

ECOSOC panel discussions

Panel 3: Human well-being and capabilities: Building back more resilient, healthy, equitable and sustainable societies

Soumya will be a panelist and so will be asked to speak for 4 minutes at beginning of the panel. Each panelist will initially be given 4 minutes each to contribute to the panel from the perspective of their work, highlighting innovative and integrated policy solutions for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from the pandemic.

Talking points for Dr Soumya

This COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the **interdependence** and **holistic nature of SDGs**. As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic (SDG3, health and wellbeing) has consequences on other SDGs. We can take some visible examples:

- The pandemic has a significant impact on **jobs and labour market (SDG8: Good job and economic growth)** challenges, particularly in terms of underemployment, unemployment, disproportionately among the most vulnerable workers, informal workers, youth and women, etc.
- This has further consequences on poverty (**SDG1: No poverty**), pushing an additional 132 million people into chronic hunger (**SDG2: No hunger**) in 2020. ¹
- The COVID-19 pandemic magnifies gender inequalities (**SDG5: Gender equality**), exposing the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, facing different forms of discrimination. Besides, the pandemic has exacerbated situations of **vulnerability experienced by women and girls**, undermining their access to food and disrupting essential health services such as ANC, PNC.
- The pandemic highlights the importance of **Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) (SDG9: industry, innovation and infrastructure)** as STI has played a crucial role in developing **vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics** for COVID-19; **geospatial technology** to record and report the virus' spread; **contact tracing apps**, virtual collaboration, information and data sharing tools and communication infrastructure. The STI provided an opportunity to share "**real-time**" information, strengthening national collaboration and global solidarity.

¹ 2021 ECOSOC Integration Dialogues
(https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/integration/2021/Key-messages_Integration-Dialoguesrev22Jun.pdf)

- During this pandemic, the STI has enabled **continuity in education (SDG4: Quality education), remote work (SDG8)**.
- Also, the application of **big data and artificial intelligence** has reshaped healthcare and education sectors as it enables complex-decision making, identification and reporting of emergencies.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is considered an opportunity to address **climate change (SDG13: climate action)** and build a new social contract that is inclusive and responsible.
- However, we need to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines as no one is safe until we all are.
- As of 28 June, 2,928M doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in 215 countries, areas, territories & economies. Of these, **over 85.5%** have gone to **high-income or upper-middle-income countries**, while low-income countries have received just 0.3%. **14.4%** of doses have been administered in **LICs/LMICs** while representing **46.7% of the world's population**. Inequity is decreasing, but HICs have administered **62x more doses per inhabitant** than LICs.
- We also need to give attention to other critical diseases such as HIV, TB by developing affordable vaccines, treatments and innovative delivery methods. We need **international collaboration (SDG17: partnerships on the goals)** on this.
- This includes more **equitable access to scientific knowledge and technologies**, including digital technologies, which is crucial **to close the gap on SDG3** and enable other SDGs.
- It is essential to **strengthen national innovation systems (SDG9)**, including investing in education and data-related skills, promoting international cooperation, and the commitment to global solidarity to ensure equitable healthcare access.
- Therefore, the ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) 's work is crucial as it takes a global, holistic approach to the COVID-19 pandemic response. We encourage to continue to synergise and promote joint actions among its subsidiary bodies.