



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

Webinar: Confronting climate change in the global COVID-19 recovery

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Moderated by [Samantha Gross](#)

(Fellow - Foreign Policy, Energy Security and Climate Initiative, Brookings).

The year 2020 was always going to be critical for climate change. Around the world, countries are required to submit updated plans to the UN in order to comply with the Paris Agreement in a cycle meant to encourage countries to put more ambitious action on the table. Now, as leaders around the world focus on managing and recovering from the coronavirus outbreak, the political will and financing needed to address the climate crisis may be at risk. But should recovering from the pandemic and investing in climate resiliency be viewed independently? What have we learned from COVID-19 that should inform our response to climate change? And what would climate-friendly recovery plans aligned with the principles of the Paris Agreement look like?



[Todd Stern](#) Senior Fellow - Cross-Brookings Initiative on Energy and Climate (Brookings); former U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change; U.S. chief negotiator at the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

The key question is **whether and in what ways the Covid-19 will have negative or positive effects** on our ability to **address climate change**.

Potential positives: a) an important lesson is: the facts and science are real, and they matter; b) the planning and preparation are vital, the delay kills; c) confident and effective government matters; d) huge steps can happen quickly when the mindset changes. **Potential negatives:** a) There was a tremendous emphasis on the climate change to happen – and now the focus is on the virus; b) It is clearly essential that US and China rekindle their climate cooperation.

About **COP27**: We should allow the time necessary for the next COP, we should not try to force it a few months earlier. What is important is not when the COP happens, but what it produces.

About the **effect of Covid-19 on the CO2 emissions**: The fact that we are locked down in this epidemics is not going to have any long-lasting effect. The emissions did fall a lot in China – but the emissions are coming back now. The only solution is decarbonizing of our economy.



[Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven](#) Director-General, Global Issues – German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Coronavirus shows us how vulnerable our economies and our societies are. This is one Global Village – and we have to take care of it. The attention has to be paid to the scientific evidence.

The worst is still to come for many developing countries. First emerging data from Africa shows that economic activity is likely to be halved after the crisis. Unless the world now shows the developing countries and the most vulnerable its broad solidarity, this is going to **pushback on climate agenda** when we try to reactivate it.

There are many signs of the emerging solidarity, creativity, discipline, and selflessness – but are they enough? Global multilateral system should deliver more and more coherently in the coming months.

We should use this opportunity, to make sure the emergency economic packages also **serve the goals of the Paris Agreement**, in order to get rid of climate-unfriendly ways of doing business. The investment plans can also be reconsidered, the governments should keep re-analyzing and re-focusing the bigger investment portfolios. We are trying to keep momentum on the ground in **Germany**, such as doubling our climate finance and stimulating more funding for those vulnerable not only to Covid-19 but also extreme weather events.

We must continue to provide support to organizations and programs that have been at the forefront of helping refugees and **vulnerable communities**. There is also a specific need to deal with the gender issues in Covid-19 crisis. We have to pay more attention to the role of women – including to their role in overcoming the crisis.

Digitalization is going to bring big transformation to our societies and economies; it can bring a lot of benefits – but it is also going to be one of the biggest challenges in the future.



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Pablo Vieira Global Director - NDC Partnership Support Unit

Three issues to focus on: 1. We need to urgently support the countries in implementing their NDCs. 2. Climate change agenda should not drop from the political agenda. 3. We need to support countries to recover in a more resilient sustainable, and climate-compatible way. Costs of recovery will be higher than the possible costs of prevention.

It is ever so important to link climate action with the sustainable agenda. The world is doing things that were unimaginable a couple of months ago – this should **inspire the climate ambition**.

There are many ways of keeping the momentum, e.g. virtual gatherings and discussions that will allow it to stay at the high political level.

The **submission of the new NDCs** is fundamental for us to be able to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. What is even more important is to make sure that this NDCs are ambitious, realistic and implementable.

The **recovery** needs to be more durable, this is about achieving the goals in a more sustainable way. Capacity building, technical assistance, expertise on the ground is essential. The Covid-19 recovery will be more effective and durable if climate action is integral. The responses to both crises are mutually reinforcing.

The developing countries should use these limited one-time financial resources to find permanent solutions, e.g. by changing their policies and their regulatory frameworks.



Stéphane Hallegatte Lead Economist, Climate Change Group - World Bank

Double impacts going on at the moment: human costs and poverty rising.

We are focused at the moment on crisis management, but that does not mean that there is nothing to say about climate. Examples of dealing with other crises (e.g. 2016 Fiji cyclone, 2015 Kenya draught) show that **timeliness** is everything. We need to act quick to replace the lost

income. All the delays are creating terrible impacts on people.

Because we have Covid-19, does not mean that we have no **other risks**. Education: According to the data analyzed in Mexico, when children are taken out of school during the crisis, 30% of them do not go back. There should also be no excluding of women, no excluding on the basis of ethnicity and religion.

We need to start preparing now for what will happen in a couple of months. Finance will be only part of the problem – technical assistance will be absolutely necessary. There is opportunity to build **long term climate action**. The systems we put in place now may be the systems we have in place in 5 or 10 years when the next crisis occurs; we need to build long-term resilience.

Sustainable recovery does not mean compromising on economic or employment targets - it means achieving them while providing sustainability benefits at the same time. The best way is to **build climate into the Covid-19 response**, to make it as efficient as possible, not an additional agenda.

It might also be better to focus not only on climate, but on broader issues that have climate embedded in them.

*"It is really important to keep climate in mind and include it in recovery process... it can be done and we can find ourselves in a better place", **Samantha Gross**, closing the event.*