



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

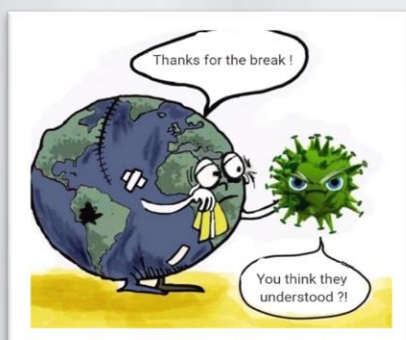
“The New Business as Usual? Environment and COVID-19?” by GCSP – 14 May 2020

Moderated by Dr. Jean-Marc Rickli, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)



Ms Anna Brach – Head of Human Security, GCSP

The crisis contributes to raising awareness in people. What can **Human Security approach** offer for this discussions? The importance of **protection** (of individuals by the government and the international community) and **capacity development** (empowerment of individuals and communities to enable them to deal with threats themselves). Covid-19 as an opportunity to invent a new “business as normal” and do better at preventing the global crises.



Nexus between environment and health:

- **Pollution:** kills 9 million people every year;
- **Environmental degradation** (land, water, biodiversity, food production);
- **Movement of people:** may also be caused by natural or man-made disasters, cause physical and mental health issues;
- **Movement, migration of species.**

Are the trends going to stick? What will be the new normal?



Mr Oli Brown – Associate Fellow, Chatham House, Senior Advisor, TrustWorks Global, Conflict and Environment Observatory

3 reasons for optimism: 1. Individual action has enormous consequences; 2. Changes in how people, governments, business think about risk; 3. Importance of prevention, early action and resilience.

The impact of Covid-19 on global cooperation: being a globalist is almost becoming an insult. What is the future of **multilateralism**? Backlash between the globalization and global cooperation.

The multilateral system has to earn the trust. The challenge is that national systems blame the multilateral things for not doing the things they can do themselves: multilateralism becomes a scapegoat.

National systems are being more responsive now – we have to vote for leaders with a long-term vision, we need leaders that will harness multilateral cooperation, not blame it. Everybody has to be taking responsibility for the mechanisms we have in place.



Mr Vicente Paolo Yu – Senior Legal Advisor, TWN, Visiting Research Fellow, UNRISD, Associate Fellow GCSP

- Improved outdoor air and water quality, including reduction of GHG emissions in urban areas as vehicle transportation, factories, commercial activity shut down – **but only for duration of the pandemic.**
- Likely increased incidence of difficulties in municipal **waste management** to handle medical waste and single-use Covid-19 related plastic waste.
- Rise in **poaching and deforestation** due to weakened protection enforcement efforts.
- **Fish stocks** recover as fishers stay home (but loss of income for small-scale fishers).



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Systemic impact of Covid-19 in the Global South

- The health crisis has rapidly turned into an **economic and financial crisis, particularly for the Global South**, compounding the existing adverse effects of structural inequalities in the global economic system on development and poverty in the South, climate change, environmental crises.
- **Developing countries hit hardest** economically.
- **Poverty and inequality** due to systemic gaps and failures exacerbated within and among countries → **increasing vulnerability** to other crises (climate, biodiversity, desertification, waste).

Systemic approaches in response

- Post-pandemic response should be **systemic and structural, transformative** not incremental, not return to pre-pandemic business as usual;
- Build systemic, equitable, multi-dimensional and sustainable **community resilience in developing countries** to sustainably develop, eradicate poverty, address climate change, deal with environment crises;
- Strengthened international cooperation and coordination;
- Short-term pandemic response measures should take into account **broader long-term goals**, especially those related to **poverty eradication; sustainable development**, including environmental protection and clean and renewable energy; **climate change; food security; gender equality; health; education; sustained economic growth**, including full and productive employment and decent work for all; **strengthening existing or providing new social safety nets**; strengthening **public sector provision of public goods** and services, including health systems, basic services, and protection of the national and global commons.



[Dr. Dhanasree Jayaram, Assistant Professor, Department of Geopolitics and International Relations, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Research Fellow, Earth Systems Governance](#)

The extreme weather conditions during the lockdown measures (extreme heat, monsoons, flooding) → **multiple hazards at the same time** → **integrated risk assessment needed.**

Food insecurity (in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan Afghanistan...). Agrarian crisis. The question of food insecurity, equity and justice is especially acute for the countries of the so-called Global South.

How to come out of this crisis: more structural reforms are needed.



[Mr Alexander Verbeek, Founder, Institute for Planetary Security, Associate Fellow GCSP](#)

Lockdown is NOT climate action.

The emissions are down – but not so down as we would hope them to be.
25 billion dollars in US and Europe available to bailout air industry **without any green responsibilities attached.** Need for conditionality.

Preparation, science, early action matter.

The pandemic was predicted, even if we did not know when or where the crisis will hit. With the **climate change** we know – the **predictions are extremely precise.**

If we want to keep this planet a liveable place, we have to learn from this pandemic. On an **individual level**: You can fly less – and you can eat less meat.