycle of the industry is moving positively to its next level. The rigorous efforts from stakeholders namely industry regulators, players and researchers are equally eminent to this great milestone. Islamic capital market follows the same trend, particularly in Sukuk product. This is substantiated by structuring and execution works of sovereign and corporate Sukuk, which have been going beyond the ordinary. Apart from advancing plain vanilla to hybrid format (i.e. Ijarah to Wakalah) and promoting innovation from pure Islamic debt to quasi instrument (i.e. plain Sukuk to convertible / exchangeable Sukuk), there have been growing efforts to embed impact element, giving rise to the proliferation of Green Sukuk and Sustainable and Responsible Investment ("SRI") Sukuk. They become ubiquitous products in the market, which emphasize more on substance. One could not deny that the impetus to this predominant evolution is inarguably amongst the results of the Sustainable Development Goals ("SDGs") advocacy efforts, in mobilizing alternative resources to bridge its huge financial gap.

Partnership amongst the market leaders require more intensification to enable programming, resource mobilization and implementation efforts for these Islamic Social Finance resources (i.e. Zakat, Waqf and Sadaqah) could be regulated

systematically. The good case study for the eminent partnership in this space was the collaboration between IsDB and UNICEF in developing the USD250 million Global Muslim Philanthropic Fund for Children ("GMPF"). Leveraging on the respective strengths, GMPF was successfully launched during the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019, to mobilise Zakat and grant resources in support of blended financing for multi-sectoral developmental projects for both institutions, which are in line with the SDGs. Another good example was Cash Waqf-Linked Sukuk ("CWLS") issued by the Government of Indonesia last year with a minimum issuance size of fifty billion rupiah. It was fully subscribed from Waqf resource. The product is worthwhile for further replication by other countries, appreciating its innovative features in developing Waqf products. Firstly, the



**UNICEF and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) launched an innovative fund that will open new opportunities for Muslim philanthropy to reach the millions of children currently in need of humanitarian support and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

feature of capital preservation by way of governments guarantee is very important to allow the utilization of CWLS proceeds. Under the Shariah requirement, Waqf property needs to be conserved at all time. With no guarantee element, the Waqf properties could be subject to possible losses. That is the main reason for the traditional Waqf model, only return derived from investment of Waqf capital is utilized

The good case study for the eminent partnership in this space was the collaboration between IsDB and UNICEF in developing the USD250 million Global Muslim Philanthropic Fund for Children ("GMPF").

for project, not the capital itself. Secondly, CWLS profits are forfeited for utilization of community-based projects.

Likewise, it is equally interesting to illustrate the evolution in the Sukuk space. The world's first global corporate Sukuk issued in 2001 out of Labuan, Malaysia, showcasing Ijarah principle as the preferred one. Since then, Malaysia issued another the world's first global sovereign Sukuk in 2002, United Arab Emirates followed suit in 2003 as well as the German Federal State of Saxony Anhalt in 2004. The IsDB issued the world's first supranational Sukuk in 2003. One obvious tenet to note that all the pioneered Sukuk issuances above applied the globally accepted Shariah principle, which is Ijarah. Over the years, more innovation had taken place, bringing other Shariah principles (i.e. Istisna', Commodity Murabahah, Musyarakah, Wakalah). The trend continued till February 2008, when the market was stunned with the high-level criticism made by the Chairman of the board of scholars at the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions AAOIFI back then, Mufti Taqi Usmani. He announced that more than 85% of the Sukuk globally were not Shariah compliant. The critic distorted phenomenally the Sukuk growth, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Countries. That was the turning point, when Sukuk Ijarah regained the market confidence. Sukuk Wakalah Bil Isthismar

# التعليم .. قائد التنمية

المال العام، وحتى أنظمة الري المُبتكرة. وذلك لأن نجاح الفرد في دنيا لا يقتصر على حياته الدنيا فقط، بل يُقاس بصلاح دنياه وأخريته. وبالتالي يحرص المؤمن في امتداد أثره النافع بما يتجاوز حدوده الشخصية (الجسدية، الزمانية، المكانية، المجتمعية) لِيُسهم في نفع العالمين حاضراً ومستقبلاً.

وبمفهومنا الحديث للتمكين (Empowerment) والتدريب (Training) والإرشاد (Counseling) نستذكر إرشاد المصطفى صلى الله عليه وسلم (متضماً تهيئاً مهنيًا) لمن جاءه يسأله مالاً لسد حاجته، حيث وجهه عليه الصلاة والسلام خطوة بخطوة، فباع ذلك الرجل بعضاً مما في منزله وأشترى ما يحتاج به ... ثم أمره أن يحتطب ولا يرجع إليه عليه السلام مرة أخرى إلا بعد 15 يوم ... وبالتبعية حظي الرجل بدورة تأهيل مهني (ويلاحظه بذلك المُعَلِّم). اللهم صلي وسلم وبارك على مُعَلِّم الناس الخير.

لقد نجحت سنغافورة في بناء نهضتها الحديثة عندما ركزت على: "تنمية المورد الطبيعي الوحيد الذي تمتلكه سنغافورة، وهو شعبها" حسب تعبير مؤسسها لي كوان يو. ومعلوم مدى تميّز نظام التعليم في سنغافورة من حيث الجودة وكفاءة إعداد الطلاب، حيث تصدر سنغافورة العديد من أنظمة تصنيف التعليم الدولية ومنها تصنيف منظمة التعاون والتنمية الاقتصادية (OECD).

ختاماً، في ظل التوجه المتزايد نحو التعليم الإلكتروني بعد جائحة كورونا، فإن الأمر يستدعي البحث عن وسائل فعّالة لتعزيز وتهديب السلوك وتنمية المهارات الشخصية في بيئة التعليم عن بُعد التي تختلف عن بيئة التعليم التقليدي من حيث التواصل البشري المباشر بين المُعلِّم والمُتعلِّم.

عندما نعلّم فرداً، فإننا نزرع بذرة لعائلة متعلّمة يخرج منها الطبيب والمهندس ورائد الأعمال.

"التعليم هو أقوى سلاح يمكنك استخدامه لتغيير العالم" مانديلا.

"التعليم هو جواز السفر للمستقبل، فإن الغد ينتمي لأولئك الذين يعدون له اليوم".

"الزراعة تسد الجوع، والصناعة توفر الاحتياجات، لكن التعليم يزرع ويصنع وطناً".

الحديث هنا عن التعليم بمفهومه الواسع الذي يشمل اكتساب المعارف وتهذيب السلوك وتنمية المهارات الشخصية والتأهيل المهني.

"طلبت الأدب ثلاثين سنة، وطلبت العلم عشرين سنة" الإمام عبد الله بن المبارك رحمه الله.

يسمى التعليم عندما يقترن بالأخلاق مما يوجّه التطور نحو الخير العام و«المُستدام». وللخبرة المتأصلة في الدين الإسلامي برعت حضارتنا الإسلامية من حيث «الاستدامة» في مجالات مختلفة، منتجة أنظمة إدارية وأنظمة حقوق وتفاضي ودواوين الإدارة والمحاسبة العامة وحفظ



محمد بن طلال سمسيم

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أهداف التنمية المستدامة (Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)) التي تعتمدها الأمم المتحدة منذ 2015م لإنهاء الفقر وحماية الكوكب وضمان تمتع جميع الناس بالسلام والازدهار بحلول عام 2030، تشمل على (17) بنداً يجب العمل عليها معاً لتحقيق التنمية المُستدامة التي تفي باحتياجات الحاضر وفي نفس الوقت لا تستنزف الموارد وتضمن حقوق الأجيال القادمة لتستطيع الوفاء باحتياجاتها.

يركّز الهدف الرابع منها على: "ضمان التعليم الجيد المُنصف والشامل للجميع وتعزيز فرص التعلّم مدى الحياة للجميع".

ورغم أهمية جميع مجالات التنمية المستدامة، إلا أن للتعليم الدور الحاسم ويزبر ذلك بجلاء عند استقراء حضارات الأمم ونهضات الشعوب والدول قديماً وحديثاً.

العلم يبني بيوتاً لا عماد لها ... والجهل يهدم بيت العز والكرم

العلم أعلى من المال منزلة ... لأنه حافظُ والمال محفوظ

also gained momentum afterwards. Irrespective the trajectory growth of the global Sukuk market for almost 15-years since 2001, the valid question remains unanswered, how the Sukuk proceeds could really give significant impacts to a community at large?

The SDGs, set in 2015 by the United Nations ("UN") General Assembly has brought more unity and cooperation between international organizations and multi actors from private sector to support the underlying 17 broader goals, which are not much different from the Maqasid Shariah concept of Islamic Banking and Finance. It was a great coincidence with the SRI Sukuk Framework issued by the Malaysian's Securities Commission ("SC")

in August 2014. The Malaysian's Sovereign Investment arm, Khazanah Nasional Berhad ("Khazanah"), took the lead role issuing SRI Sukuk in 2015. The launching of another world's first local green Sukuk on June 27, 2017 by Tadau Energy Sdn Bhd, in collaboration between Malaysian SC and Bank Negara Malaysia with World Bank, marked another great milestone in spurring the country's Islamic banking finance industry to greater heights. The Government of Indonesia followed suit in 2018, issuing the world's first sovereign Green Sukuk. The IsDB's €1 billion Green Sukuk deal in 2019 was the real game changer and reinforced its leadership position in the industry. It is clear to all that the products innovation at this stage was

focused on its substance and measure its impact, given the literacy in Shariah form / principle to many specialized bankers is moving towards an advanced stage.

In a nutshell, establishing this unique partnership as a backdrop to advance blended financing concept, either as an Islamic banking or Islamic capital market products, is very much relevant. All the experts in the multi-faceted financial industry (i.e. commercial, investment, development and humanitarian) should appreciate each other and work closer to apply the concept into the mainstream works of SDGs, with the ultimate anticipation to reduce its still huge financial gap of USD2.5 trillion annually.

# Affordable and Clean Energy for the Poor



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Energy is needed for a variety of household uses, such as cooking, lighting and space heating. Energy is also an important facilitator for provision of clean water, modern communications, commerce, health, education and transportation facilities. Poor communities generally do not have access to more efficient and convenient sources of energy, e.g. electricity, and usually rely on only low-calorific and inconvenient sources of energy, such as fuel wood, animal dung, and personal human energy.

In general, people living in poverty spend more time and effort to obtain energy services that tend to be of inferior quality than the energy services available to the rich. Contrary to the common belief, poor people pay a higher price, in cash or in labor, for the energy they use.

The vast majority of the poor continue to inhabit the rural areas with no or minimum access to electricity. Consequently, rural electrification projects have high developmental impact including:

- i.  Reducing Poverty (SDG-1) by providing local employment opportunities to the rural population as a result of enhanced economic productivity through the provision of electricity for electrical equipment for workshops and agriculture (including lighting, pumps, irrigation systems, etc.).
- ii.  Achieving Zero Hunger (SDG-2) by facilitating preservation of agricultural produce through establishment of cold storage facilities supported by a stable electricity supply using on or off-grid generation.

- iii.  Improving Health (SDG-3) through better lighting, heating, potable water systems, cooking, refrigeration, etc., which result in better nutrition and reduced disease incidence as well as by facilitating operation of modern better equipped hospitals and clinics.

- iv.   Facilitating Education (SDG-4) and Promoting Gender Equality (SDG-5) by freeing women and children from unproductive duties such as transportation of wood and/or water for heating and/or cooking enabling them to attend school. Moreover, rural electrification allows schools to be open for adults in the evening owing to availability of improved lighting.

- v.  Supporting Environment (SDG-13) by eliminating the need for use of environmentally harmful low calorific fuels/sources of energy such as wood, low quality coal and animal dung.

- vi. Improving Public Safety through introduction of the public lighting systems as well as access to media (weather forecast and prevention against Natural disasters).

IsDB has successfully implemented several rural electrification projects. This article focuses on three of them, i.e Morocco which relied on central planning to achieve rural electrification, Senegal pilot rural electrification project explored the feasibility of leveraging private sector finance and Bangladesh which relied on micro-financing to promote off-grid solar electrification. IsDB through its Reverse

Linkage initiative can provide a platform for other member countries to benefit from these experiences.

Morocco (Centrally Planned Multi-year Phased Approach): In 1995, the Moroccan authorities and the state utility National Office for Electricity (ONE) launched an ambitious programme to provide electricity in rural areas, the PERG (Global Rural Electrification Program). With the use of a Geographic Information System (GIS), the rural electrification master plan was developed which factored-in the connection cost per household, the need for balanced regional reach, and the scattering of the targeted rural households. The Global Rural Electrification Program has been a success owing to a well designed and streamlined funding mechanism involving contributions from the rural households, the rural community, and ONE. The Program was implemented in multiple phases and was supported by several development partners including AFD, IsDB, EIB, JBIC, AfDB, and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

Senegal (Leveraging Private Sector Financing): Rural electrification project in Senegal used an innovative approach for providing electricity to rural poor population in a commercially viable way through a PPP structure (involving private sector operators). Lessons learned through implementation of this project can be used to replicate PPP rural electrification projects in other IsDB member countries. The project was part of a wider partnership program initiative between the IFIs consisting of the World Bank Group (IDA and IFC), the





African Development Bank, the French Development Agency, the German Reconstruction Credit Institute KfW and IsDB which aims at providing clean, reliable and affordable electricity to the rural populations of Senegal.

Bangladesh (Micro-Financed Solar Electrification): IsDB has also successfully financed "Improving Rural Households Livelihood through Micro-financing Solar Energy Equipment" projects in Bangladesh. The project was an integral part of an overall effort of the Government of Bangladesh to increase access to electricity and income generating activities in rural areas, where 75% of the country's nearly 105 million poor people live. The project also aimed to promote the use of environmentally friendly renewable energy system (RES) and support initiatives in rural areas for productive use of electricity to increase household income and improve the delivery of such social services as health and education. The project targeted remote villages and communities where it would have been physically difficult and financially infeasible to offer grid connections. The project provided facilities for lighting, TV, radio and in some cases for personal computers and wireless local loop telephones.

In line with P5P, the IsDB can act as a platform for facilitating member countries to exchange ideas and experiences to decrease energy poverty through rural electrification programs. While promoting the Delivery by Results Culture through Decentralization, the Regional Hubs, are ideally positioned to help member countries with knowledge dissemination as well as establishment of the necessary network to promote the exchange of best practices.

# Skill Development Policies in a Post Pandemic Era



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The world is passing through an unprecedented pandemic.

In the early days of the pandemic, it was highly speculated that the Corona virus didn't differentiate among rich and poor, spread and hit everyone and everywhere proportionately.

As days pass by and evidence based on more and better data point out a different picture.

One study comparing the spread of the COVID among various States of the USA conclude that those states with greater income inequality are more likely to see coronavirus cases and related deaths after incorporating other socio-economic factors. The study adds that the predicted number of cases in a state grows nearly seven-fold, from 2368 to 14,618, if the level of economic inequality increases from its lowest to its highest observed level<sup>1</sup>.

This is not something special to COVID pandemic. Another recent study investigating the distributional effects of major pandemics in the last century finds that these pandemics lowered the share of incomes going to the bottom deciles, and lowered the employment-to-population ratio for those with basic education but not for those with advanced degrees<sup>2</sup>. Pandemics lead to a persistent and significant increase in the net Gini measure of inequality (After five years, the Gini is above its pre-shock level by about 1.25%) which is the most common and accepted measure of income inequality.

Post pandemic prospects for poor are not very encouraging as well.

ILO estimates the Global job loss to be over 200 million with 40% of the global workforce employed in sectors that face high risk of displacement and with limited access to health services and social protection. This show the employment pandemic coming<sup>3</sup>.

The ones who are disproportionately affected are those with less than college education, working in informal sectors, those who are working in non-decent conditions.

These have a greater probability of being caught to disease, a lower probability to survive, and fewer work opportunities if they survive.

In the post pandemic world, the priority of the development agenda should be these vulnerable groups; People with high school and lower degrees, unemployed or working in poor conditions.

Tomorrow will be late. What is needed to take these vulnerable people on board is more than formal education. A training based on their skills set, the potential fields they have comparative advantage, aligned with the changing needs of the job markets.

In a job market where the more than half of the jobs would be subject to changes<sup>4</sup>, anticipation of the Job skills needed and incorporating these skills-based trainings to formal and informal education is needed at a minimum to contain the already alerting level of global technology and income divide.

These challenges should be timely and effectively translated to the sectoral policies' and project's conceptual design frameworks. Vocational and technical education programs that do anticipate these transformations through innovative training schemes, lifelong learning activities considering the changing expectations of the industries need to be placed to the core of the new social development policies and projects.

<sup>1</sup> <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2020/05/06/economic-inequality-can-help-predict-covid-19-deaths-in-the-us/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://voxeu.org/article/covid-19-will-raise-inequality-if-past-pandemics-are-guide>

<sup>3</sup> ILO web site

<sup>4</sup> OECD Survey of Adult skills, <http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/>

# Development Plan of Al-Madinah Al Munawwarah after COVID-19: How to Integrate the Economic Empowerment and Awqaf Models to Achieve the SDGs



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Bayan Charitable Foundation for Education (Prince Muqrin University) in Al-Madinah and also, positioning Al-Madinah as a Global Hub for the development of the Waqf Sector by establishing the "Global Waqf Centre of Excellence" in Al-Madinah.

In conclusion, by leveraging a comprehensive Impact investment model based on demand driven investment opportunities, market oriented technical assistance and sustainable income generating activities through tight Value Chain integration, the EE and IsDB's Awqaf Investment models, will play a critical role in the post-COVID-19 development program for Al-Madinah and contribute to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's efforts in achieving the SDGs.



**D**r. Bandar Hajjar, President of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, addressed the opening session of the virtual workshop on Al-Madinah's post-COVID-19 Development Program and highlighted the Bank's readiness to support it through all available mechanisms aligned with its new Global Value Chains (GVC) Strategy, including two important models contributing directly to the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda, namely; the Economic Empowerment (EE) Model and IsDB's Awqaf Investment Model.

The Theory of Change underlying both approaches aims at building the resilience of the Poor in the region through several available development schemes deployed in collaboration with the Public and Private sectors including Funds, Waqf Assets, Financial Institutions and Programs to be able to reach more efficiently a bigger pool of beneficiaries and achieve a higher development impact. In fact, one of the building blocks of both models is the creation of "smart partnerships" with the Public and Private Sector in order to achieve the before mentioned development objective and by doing so, contributing directly to SDG17 (Partnership for the Goals) and SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and indirectly to several SDGs.

For instance, from the Economic Empowerment perspective, it is through a comprehensive Impact

Investment Developmental Model implemented in collaboration with the EE partners of the Private Sector involved in the Dates Value Chain in Al-Madinah, that customized Financial and Non-financial services can be deployed. Specifically, technical assistance services can be co-designed with these partners as they are closely involved in the commercial activities of this VC and can determine with precision the adequate set of skills needed to upgrade its productivity. Also, sustainable contractual commercialization of the beneficiaries' products can be realized with the Private Sector VC leader/Off taker. Finally, it is through these actors in the targeted Dates VC that strong and tight long-term market oriented linkages and relationships can be built for the benefit of the Poor in the region.

From the Public sector standpoint, considering the ongoing cooperation with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, the establishment of a Fund for the development of the tertiary sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the innovative development models focused on Social Investment and Economic Empowerment that can benefit directly Al-Madinah's post-COVID-19 Development Program and support the growth of productive MSMEs in several sectors and VCs like the dates sector.

Furthermore, IsDB will also leverage the Impact Investment Developmental Model developed by the Awqaf Properties Investment Fund (APIF) to directly support the Education Sector in Al-Madinah and contribute to SDG4 (Quality Education) by funding the Al-

# Agri-Tech Wave



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The agriculture sector which is supposed to feed 9.5 billion people by 2050<sup>1</sup> is facing sustainability issues mainly due to climate change and pressure of natural resources. More than ever, there is a need to boost productivity -without depleting the planet's resources- and to enhance efficiency to stop food wastage estimated to be 1/3 of total agriculture production equal to 1.3 billion tons, enough to feed 1.6 billion people.<sup>2</sup>

Around 70% of food comes from just four commodities (Wheat, Rice, Corn, and Soybean)<sup>3</sup>, that are not normally grown in OIC member countries which makes food security a top priority. COVID 19 made things worse with disruption to the supply chain and protective measures and export bans considerations by major exporting nations.

Agriculture employees represent nearly 35.5% of the OIC's workforce<sup>4</sup>, yet the sector does not get sufficient (technical and financial) support from MDBs mainly due to associated risks such as lack of visibility and traceability across the supply chain. This is changing now with the emergence of AgriTech.

AgriTech can be defined as *the utilization of innovative technologies to enhance the sector's efficiency and productivity as well as provenance and transparency across the value chain.*

We can no longer afford to farm the same way our ancestors used to hundreds of years ago. Revolutionary advanced technologies like satellite imaging, drones, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, Blockchain, mobile apps, robotics and autonomous vehicles are promising a new era of "Smart Farming".

Here are some examples of promising AgriTech applications:

**Vertical Farming:** In the GCC, agriculture consumes 70% of the water resources, yet the region imports around 80% of its food. Badia Farms and Emirates Flight Catering (EKFC) in UAE are using vertical indoor farming to grow micro-greens and herbs enabling local farming of crops alien to the region with 90% less water with no pesticides<sup>5</sup>. While it is not yet economical to grow grains in such farms, the concept is very promising.

**Precision Farming:** This is a new concept of farm management focusing on accurately planning and utilizing field resources to maximize the yield in a sustainable manner while reducing cost and negative impact on the environment.<sup>6</sup> Zenvus is a Nigerian startup specialized in measuring and analyzing soil data like temperature, nutrients, and vegetative health to enable farmers to decide on the right fertilizer and optimally irrigate their farms and detect diseases and pests<sup>7</sup>.

Under its flagship program Arab Africa Trade Bridges (AATB), ITFC has partnered with OCP Africa to train farmers on best farming practices and soil mapping for better fertility management and higher yields. The initiative utilizes mobile laboratories and applications.

**Platforms and Apps:** Crowde is an Indonesian crowd-investing platform for sustainable agriculture projects, connecting small-scale farmers with retail investors, playing a vital role in farmers financial inclusion. MSMB is another Indonesian platform connecting farmers together to share best farming practices and enabling farmers to use drones and soil, weather and water IoT sensors to properly time their farming activities.

**Provenance:** Koltiva is an Indonesian startup that provides commodities traceability through its web and mobile apps. It connects farmers, traders, processing plants, inputs suppliers and financiers through an end-to-end traceability platform. Promoting transparency through provenance is important to financiers, distributors as well as to end consumers driven by growing awareness about sustainability and ethical concerns over growing conditions, labor, environment ...etc.

**Robotics and Autonomous Farming:** This approach takes care of repetitive processes much faster, more efficient error-free and non-stop. Activities like harvesting, picking, mowing, pruning, seeding, irrigating, fertilizing, spraying, sorting and packing will no longer be done by humans, therefore freeing farmers to focus more on planning and marketing<sup>8</sup>.

The above applications are the perfect match to achieve at least 8 SDGs<sup>9</sup>. In particular, they can directly contribute to goal 2: zero hunger, goal 12: responsible consumption and production and goal 13: climate action.

## Conclusion

AgriTech is a game-changer for the industry that will maximize the yield, reduce the waste, minimize negative environmental impact, promote supply chain transparency and enhance sustainability which is directly in line with SDGs.

While it sounds like science-fiction today, it is becoming the new reality. Countries and companies that will fail to harness the new technologies will not be able to sustain their business for long.

Providing AgriTech financing to beneficiaries across OIC will help bridge the agricultural productivity gap (estimated at 30%<sup>10</sup>) and maximize farmers profit in a sustainable way.

There is an acute need to enhance partnerships among the public and private sectors, MDBs, banks, AgriTech startups, universities and research centers to explore new green horizons.



<sup>1</sup> [https://docs.wbcsd.org/2018/12/csa/December\\_2018\\_Newsletter.html](https://docs.wbcsd.org/2018/12/csa/December_2018_Newsletter.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/initiative/yieldwise/>

<sup>3</sup> CFF Report: Agriculture Diversification Value Chain Project, April 2020

<sup>4</sup> ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) Database, (p: projected).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.badiafarms.com/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.scenario.co.za/en-ZA/News/Article/View/basic-concepts-of-precision-farming>

<sup>7</sup> <https://hbr.org/2017/05/how-digital-technology-is-changing-farming-in-africa>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.robotics.org/blog-article.cfm/Robotics-in-Agriculture-Types-and-Applications/74>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cropin.com/blogs/does-your-agribusiness-align-with-the-sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>10</sup> Agriculture Division, ISDB.

# Agility in the Delivery of Islamic Finance Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI)



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The world of learning is changing. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on organizations, individuals, the economy and society. Learning providers have had to respond to a rapidly evolving landscape, changing how and where they operate, as well as reconsidering the services they offer.<sup>1</sup>

Education and professional training are undoubtedly having their watershed moment. We've witnessed changes in the past twenty years, but this change will be insignificant compared to the change that's coming after the COVID-19 pandemic. Technology is becoming even more sophisticated and soon we'll all be working with AI, Fintech, Block-Chain technology and VR on a day-to-day basis. The whole culture surrounding the workplace and the idea of jobs in general is changing; people are working remotely and for many different companies in their lifetime. Education and learning aren't just for a specific qualification; it will soon be much more an idea of 'learning is for life'.<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the passion of workers, students and Islamic finance practitioners in education and training remotely, especially after the imposition of lockdown measures and home quarantining. This quarantine has driven many, if not all learning institutions to make tremendous efforts to continue their training education through different online educational platforms and provide various training programs, which have attracted a

large number of students to these training programs.

The question now is: are learning providers, companies and even students themselves ready for such a dramatic change? We may often assume that new technology is the way forward, but is this reflected in students' wishes for their education and training? How do learning providers see the future of their educational programs, degrees and classroom activities? Do they see all of the changes that have thus far happened in the world of education and professional training as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI), a member of the Islamic Development Bank Group, took a pioneering step in 2015 to transform access to knowledge and education in Islamic finance. At this time, IRTI introduced the Online Learning Program (OLP) to take advantage of the advancing technologies to make Islamic finance education accessible worldwide. The OLP was founded to deliver massive open online courses (MOOCs) in Islamic Economics, Banking and Finance, through the leading online learning platform edX.<sup>3</sup>

In 2020, and to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, IRTI offered eight free online courses, as part of its initiatives to expand access to knowledge in Islamic Economics and Finance. The courses are available on the edX platform from April 15 until 31 December 2020. All eight courses are self-paced, granting flexibility to learners to complete the modules at their own convenience.

Within a span of two months only since the programs launched on the edX® platform, more than 10,000 learners had enrolled in the courses from around 151 countries (as shown in graphs 1 and 2). The enrollment in OLP compared to traditional training methods has been tremendous. It seems from the experience of IRTI with MOOCs that students are indeed ready for such a change, for the programs have had students from all over the world.<sup>4</sup>

**Conclusion:** In this fast-changing world, Islamic finance education needs to evolve,

and it must be accessible, agile and flexible. Moreover, emerging technologies such as augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence and mobile solutions enable personalized and targeted learning that impacts performance. While learning providers and business leaders focus more and more on productivity and adaptability, they need to be very agile in responding and providing learning solutions that support these outcomes directly.

IRTI showed a moderate degree of agility in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, after the pandemic, IRTI will exert more efforts to change where, when and how Islamic finance education and learning are delivered: through increasing the flow of learning; via digital technologies which enable Islamic finance education to be available anytime and anywhere; and through curation, not just creation, harnessing the growth of rich, readily available online content. It's very much about using technology sensibly to assist learners, trainers and practitioners. The classroom of the future, for me, would be one where AI, Blockchain and FinTech are performing as an assistant to the teachers and learners, and it's an education where people are being taught to build their skills, abilities and knowledge in a way that is not easily automatable.

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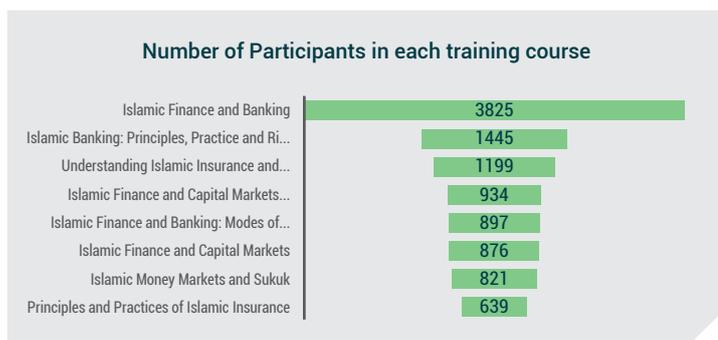
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<sup>3</sup> IRTI Success Story: Islamic Finance Education Goes Global, Thanks to IRTI Online Program. Available online at: <https://irti.org/success/islamic-finance-education-goes-global-thanks-to-irti-online-program>  
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# Africa E-Learning and Knowledge Sharing Platform on “Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 Pandemic:”



## IsDB’s Reverse Linkage Initiative



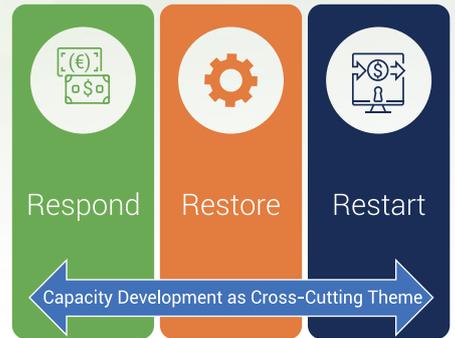
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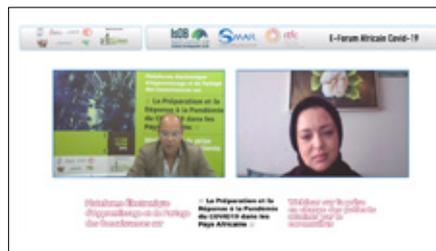


### Background

Under the Strategic Preparedness and Response Program (SPRP) for COVID-19 Pandemic, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), has been playing a key role as a facilitator to connect Member Countries (MCs) among themselves as well as with countries from the Global South that have developed solutions to mitigate and address the effects of the pandemic. One of the capacity development initiatives undertaken under the Reverse Linkage Mechanism is the “Africa E-Learning and Knowledge Sharing Platform” to connect Member Countries (MCs) among themselves as well as with countries from the Global South that have developed solutions to lessen and address the effects of the pandemic.

### Objectives of the African E-Learning and Knowledge Sharing Platform on “Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 Pandemic”

The African E-Learning and Knowledge Sharing Platform on COVID-19 pandemic, was designed and introduced by the IsDB and its partners to facilitate peer learning and knowledge sharing on preparing and responding to COVID-19 pandemic among medical and paramedical staff, as well as decision-makers in IsDB African



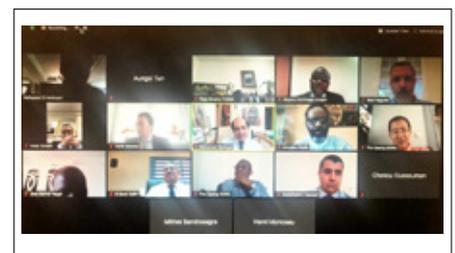
MCs to provide suitable response to the pandemic.

So far, the E-Platform has benefited from the expertise and experiences of many countries and institutions that have successfully managed to deal with COVID-19 pandemic in Africa and globally. A special thanks goes to the members of the Moroccan Association of Anesthesiology, Analgesia, and Critical Care (SMAAR)” for their voluntary involvement and tremendous dedication to this initiative. The continuous engagement of this scholarly association has shown the importance of the voluntary work as well as the crucial role of the Civil Society Organizations in responding to COVID- 19 pandemic.

### Achievements under the Africa E-Platform

Since its launching on 25 April 2020, the E-Learning and Knowledge Sharing Platform Provided several capacity development programs in both French and English languages for the benefit of African countries. Until today, the Islamic Development Bank and its partners organized 6 webinars through this E-Platform: 5 related to health related-issues and 1 on the challenges and opportunities facing South-South and

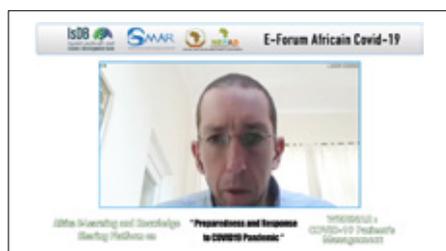
Triangular Cooperation in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and role of technical cooperation agencies. In total, 16,500 persons viewed the webinars including more than 5,700 medical and paramedical attendees from 25 IsDB African MCs. Around 90 speakers from 26 countries (member and non-MCs) had the opportunity to share knowledge, best practices and expertise in this area. The speakers included high-level experts such as the Vice President of Samsung Biologics and the Deputy Director of WHO.



### Next steps of the Africa E-Platform

The connections that the Africa E-Learning and Knowledge Sharing Platform have helped build among MCs will surely contribute not only to achieving SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) but also to make a positive contribution to achieving the SDG 3 (Good Health and well-being).

The Africa E-Platform will continue its journey by offering its capacity development programs in Arabic, English and French to the African Countries through webinars, certified specific online training, etc while expanding the scope of its activities beyond the health sector.



# Food Security Matters in the COVID-19 Response



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Food security matters in the response to the CV-19 pandemic. Hungry people cannot be healthy. Good nutrition is essential to enhancing the immune systems. This is required always but more now when there are recommended treatments and/or vaccines against the CV-19 pandemic. The CV-19 pandemic, indeed, a health and human crisis that is threatening the food security and nutrition of millions of people around the world, and more so the less endowed member countries (MCs) of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group.

Advocacy and requests for support for the latter needs to be ramped up, and to equal measures as that of health concerns. This is, unfortunately not the case presently. Only 4 out of the 40 plus requests from the MCs to IsDB were, at end of May 2020, related to food security. Unless

The bank engaged early with development partners (multi-lateral development banks, bilateral donors, UN Specialized agencies, philanthropic organization, among others) to share intelligence, exchange information and develop harmonized and mutually reinforcing interventions to support the governments

this changes, we are staring at another emergency that can be avoided, at least to some extent now.

In this article we highlight initial support of the bank to its MCs response and draw some early lessons emerging towards mitigating the impact the pandemic on food and nutrition security.

### Knowledge products to better inform IsDB response action

The Agriculture Global Practice prepared analytical paper “Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) Impact on IsDB Member Countries Food Security” to inform and guide the decision-making process of IsDB Group Committee for COVID-19 Pandemic. The paper (its key points are summarized on pg. xx of this issue) highlights that while all MCs will likely feel the brunt of the crisis, the effect will be most pronounced among those countries classified as Low Income and Food Deficit Countries (LIFDC) by the United Nations. Sadly, 28 out of the 57 IsDB MCs fall into this group and most (18 MCs) are in in sub-Sahara Africa.

### Procurement support of food supplies to most vulnerable population

New emergency partial food security projects were developed, at the requests of the MCs, for: a) Senegal – US\$ 84.0 m, targeting about 1.0 m households, and b) Chad – US\$ 20.0 million covering both health and food security supplies for about 151,000 households. Funding was partially repurposed from other projects that are ending with savings, others that reimbursements can be made later as well as new resources. Requests from a few other MCs, including Pakistan and Mali, are currently in the development process. In addition to new projects, another approach adopted by the bank and the MCs included

fast-tracking the implementation of existing projects, and re-allocating resources within them to address some rapid response needs. A particular emphasis of this effort is to support farmers not to miss planting the current cropping season or the next since this will exacerbate the food security problem.

### Coordination with other MDBs and Development partners

The bank engaged early with development partners (multi-lateral development banks, bilateral donors, UN Specialized agencies, philanthropic organization, among others) to share intelligence, exchange information and develop harmonized and mutually reinforcing interventions to support the governments.

### Emerging lessons

- Engaging early with the governments in planning jointly the response is critical. This helps avoid ‘catch up’ exercise and missed opportunities for collective and rapid response. The Regional Hubs can be effective bridges in this endeavor
- Planning the procurement of the food supplies to include local sources can be effective means to trigger the recovery and restart process (incentivize farmers to produce of the economies, as well as include nutritious foods in the supplies – example are vegetables and fruits grown by farm families.
- Ramping up the advocacy and support by the bank for food security interventions is critical to not losing the gains made towards the SDG #2 (Zero Hunger) which threatened by the CV-19 pandemic

Smallholder vegetable farming family in Senegal under the current CV-19 pandemic is part of the CV-19 food security solution.



# Sustaining Climate Action in the Phase of COVID-19 Recovery



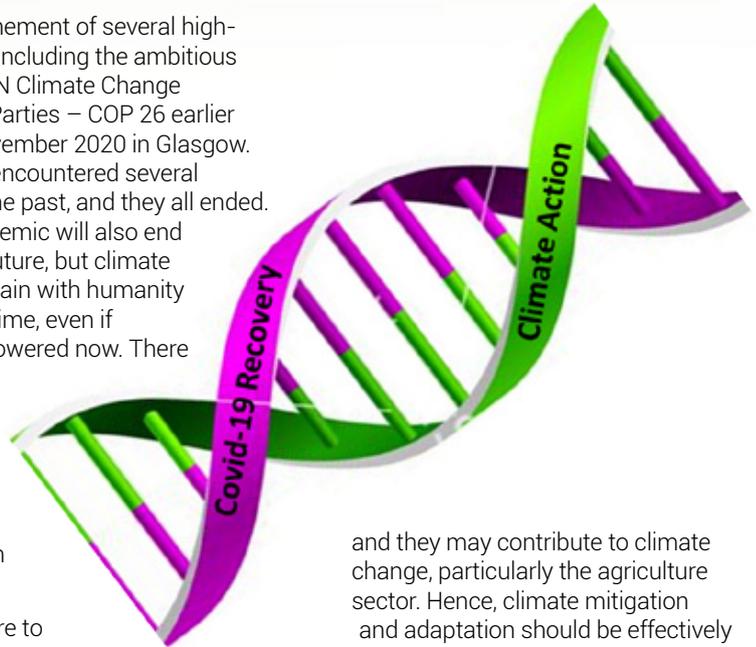
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COVID-19 Pandemic may reshape the focus of many countries, including the IsDB member countries (MCs), who are mostly developing economies. There is likelihood the pandemic could stagnate or decrease the SDG achievements recorded so far by the MCs. As described in the 2019 Sustainable Development Report, the IsDB MCs have performed well on SDG-13 (Climate Action) relative to other SDGs. But the strive to improve on this achievement may face a strong drawback due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The pandemic

caused postponement of several high-level meetings, including the ambitious and inclusive UN Climate Change Conference of Parties – COP 26 earlier planned for November 2020 in Glasgow. The world has encountered several pandemics in the past, and they all ended. COVID-19 pandemic will also end in the nearest future, but climate change will remain with humanity for a very long time, even if emissions are lowered now. There is need to strike a balance to ensure we do no harm to the environment as we recover from the pandemic.

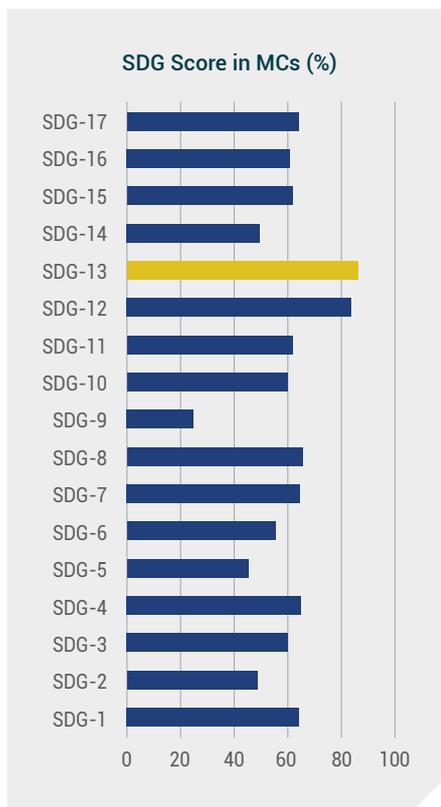
The IsDB's desire to promote green growth and support transition to a green economy in MCs remain a priority. At this very period, the main priority of MCs will be to recover their economies from the disruption triggered by COVID-19 Pandemic. To support MCs' economic recovery alongside climate action, some measures need to be ensured:

- Aligning finance to MCs' nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and climate action plans will ensure a win-win situation where countries' economic recovery and climate action plans are addressed concurrently.
- Capacity strengthening and advisory: The global practice teams, project teams and MCs have received series of climate change related capacity building. These trainings should be further strengthened and expanded to others to ensure climate actions are mainstreamed in all recovery strategies. Provision of advisory support would assist MCs with the preparation of climate compatible recovery package.
- Sustain climate action mainstreaming into projects and programs: The health and agriculture sector are crucial in the recovery phase. Both sectors may be exposed to climate risk when sited in climate risk prone location,



and they may contribute to climate change, particularly the agriculture sector. Hence, climate mitigation and adaptation should be effectively mainstreamed into COVID-19 recovery projects to ensure adequate resilience is built from design, and the projects are climate smart.

- Partnership for development: The bank needs to sustain the established networks and expand its partnership base to be able discover innovative strategies and best practices adopted by partners in addressing COVID-19 related issues. These best practices should be shared with internal teams and the MCs. An example is the MDB Working Groups on Climate Change and Paris Alignment Framework where IsDB works closely with other MDBs on the Paris Alignment Framework and how it will affect MDB operations. Through this network, lessons learned and experiences from MDBs are discussed and various knowledge products are developed.
- Mobilization of resources: To keep climate action agenda resonating in the heart of MCs during the period of COVID-19, the Bank would need to explore various avenue to mobilize resources that would enable MCs sustain or even raise the climate action ambition while recovering from the pandemic. An example is the Climate Action Enhancement Package Technical Assistance Fund (grant) secured for some MCs.



# Changing Human Lives, Doubling Global Food Crises



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The COVID-19 pandemic will double the number of global populations suffering from acute hunger, further deepening the food crisis and raising the number to 265 million in 2020, up by 130 million from 135 million in 2019, the WFP warns. It explains that COVID-19 is potentially catastrophic for millions who are already hanging by a thread. It is a hammer blow for millions more, who can only eat, if they earn a wage. Lockdowns and global economic recession have already decimated their nest eggs. It can only take one more shock – like COVID-19 – to push them over the edge.

Most people suffering acute food insecurity in 2019 were in countries affected by conflict (77 million), climate change (34 million) and economic crises (24 million). Ten countries constituted the worst food crises in 2019: Yemen, DR Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria, Sudan, Nigeria and Haiti. 61% of South Sudan population was in food crisis while 6 countries: Sudan, Yemen, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Syrian Arab Republic and Haiti had at least 35%. Out of 135 million, 88 million populations of these ten countries was in worse crisis.

UN SG, António Guterres, says 'The upheaval that has been set in motion by the COVID-19 pandemic may push even more families and communities into deeper distress. At this time of immense global challenges, from conflicts to climate shocks to economic instability, we must redouble our efforts to defeat hunger and malnutrition. This is crucial for achieving the SDGs and building a more stable and resilient world. We have the tools and the know-how. What we need is political will and sustained commitment by leaders and nations.'

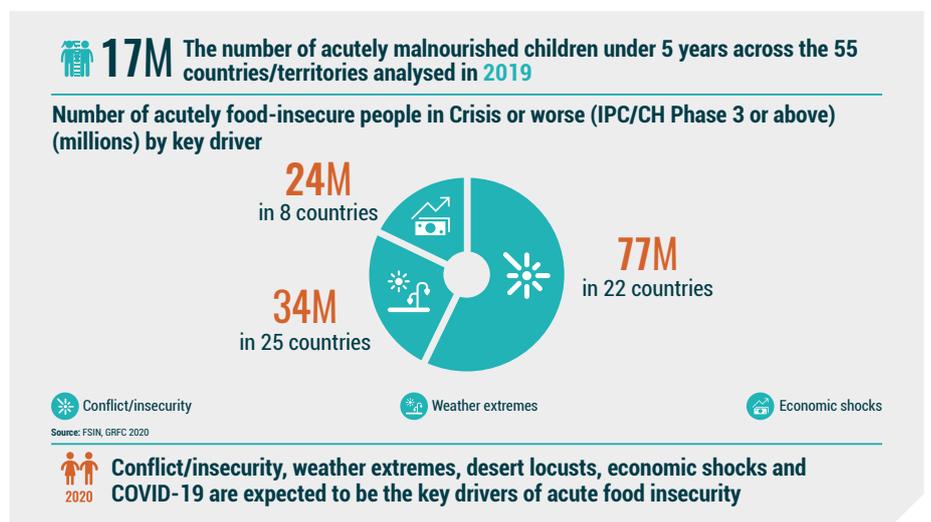
WFP ED, David Beasley, states 'The worst is yet to come. On top of the coronavirus pandemic, the world may see a global humanitarian catastrophe, including famine in three dozen countries - potentially the



most serious crisis since World War II. Ports are closed and supply chains disrupted as a disaster looms for millions. More aid is needed to keep food supplies moving. The world must collectively act now to mitigate the impact of this global catastrophe'.

The drivers of food crises, as well as lack of access to dietary energy and diversity, safe water, sanitation and healthcare will continue to create high levels of child malnutrition, while COVID-19 is likely to overburden health systems. The pandemic may well devastate livelihoods and food security, especially in fragile contexts and particularly for the most vulnerable people working in the informal agricultural and nonagricultural sectors. The persistent global recession will, albeit, disrupt food supply chains.

**GRFC Policy Recommendations:** (1) Expand near-real time, remote food security monitoring systems to provide up-to-date information on the impacts of the outbreak on food security and livelihoods, health, access to services, markets and supply chains, among others, for early action and mitigation; (2) Preserve critical humanitarian food, livelihood and nutrition assistance to vulnerable groups – adapted to potential COVID-19 impacts – to ensure that needs are fully met. Position food in food-crisis countries to reinforce and scale up social protection systems, ensuring the most vulnerable who are affected or at high risk of COVID-19 can still access food; and (3) Scale up support for food processing, transport and local food markets, and advocate for trade corridors to remain open to ensure the continuous functioning of the critical food supply chain and agri-food systems in food-crisis countries.



Source: 2020 Global Report on Food Crises & WFP Website

# Regional Cooperation in the Time of Crisis: Challenges and the Way Forward



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The current COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the disease mortality and public health effects, is leading to a significant and lasting economic impact. Its after-effects on productivity losses, supply chain disruptions, labor dislocation, and potential financial pressure on businesses and households have been already felt. This can be seen in the IMF projection of the global economy to fall to -3% in 2020 and WTO expectation of 13% falling in the volume of the global merchandise trade in their most optimistic scenario. Furthermore, UNCTAD is estimating that the COVID-19 outbreak could result in a drop in FDI ranging from 30% to 40% in 2020-2021 in the range of US\$ 417-556 billion. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), this deteriorating economic situation will lead to the loss of around 305 million full-time jobs by the 2nd quarter of 2020.

Unfortunately, this global unprecedented challenge has generally been met with infrequent attempts to joint efforts as countries have generally continued to enforce their own measures, often without consultation with each other and in the absence of global leadership. Those unilateral actions defy and hinder the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as SDGs explicitly recognize the importance of planning and cooperating at the regional level, especially in targets 11.a ,9.1 and 17.6.

This lack of coordinated action has aggravated the failure of regional mechanisms to address the outbreak and impact of the virus. Questions have already been raised as to what could have been done differently, and what lessons can be learned and put into action from the initial responses. At CSC Department we've come up with some high level take-aways to enhance regional cooperation and integration that can be useful in this regard:

1. Regional collaboration and partnerships can accelerate, harmonize and mobilize actions to address gaps in providing public goods. Regional cooperation can play a crucial role in strengthening research and testing facilities, sharing knowledge and best practices (through Reverse Linkages), supporting the development of critical treatment strategies, and procuring of medical and personal protective equipment, the establishment of regional quick-disbursing disaster funds, etc. to name a few.
2. Effective supply chains and open trade in support of business will be crucial for a recover better strategy and can help safeguard more jobs. A prolonged pandemic crisis could quickly put a strain on the supply chains including food and essential medical supply. Any constraints to trade, including bureaucratic hurdles, tariff and non-tariff barriers should be reviewed in order to link producers to markets and consumers.
3. Stronger coordinated fiscal measures could help absorb growing economic costs. It is therefore crucial to develop comprehensive, coordinated, and rules-based regional fiscal stimulus mechanisms with the aim of strengthening health systems, protecting income, and minimizing economic contraction.
4. Higher demand for US dollar liquidity has led to unprecedented capital outflows from developing countries, particularly "emerging market" countries. A liquidity support finance line should be made to the private sector (especially MSMEs as they have high financial vulnerability as liquidity pressures can quickly threaten their survival) to ensure their business continuity.
5. Leveraging on technologies and digital trade. The shift to a digital platform has helped to mitigate the productivity loss in the economy amid COVID-19. With all the benefits presented by digital platforms, two things are becoming urgent: the need fast and reliable ICT and digital connectivity, and the urgency of raising awareness of and capabilities in cybersecurity.
6. Encourage use of philanthropy tools. The nature and scale of the current crisis has reinforced the idea that non-market sources of funding such as "zakat" (in the Islamic context) remain crucial to respond in cases that require relief.

Although COVID-19 is an unprecedented challenge, it is only through collaboration and coordination that we can successfully win the battle against the pandemic. Protectionist strategies will not help to fight a cross-border threat. Unless there is an intense regional effort to contain and minimize the spread of this virus, national efforts might ultimately count for naught.



# The IsDB Group Emergency Support for COVID-19: Preparedness and Response Plan for the Republic of Yemen



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Yemen remains the world's worst humanitarian disaster. With 24 million people in need of humanitarian assistance (80% of the total population) and millions surviving on emergency food aid, the magnitude of chronic malnutrition in the Yemeni population has become precarious. COVID-19 is further exacerbating these needs. With the increased pressure the pandemic has put on the available health facilities, we can certainly admit the health system has been left in shambles. The virus is spreading in a country where five years of conflict have degraded the health infrastructure and made people increasingly vulnerable.

On 10 April 2020, Yemen has declared its first COVID-19 case. Since then, there have been 1,089 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 293 deaths (as of 27 June 2020). Because of the already fragile situation, experts recognize the virus can spread faster, more widely, and with deadlier consequences than elsewhere. According to the modeling run by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with international research institutions, even with mitigation measures, 55% of people in Yemen will be infected with COVID-19, over 42,000 people may die and over 292,000 people may require hospitalization.

In this backdrop, a detailed discussion held between H.E. the President, IsDB, and H.E. the IsDB Governor for Yemen on

7 May 2020 on the COVID-19 situation and potential areas of collaboration for supporting the Government's endeavors for limiting the impacts of the pandemic on the country.

Accordingly, the IsDB Group Emergency Support for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan was prepared and approved on 15 June 2020 within the framework of the IsDB's Strategic Preparedness and Response Program (SPRP). The project, amounting to US\$20 million, is the 2nd largest among all donors responding to the health sector COVID-19 emergency in Yemen and part of the IsDB's pledge of US\$100 million during the recent Virtual Donors Conference hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Nations. It will be implemented over the next 12 months through close cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO).

To support Yemen's National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, the project focuses primarily on immediate and fast track actions to assist the response to the COVID-19 health emergency while at the same time strengthening the health system. The project's scope includes improving the health care facilities' readiness through equipping 32 Isolation Units and ICUs, supporting frontline health workers through the provision of PPEs, enhancing the inpatient care through the provision of essential medicines and supplies, and

expanding the PCR lab testing facility for early detection. Key features of the project include its extensive outreach covering all the governorates of the country for serving the poor and most vulnerable. A strong on-the-ground partnership between the IsDB-UN/WHO-GOY is another important feature of this project. Finally, to ensure sustainability, health system strengthening, and capacity building is the technical contribution of the WHO in this project.

The development result of the project is improving capacity and quality of Isolation, Quarantine, and ICU facilities, which will contribute to (i) at least 50% survival rate of critical COVID-19 infected patients admitted in ICUs; (ii) at least 60% of confirmed COVID-19 cases treated as per the approved protocol; and (iii) at least 135,000 suspected cases who have received quality assured tests for COVID-19 in the selected regions as per WHO standard in terms of COVID-19 screening and confirmation.

In the spirit of **SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing)**, **SDG 10 (reduced inequality)**, and **SDG 17 (partnership)**, key success factors during the preparation of the project include the active participation of the Regional Hub on the needs assessment from day one, collaboration with other donors, and a strong engagement with the country and the partners with the aim of leverage existing expertise on the ground.

# Solidarity in Times of COVID-19 Crisis: Innovation and the Role of Civil Society



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## Context:

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the level of resilience of countries in the world. IsDB Member Countries (MCs) are facing high pressures on their healthcare systems, communities and citizens' lives and livelihoods. As a response to a threat of this magnitude, MCs have taken drastic measures cushioning the health risks on their economies with the aim to mitigate and contain the spread of the virus.

The crisis has exposed and increased the fragility of health care systems, economies, social norms and values in all MCs. The most vulnerable groups are the ones that are most at risks of the pandemic. Their lives, livelihoods and conditions are significantly affected by the cascading effects on social and economic conditions. Decisions of governments and partners to reduce the costs of the pandemic on the society have generated externalities and direct effects on the hard-to-reach communities who do not access to basic health and social services.

At the frontline of the crisis, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are contributing in the efforts and participating in the global responses. They are promoting community engagement approaches that ensure prevention, identification of early symptoms, mitigation of transmission, support humanitarian and social services to the most vulnerable populations, and local authorities working together with community leaders. Solidarity through the CSOs to support the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities affected by the pandemic is critical.

CSOs play critical role in engaging citizens as a foundation for sustainable innovation to contain and mitigate the effects of the pandemic. In this framework and in line with its high level Strategic Preparedness and Response Program to support the member countries to tackle COVID-19, the IsDB and ISFD have developed the Tadamon CSO Pandemic Response Accelerator

Program to contribute to the immediate and medium-term efforts of the MCs to prevent, contain and respond to negative impacts of COVID-19 in 16 member countries affected by fragility and conflict, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs).

The scope of the program includes: Emergency Medical Response through CSOs (Respond). It entails medical supply to health facilities, essential community social services such as psycho-social counselling, trainings of community health workers and communication, awareness; (ii) Education in Emergency (Respond). The program will ensure the provision of basic education in emergency situation and skills development through high tech and/or simple communication tools; (iii) Build Community Resilience (Restore): deprived households including women-headed households will acquire, among others, entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and competencies required to engage in income generating activities through online and in person while maintaining physical distancing; and (iv) Setting up a Pandemic Response Accelerator Window: The program introduces an innovative tool "Pandemic Accelerator" to mobilize resources to prevent, contain and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 crisis. The services of the accelerator include: (i) expediting the response to the pandemic by tapping into a network of CSOs, social innovators; (ii) improving access to finance, building capacity for entrepreneurship; and (iii) mapping and empowering organizations already responding to COVID-19 crisis. The Accelerator will be hosted in www.tadamon.community of the "NGO Empowerment for Poverty Reduction Program" launched by the IsDB, ISFD and UNDP in September 2019. The pandemic response accelerator will also provide (i) digital neighborhoods that improves the social infrastructure and community resilience through digital education, digital care, telemedicine; (ii) physical distancing to engage and provide psychosocial support, building new ways of virtual social networks, and solidarity. The Accelerator will use solutions with blockchain and similar technologies. The pandemic response accelerator will make an Open Call through Tadamon Platform for COVID-19 resources mobilization (donation, co-financing).

Traditional financing is not providing all resources to fulfil the needs of vulnerable communities and to serve the MCs during crisis or in their long term development perspectives. The pandemic accelerator and precisely Tadamon platform are new ways to bring additional value to the digital transformation and new mechanisms

to foster networks, mobilize financing and resources. This is in line with the emerging trends that capitalize on networks of developers including partnership with non-traditional actors, encourage digital transformation and innovate with crowdfunding and blockchain technologies

The main results of the program include but not limited to: (i) around US\$46 million mobilized from non-traditional partners; (ii) 1 million vulnerable people will gain access to basic medical services to help mitigating the health impact of COVID-19, (iii) capacity building for 5,000 community health workers to respond to COVID-19, (iv) use of media coverage for awareness raising and sensitization campaigns to reach 3- 5 million vulnerable people in affected communities; (v) 20,000 children, refugees and those at risk of being left behind will have access to continuing basic education and skills development, and (vi) 3,000 of the most deprived households will access financing to set up their own income generating activities. Also, 60 % of the targeted households will have coping, adaptive and transformative resilience

capacity to risks and shocks. In terms of Impact, the program will directly contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



## Conclusion:

CSOs and partners have an important role to play in the COVID-19 crisis response. The engagement and coordination with such actors is crucial and needed by the population of IsDB MCs. Over the years, collective actions of citizens and networks of CSOs will continue increasing across the world, consolidating their activities in emergency situations, education, health, social welfare and economic empowerment, especially among vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

We believe that solving the humanitarian and development problems is not possible through "usual suspects". Development organizations cannot do the work alone but should be the connector and being able to create partnerships and to bring onboard as a community of developers who can contribute to reaching SDGs.

# New Frontiers in SDG2: Accelerating the Achievement of Nutrition Targets



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Globally, about 2.0 billion people experience moderate to severe food and nutritional insecurity. In technical terms, the nutrition issue is divided into three broad categories. The first is malnutrition, the most visible symptom of which is stunting (short height for age). The second is wasting (low weight relative to height), and the third is obesity (high weight for height). To limit stunting and wasting requires that interventions be made during the first 1,000 days of life; otherwise the damage becomes irreversible. Stunting is a severe problem in the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) member countries (MCs), especially those located in sub-Saharan Africa, where over 43% of children under 5 years of age are affected.

The problem of nutrition is multifaceted, and so too must be the solutions. Even when nutritious food is available and accessible, health and socio-cultural factors (beliefs and taboos) may inhibit its optimal consumption. Water and sanitation are other important constraints. Integrated solutions are needed, the delivery of which requires managing interactions and complementarities among many sectors and development programs. Agriculture and health are two such critical sectors. Integrated programs, while challenging to manage, provide sustainable frontiers for success. This is well demonstrated by the Millennium Villages Project (MPV -2006-2009) and its follow-up, the Sustainable Villages Program (SPV - ongoing, initiated in 2012). IsDB funded the latter in 5 MCs: Chad, Guinea, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique and Sudan.

The MVPs operated on investments of US\$ 101-127 per person per year in each MVP. This called for US\$ 58-80 per person per year from external funding sources to support low income countries, including many IsDB MCs. These investments generated substantial household-level impacts, particularly in agriculture and

health, reaching between 6,000 to 25,000 households in each MVP area over 5 years. Although nutrition targets are generally difficult to achieve in relatively short periods of time, end-of-project studies noted that stunting of children younger than 5 in the MVPs were 4% less likely relative to those in comparison villages outside project intervention areas. These gains were strongly correlated with improvements in the availability of food and primary health services, including the control of malaria using bed nets, as well as with overall improvements in water and sanitation.

Important concerns about the MVPs and SVPs include their scope (a village level focus) and their replicability (expensive, requiring high per capita investments). Notwithstanding this, governments are keen to deploy the approach because of their tangible and highly visible outcomes. For example, in 2009 the Ugandan government, with funding from IsDB, scaled up its MVP work to the district level (Karamoja), reaching over 300,000 people. The government established a strong coordination mechanism, with technical support from the Millennium Promise Alliance that is associated with MVPs. This effort produced concrete outcomes within 3-4 years. Food crops grown by Karamoja farmers, for instance, found their way to the District's school feeding program, improving attendance, overall education, and the nutrition of the District's children (photo).

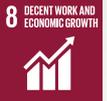
Lessons learnt from these projects are guiding the new generations of IsDB-funded projects and programs. For example, the benefits of crowding in additional development partners is evident in an IsDB-supported regional program, launched in 2018 and involving 10 countries, which is aimed at strengthening the rice value chain in West Africa. The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the Africa Development Bank are co-investing in the program. Another important lesson learnt is the need for strong monitoring and evaluation systems, and the Swiss Development Cooperation has joined the rice value chain partnership to provide both financial and technical support for M&E. Other development partners are now engaged with IsDB, for example, the World Food Program in integrating nutrition-sensitive interventions into the rice program that focus on the first 1000 days of a child from its conception. This is but one way that new and mutually owned sustainable frontiers can be developed for achieving the 17 SDGs, and in which nutrition is both an input and an outcome of all of them.

**Note:** The author is grateful for the support received in developing this article from the following colleagues in the ESI Department: Ammar Abdo and Khaled Sidi Yahya (Social Infrastructure Division), and Ceesay Lamin Momodou (Agriculture Infrastructure Division).



Pupils in Karamoja District schools benefit from the District's school feeding program. Sorghum and other nutritious crops are grown by nearby farmers.

# The Economic Empowerment Fund for Palestine: Leveraging Past Successes for the Future



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The IsDB Economic Empowerment approach provides a unique and innovative mechanism to tackle poverty in member countries. It contributes to crafting sustainable capitalism through its social impact investing properties that aims at creating jobs and reducing economic marginalization.

The Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Program (DEEP), which was implemented in Palestine over the period 2006-2015, was one of the IsDB Economic Empowerment success stories. It, successfully, developed and implemented around 16,000 projects for targeted families and, thus, created roughly 50,000 direct and indirect jobs. In addition, the program provided social services in the areas of health, housing and education for almost 13,000 families.

To leverage on this success, IsDB has launched the Economic Empowerment Fund for the Palestinian People (EEFPP) which is a development investment fund,

The Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Program (DEEP) successfully, developed and implemented around 16,000 projects for targeted families and, thus, created roughly 50,000 direct and indirect jobs

with \$500 million capital, that invests its capital in individual and collective economic empowerment projects proposed by its strategic partners that directly target the poor of Palestine. The Fund's aspiration is to empower 300,000 Palestinian families and thus, contributing to lift approximately 1,500,000 poor Palestinians out of poverty.

On 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2020, Dr. Bandar Hajjar, President of the Islamic Development Bank Group and Chairman of the EEFPP Board of Shareholders, inaugurated the constitutive virtual meeting of the Fund, marking the official starting signal for its activities. In that meeting, the President announced that IsDB decided to contribute by US\$ 100 million to the Fund's capital, while the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD) contributed by US\$ 52 million, and the Al-Aqsa Fund followed suit with a contribution of US\$ 13 million.



Furthermore, the Bank successfully mobilized US\$ 55 million from the Palestinian Investment Fund (US\$30 million) and the Palestine Prosperity Fund (US\$25 million). In addition, the Economic Empowerment Department's team is working hard, under the leadership of H.E. the President, on an ambitious plan to mobilize additional resources and attract other shareholders with a view to mobilizing the authorized capital of US\$ 500 million.

EEFPP positions the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda at the heart of its interventions, namely, the SDG1 (End Poverty), SDG2 (Zero Hunger), SDG5 (Gender Equality), SDG8 (Economic Development and decent jobs), SDG10 (Reduce Inequality) and SDG17 (Partnerships). EEFPP is also contributing indirectly to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 3 (Good Health).



# Integrating SDGs with the IsDB Strategic Preparedness and Response Program



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The COVID-19 pandemic is a major setback to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Many IsDB Member Countries, which were already struggling to keep pace with the ambitious Agenda 2030, are among those most affected by this pandemic. While the virus doesn't discriminate, a double whammy of health and economic crisis has had its worst effects on the poorest countries, households and individuals, who have had to risk their health and lives to resume livelihood activities, amidst low demand and a sluggish market. As of June 24th, COVID19 has claimed a total of 33,480 lives and affected another 1.3 million population in IsDB Member Countries who tested positive for this disease.

Within weeks after the World Health Organization (WHO)'s declaration of COVID-19 virus a Global Pandemic, the IsDB launched the Strategic Preparedness and Response Program (SPRP) on April 1, 2020 to support the MCs efforts in preventing, containing, mitigating and recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The IsDB Group has allocated US\$ 2.316 billion for SPRP, of which US\$ 1.530 billion will be financed by IsDB through its various funding windows.

The SPRP has a strong focus on development effectiveness and results and is accompanied by a set of output, outcome and impact indicators, developed by the Bank's results and sector experts. These indicators are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and are consistent with international best practices, WHO and other MDBs. The indicators are categorized along the SPRP's 3-R approach (Response, Restoration and Restart) and components: (i) Health Emergency Response and Preparedness, (ii) Sustaining and Reviving the Economic and Social Sectors.

The IsDB Group has allocated US\$2.316 billion for SPRP, of which US\$1.530 billion will be financed by IsDB through its various funding windows

All projects submitted under the SPRP are required to use these standard indicators and provide progress reports against these indicators. Given the diverse contexts of the MCs and their proposed projects, the project developers can select indicators based on the context, complexity and nature of interventions. The CoVID-19 results indicators will measure the development effectiveness of IsDB's assistance to the MCs in responding to the health, social and economic impacts of pandemic, and enable standardized reporting to internal and external stakeholders.

As of 31 May 2020, the Bank has approved 17 projects worth \$412.75m and is processing several other projects that will be approved during June-July 2020. While progress on the full list of indicators will be published separately, the expected number of beneficiaries, products and services from the approved projects is summarized in the table. Details can be found at <https://isdb.sharepoint.com/teams/covid19/SitePages/Dashboards.aspx>

Indicator (abbreviated form)	Target
No. of direct beneficiaries (health/economic assistance)	6,699,834
No. of persons reached through awareness campaigns	37,005,000
No. of suspected cases investigated	62,000
No. of suspected cases tested	3,771,250
No. of confirmed cases treated	17,000
No. of health professionals trained	19,396
No. of health professionals provided PPE	158,818
No. of hospitals equipped	317
No. of hospital beds added	8,846
No of labs equipped	129
No. of POE equipped	1,583
No. of ICU beds equipped	3,110
No. of medical equipment/supplies	5,816
No. of persons sensitized /awareness sessions	1,180,000
No. of PPE kits provided	40,538,850
No. of testing kits provided	4,527,500
No. of ventilators provided	1,712
No. of ambulances and vehicles provided	210
No. of innovative projects supported	6
No. of households provided food rations	1,150,000
No. of persons provided employment	22,500
No. of persons provided access to finance	12,000
No. of Small & Medium Enterprises supported	2,870
No. of students provided education (online/traditional)	300,000
No. of teachers trained for online education	4,000
No. of e-Learning courses developed	18

# COVID-19 as a Health and Humanitarian Crisis: An Evaluation Perspective



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In December 2019, a series of unidentified pneumonia cases were detected in the People's Republic of China (PRC). By January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as a "public health emergency of international concern". We already have over 11 million people infected, and more than half a million deaths with no evidence of a significant decrease. The COVID-19 pandemic is far more than just a health crisis, affecting societies and economies at their core.

Without the proper means to contain a pandemic of such magnitude, many countries have partially or fully closed their borders, restricting movement of the people in an attempt to suppress its rapid spread. Faced with new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children and lack of physical contact



for example, countries in which tourism is relatively important could potentially be affected more severely by shutdowns and limitations on travel, while countries with relatively sizeable agricultural and mining sectors, may experience smaller initial effects from containment measures. However, output will be subsequently hit by reduced global commodity demand.

with other family members, friends and colleagues, the health of many have been negatively affected

The physical and mental exhaustion of the healthcare workforce, along with worn-out hospital infrastructure and the growing "backlog" of healthcare procedures are likely to be the two main issue healthcare systems will face in the near term.

While COVID-19 started as a health crisis, it is now not only considered as only health but also economic, largely a full- humanitarian crisis. The implications for countries annual GDP decrease will depend on many factors, including the magnitude and duration of national shutdowns, the extent of reduced demand for goods and services in other parts of the economy, and the speed at which significant fiscal and monetary policy support takes effect;



The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed countries to re-think how to strive to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets. The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs, poses special challenges for policy-makers worldwide, especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has exposed weaknesses in the international system that need to be addressed as part of the 'build back better' agenda. The past couple of months have shown how poverty (SDG 1), weak health systems (SDG 3), inadequate water and sanitation (SDG 6), and substandard international cooperation (SDG 17) have exacerbated the COVID-19 crisis.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has conceptually mapped how COVID-19 affects each of the SDGs, from disruption to food supplies (SDG 2) to increased levels of violence against women (SDG 5).

In short, while the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale, making achievement of SDGs even more urgent. Without well informed socio-economic responses, global suffering will escalate, jeopardizing lives and livelihoods for years to come. Immediate development responses in this crisis must be undertaken with an eye to the future. Development trajectories in the long-term will be affected by choices countries make and the support they receive now.

# Building Information Modeling: Technology Supporting Sustainable Development



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## What is BIM ?

In 1963, Ivan Edward Sutherland, an American computer scientist who was considered the “father of computer graphics,” developed “Sketchpad” the first computer-aided design (CAD) program with graphical user interface. Sketchpad led the way for modeling programs in the construction industry.

Further developments took place during the '70s and '80s in the computational representation of building designs and information. In 1986, Robert Aish published a paper and documented the word “Building Modelling”. The term became “Building Information Modelling” or BIM that we now know today in a paper “Automation in Construction” published by G.A. Van Nederveen and F. Tolman in December 1992.

Today, BIM technology can generate detailed three-dimensional (3D) models of a building or an infrastructure project’s components and overall structure. This not only enables designs to be easily translated

into constructed projects, but also aids infrastructure asset managers in maintaining and operating the project.

## How does BIM lead to Sustainable Development ?

The environmental impact of construction is huge. According to the U.S. Department of Energy’s Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy network, the construction industry is responsible for 30% of the country’s greenhouse gas emissions and 136 million tons of construction and demolition waste. This industry also accounts for as much as 40% of the nation’s energy consumption and consumes 12% of the country’s total fresh water supplies.

Sustainability of a building depends on several factors, such as energy efficiency, quality of air and water, and material selection. BIM computer stimulation allows all those involved in a project to understand how the building will behave long before it is constructed. Using BIM data generated during design and build over the whole project lifecycle enables faster, safer, less wasteful construction and more cost-effective, sustainable operation, maintenance and eventual decommissioning.

During the process of designing a building, architects and engineers need to consider various options and have enough information to select one. BIM allows architects to create and study multiple design options within a single model. This leads to better informed decision-making. High-resolution graphics and 3D modeling interfaces generate an accurate virtual model of a sustainable building project. This model can be very useful for making different kinds of analysis,

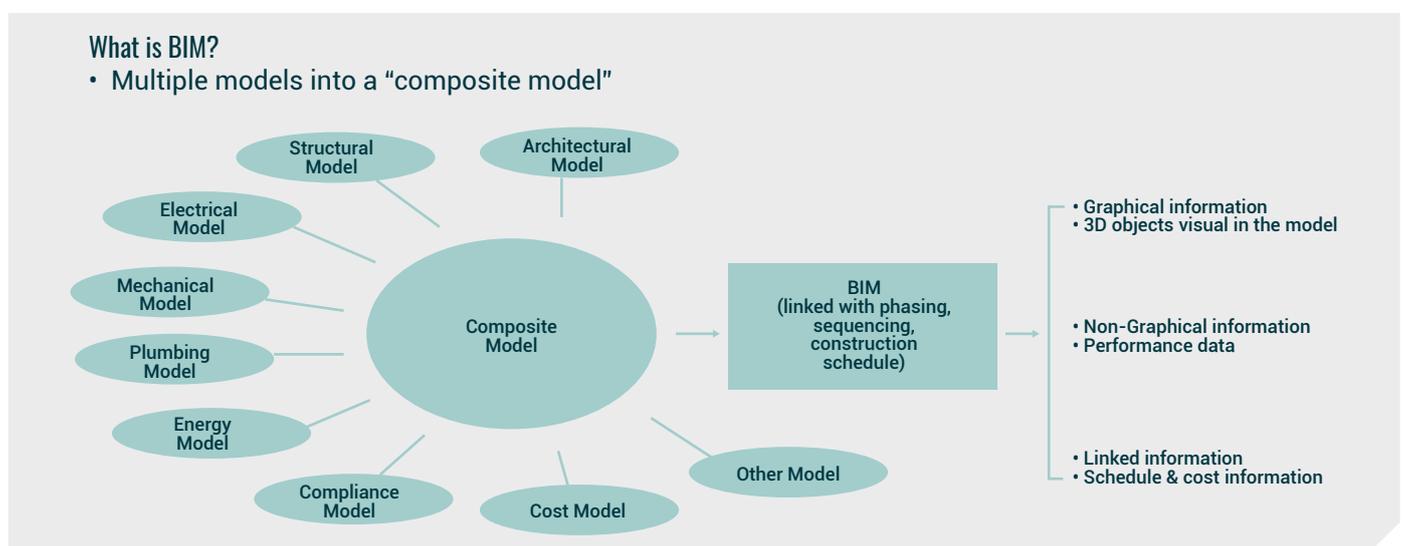
such as quantity takeoffs and detection of clashes between components. It allows analysis and integration of parameters such as heat gain, ventilation, and energy efficiency in the designs. Because it is quick, easy, and cost- effective to create a 3D model using BIM, architects often create multiple alternatives and compare those in order to select the most suitable sustainable design for a construction project.

Furthermore, using a BIM-based design model gives architects and designers easy access to the information required for creating a sustainable design. BIM models use sophisticated software tools, which enable quick information processing and easy revisions. With BIM, one can easily assess the amount of building material required to complete a project or access any other necessary information.

When projects are completed using traditional tools (i.e. without BIM), owners and operators find it difficult to update as-built information as alterations or improvements are made. As a result, maintenance, repair and replacement involve repeated surveys and costly investigation, assessment, new design and specification, impacting on technical performance, service quality, resource use and profitability.

BIM allows full, detailed component information to be embedded in the asset model. This can then be used to plan maintenance activities for assets with different design lives so that major repair and replacement programmes can be synchronised, minimising cost and disruption. It can also be used to record risks and set trigger levels for action.

Figure 1: BIM integrates all the components of a building or infrastructure project into one model

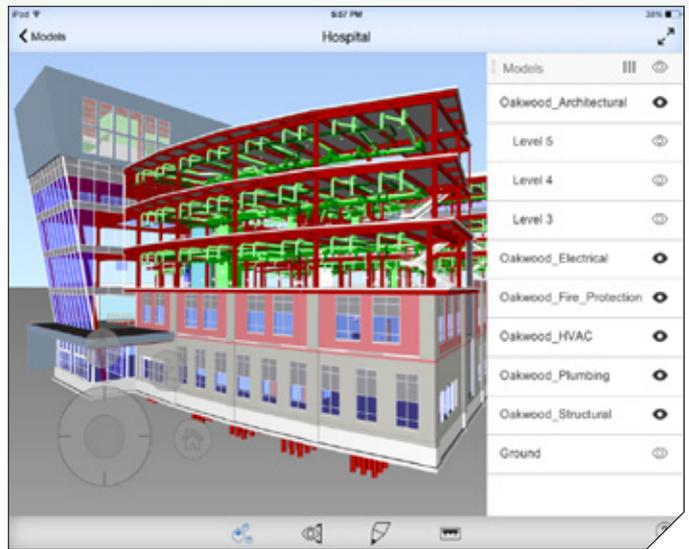


Monitoring and recording asset performance during commissioning and operation, and incorporating that data into the model, gives operators and facilities managers an opportunity to pursue greater efficiency. In buildings and on water/wastewater infrastructure where continuous measurement and control is practiced, substantial energy and carbon reductions have been achieved.

Figure 2: BIM Processes



Figure 3: BIM Model of a Hospital



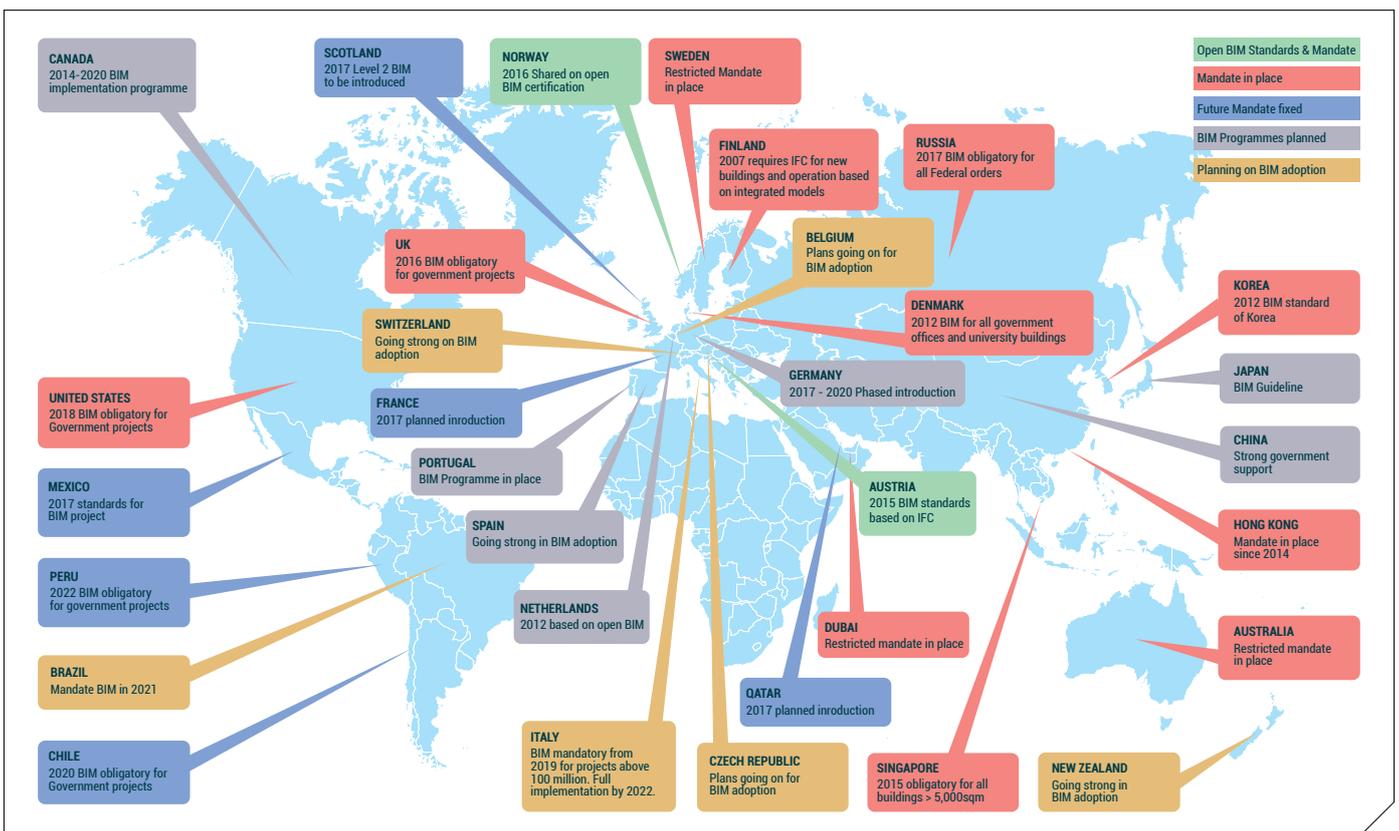
### BIM adoption around the World

The adoption of BIM is increasing worldwide as governments and private sector firms become increasingly aware of the benefits it offers. Several governments around the world have mandated the use of BIM in government financed projects. As can be seen in the following map the vast majority of these countries are in the developed world. The question that poses itself now is : What can be done by MDBs in general and IsDB in particular to encourage adoption of BIM by Member Countries ?

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1. <https://indiansustainability.wordpress.com/2015/07/03/what-is-b-i-m-and-how-can-it-lead-to-sustainable-development/>
2. <https://www.mottmac.com/views/bim-advances-sustainability>
3. <https://www.geospatialworld.net/article/bim-adoption-around-the-world-how-good-are-we/>

Figure 4: BIM adoption around the world



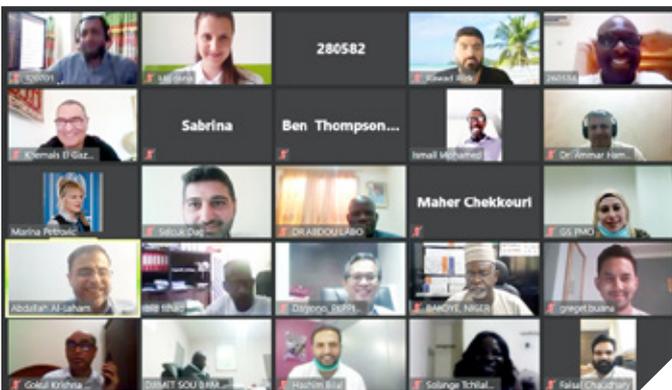
Events



ICIEC, ICD, ITFC and THIQAH Organise the Private Sector Action Response to COVID-19 Webinar and Launch New Online Initiatives in Member Countries



FAO and IsDB Strengthen Partnership with New Cooperation Agreement - Joint efforts will Focus on Improving Conditions of the Most Vulnerable in Rural Areas



TADAMON Sets in Motion the IsDB & ISFD NGOs Empowerment for Poverty Reduction Programme



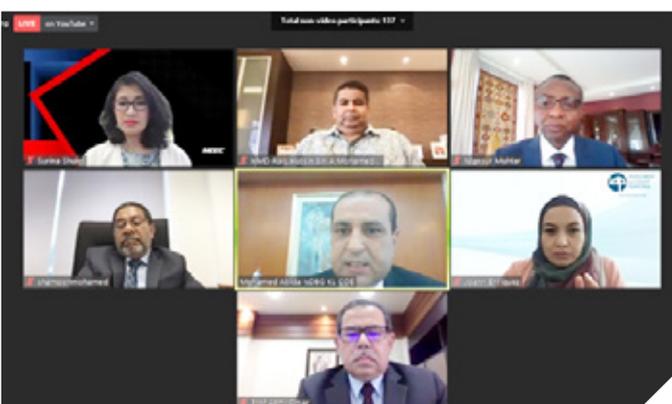
IsDB Combats Food and Nutritional Insecurity in the CILSS Region



Webinar on the Impact of COVID 19 on Intra-OIC Trade and Investment and Regional Integration



IsDB Continues its Actions in Africa to Support Medical Teams in its Member Countries



Webinar on Showcasing Malaysia's Replicable Solutions on Supporting MSMEs through COVID-19 Crisis and Beyond



BCM Team Hosts an Interactive Town Hall Meeting to Address Comments & Concerns from IsDB Group Staff

# 11th SDGs CoP Open Dialogue: COVID-19 and the SDGs Impact and Opportunities

## MDBs Collaborate to Cushion the Effect of COVID-19

The President of Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Dr. Bandar Hajjar has stated that Multilateral Development Banks are working together to cushion the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on Member Countries.

Dr. Hajjar stated this on Wednesday 13th May 2020, during the first virtual open dialogue organized by the IsDB Community of Practice on Sustainable Development Goals. Dr. Hajjar stated that as the chair of the Heads of MDBs Meetings, he is not oblivious of the importance of the SDGs in post-COVID-19 recovery. He told participants in the 11th Open Dialogue that all MDBs are working together to support Member Countries to cushion the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The virtual dialogue moderated by IsDB Special Envoy on SDGs, Dr. Rami Ahmad, had the participation of two external panelists: Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, Special Envoy to the UN Secretary General on

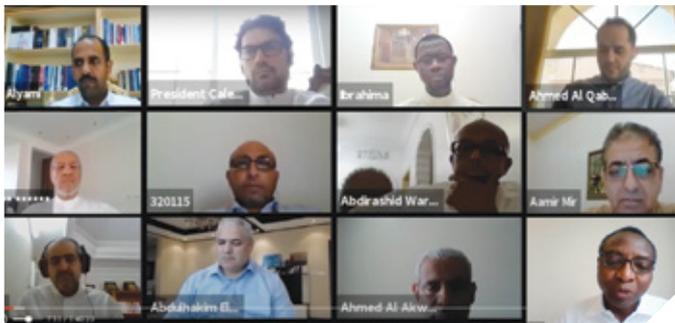


Financing the 2030 Agenda, and Mr. Bernard Wood, Director, Results Management and Aid Effectiveness Division at Asian Development Bank.

"We are already in recession as indicated by IMF. COVID-19 was caused partly by neglecting one of the SDGs, that is SDG3 on healthcare for all. As a result, we are being challenged to adopt new ways of life, and the new normal is to digitalize and localize," said Dr. Mohieldin in his keynote address.

In his remarks, Mr. Woods stated, "MDBs cannot be the whole solution here, but should do their best. Some countries have not even implemented a lockdown during the pandemic because of the advantage of technology. Distribution of resources should be targeted based on need."

The virtual dialogue had the active participation of senior members of the management, several professional staff and external participants.



## Note of Appreciation



**Rami Ahmad**  
IsDB Group Special Envoy on SDGs

Three years ago, with the blessing and support of the IsDB Group Management, we have established the SDGs Community of Practice (SDGs CoP) as part of the manifestation of the commitment of the IsDB Group to the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. We have followed a AAA strategy to carry out our mandate; namely: raising **AWARENESS**, ensuring **ALIGNMENT** and enhancing **ADVOCACY**. The overarching objective was and still is to mainstream the SDGs throughout all our activities and to make it part of the DNA of the organization. We embarked on several activities; such as holding open dialogues, hosting eminent personalities, creating a knowledge repository on the intranet, and producing this **SDGs Digest**, in addition to

organizing several outreach activities and participating in regional and global events. Most of these activities are done by a small core team of dedicated professionals on a voluntarily basis.

In order for the SDGs CoP to grow and carry out its mandate in a sustainable fashion, it is imperative that the CoP does renew itself from time to time and embark on different ideas and modalities aspiring to go to the next level. While ensuring continuity, we are injecting fresh blood and recomposing the core team. The members of the new team are: Ahmed Diken (Team Leader), Hamdi Ahmedou, Sharia Walker, Khalid Ahmed, Munira Abdalwahid, Yehia Amin, Amir Hamza Syed, and Syed Muhammad Abdullah.

Of course, the progress made so far would not have been possible without the dedication of a fine group of professionals who offered their time and ideas and spared no effort in carrying out the activities of the CoP. My sincere appreciation goes to our colleagues of the outgoing team: Aamir Ghani Mir, Ibrahimia Dit Thierno Lo, Abdirashid Warsame and Muhammad Jameel Yusha'U (who was kind enough to continue to support the new team by his vast journalistic experience).

The two teams did work together in the past few months ensuring a smooth transition. Needless to say, both on behalf of the outgoing team and in my capacity as Special Envoy on SDGs, we will continue to be at the disposal of the new core team for help and support in any way possible.

Again, the SDGs CoP is an informal body that aspires to enrich the formal work of the IsDB Group at all levels. The support of H.E. The President, the management team and the professionals in the IsDB Group was an essential enabler- the CoP would not have been productive without their support. The technical and financial support of KMIL (to the SDGs CoP and all other CoPs) is also highly appreciated. I must also mention that the willingness of the President to participate in our open dialogues and accept to take the heat of constructive criticism sometimes must also be commended and appreciated. The genuine commitment of top management is crucial in shaping up an open and healthy culture where free expression of ideas will only advance our beloved institution and enhance its productivity and effectiveness...

ومن لا يشكر الناس، لا يشكر الله

Thanks to all of you!