

## Report on First Consultative Science Platform

# Bouncing Forward Sustainably: Pathways to a post-COVID World Governance for Sustainability

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## **Abstract**

COVID-19 has once again brought the role of governments, and their ability to cooperate and coordinate their actions into the spotlight. It has however also highlighted significant gaps in various areas including the science-policy interface; the ability of institutional mechanisms to deal with crises; in the preparedness of global and national science communities and government systems; and in access to reliable, verifiable data to inform decision making.

The consultative meetings around this topic draw on lessons learned and experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic to identify effective policy tools and mechanisms that would also give due credence to issues of poverty alleviation, justice, inequalities, and the environment. The goal is to suggest pathways for more robust and responsive governance systems for an uncertain future.

This report gives a summary over the discussions in the first consultative meeting that took place online, on June 10, 2020.

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## About the authors

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## Acknowledgments

The team would like to thank the Chair and all participants in the 1<sup>st</sup> consultative meeting for their valuable contributions.

# Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Consultation on Governance for Sustainability

## Agenda (all CEST)

14.00-14.10 Introduction and objectives: Leena Srivastava

Chair: Adebayo Olukoshi

14.10-14.20 Overview: Reinhard Mechler

14.20-15.00 Tour de table: Reinhard Mechler. Rapporteur : Teresa M. Deubelli

15.00-16.00 Break-out groups

BREAKOUT GROUP 1: Global governance. Chair: Maria Ivanova. Rapporteur: Anne-Sophie Stevance & Teresa M. Deubelli

BREAKOUT GROUP 2: National systems governance. Chair: Gordon Mc Bean. Rapporteur: Reinhard Mechler

16-16.15 Comfort break

16.15 -17.00 Plenary discussion: Adebayo Olukoshi & Reinhard Mechler

17.00-17.15 Next steps: Reinhard Mechler & Luis Gomez-Echeverri

## Overview

The first consultation on the governance theme had broad participation from 46 leading experts (29 external and 17 IIASA-ISC) from Asia, Africa, Latin-America and Europe.

## Approach and Framing

- Building on background paper and 3-4 summary findings
- Framing and definition: Governance as “totality of actors, rules, conventions, processes and mechanisms concerned with how relevant... information is collected, analysed and communicated, and how management decisions are taken.” (IRGC, 2005)
- Two entry points
  - What did the COVID-19 crisis reveal to us about governance for sustainable futures?
  - How is governance to take proper account of compound and systemic risk for building resilience?
- Two levels and two foci
  - Global Governance and Governance in National Systems,
  - Governance Institutions and processes.

# Summary of discussions

## Tour de table: What is the ONE lesson that Covid-19 has revealed to you in terms of enhancing governance for sustainability?

In the plenary discussion, participants highlighted that governance approaches to address Covid-19 can be seen from two angles: on the one hand, several participants stressed that unprecedented collective action characterized the approach at global levels, even if clumsy (with some stressing that the very clumsy nature of cooperation is what ultimately results in successful containment of the pandemic), while on the other hand, several pointed to the failure of existing global governance frameworks, with action driven by mostly by individual states, including within the framework of strong supranational cooperation arrangements such as the European Union. At national levels, several participants raised concerns about the democratic nature of governance approaches in countries otherwise ranked high on the EIU Democracy Index, with some experts warning that Covid-19 may act as an accelerator of political transitions towards more autocratic approaches. Several raised questions, in particular surrounding the inclusion of expert advice as well as views and priorities of vulnerable and marginalised groups and the population at-large. Participants also observed a divide between wanting to go back to the 'old governance normal' and harnessing the crisis to transform governance towards more polycentric, flexible, innovative and inclusive approaches.

### 'Mindmap' for the tour de table

Scales	Governance		Long-term issues are today's issue!
	Institutions	Processes	
Global	<p><b>Global governance frameworks did not work</b>, response characterized by national/subnational governance</p> <p>clumsy global &amp; regional <b>cooperation</b></p> <p>Addressing issues of <b>equity</b> globally</p>	<p>Global governance of what? Risk drivers, impacts, ...?</p> <p>Integration of expert advice into decision-making (grey rhinos) – how to make it happen?</p> <p>Unprecedented <b>collective</b> action to face shared challenges around the world</p>	
Regional	<p>Addressing immediate threat vs longstanding critical challenges for sustainability (e.g. gender, climate change...)</p> <p>Political regimes: Covid-19 as an accelerator of political transitions (sharp move towards more <b>autocracy</b>?)</p>	<p><b>Sustainability issues at center of debates</b> → new landscape re sustainability transformation processes</p> <p><b>Transformations possible and acceptable?</b></p> <p>Democracy as usual feasible?</p>	<p>Trans-disciplinary approaches observed as essential, but not happening often enough</p> <p>Processes for harnessing co-benefits of Covid-19 in the long run?</p>
National	<p>Biodiversity governance to prevent spread of diseases?</p>	<p>What governance systems to include and <b>empower the most vulnerable</b> ?</p>	<p>Value of scenarios</p> <p>Covid-19 = evolving disaster → focus on <b>social, economic, civil security</b></p>
Subnational/ Individual	<p><b>Resource conflicts</b> → need for integrated governance</p> <p>Strong desire to go back to old normal</p>	<p>Community governance critical</p> <p><b>Behavioral change</b> observed in response to immediate threat</p>	<p>Supporting the most vulnerable = critical challenge</p> <p><b>Shifting boundaries of vulnerability:</b> rich are affected by movement restrictions and spread of Covid-19</p>

Observed moments of change wrt to formal and informal change

"System" unchanged?

False dilemma – health vs. economics wrong variables and questions?

# BREAKOUT GROUP 1: Global governance.

Chair: Maria Ivanova. Rapporteurs: Anne-Sophie Stevance & Teresa M. Deubelli

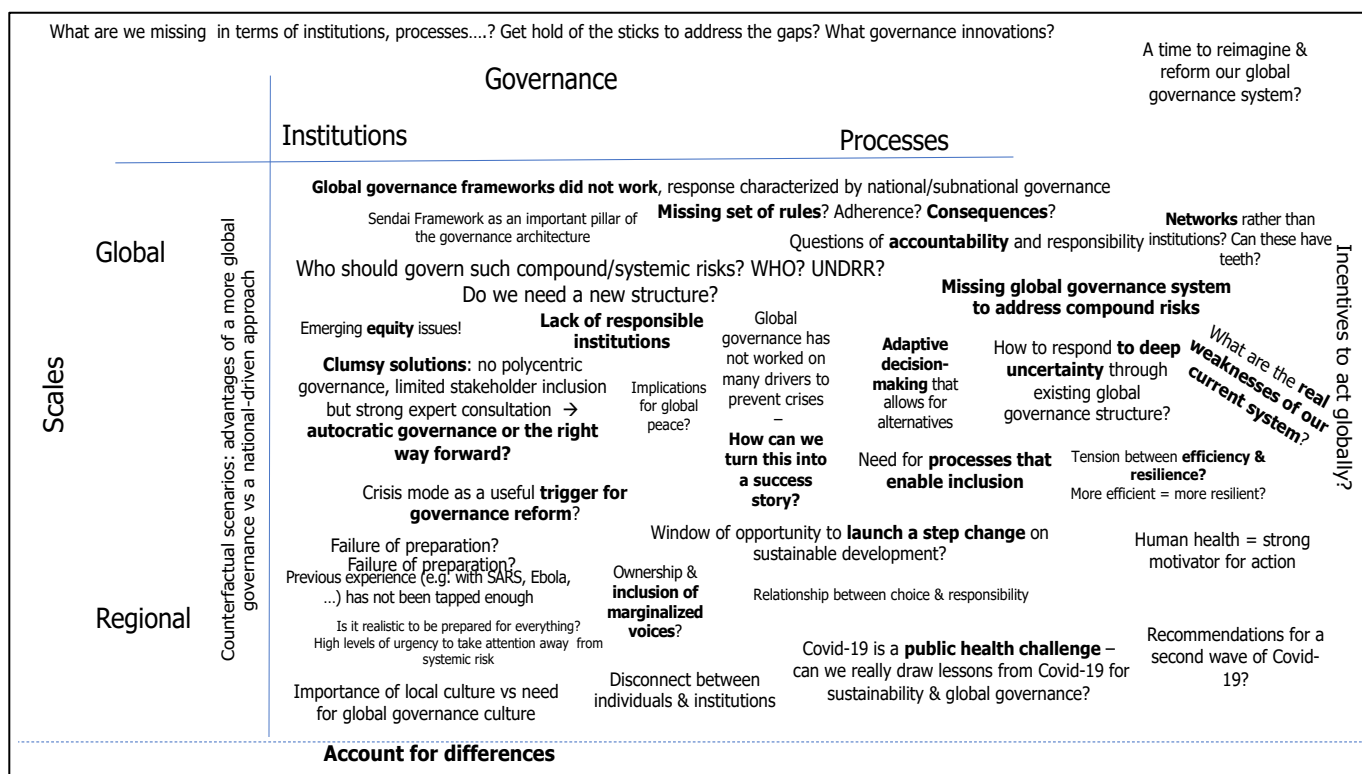
**Guiding question: How to govern compound and systemic risk for building resilience at global (and regional) scales?**

*Additional questions considered*

- How is COVID-19 similar/different to other global risks?
- What governance regimes are in place (or emerging) to deal with comparable global-reach risks (e.g., climate change, other pandemics, financial crises) and why are these more/less effective than COVID-19 governance?
- How does the world assign responsibility and liability for systemic risks that cross national borders?
- What are opportunities for compound (national and global) risk governance, i.e. tackling multiple shocks concurrently and creating co-benefits to further overcome silos in approaches that focus on either recovery or prevention?
- What institutional rearrangements would be needed for effective and adaptive (global) systemic risk governance?

**Key discussion points (see overview)**

'Mindmap' for BOG1



- The lack of preparedness for dealing with crises such as COVID-19 questions the adequacy of current governance arrangements in dealing with shocks of this magnitude and in dealing with uncertainty. This raises the question of the kind of governance arrangements that can catalyse the need to transform towards sustainability and the need to build resilience to shocks.

- The COVID19 pandemic also highlight the capacity to act collectively in the face of an immediate threat, health being a particularly good motivator for countries to act.
- There is currently no global governance mechanism to address systemic risks – risk is rather managed by specific actors. This compartmentalization creates blind spots and a void in terms of defining responsibilities and accountability to act for the prevention of these risks and respond when these risks are realised.
- This needed holistic governance approach requires a focus on baseline securities: social, human rights, food, health (which are linked to a number of underlying drivers of risk).
- Creating a global governance system to manage systemic risks and advance sustainability would have a number of multiple requirements:
  - Multi-scalar: local, national, regional and global scales,
  - Multi-stakeholder: but with attention to the specific roles and responsibilities of the public sector, the private sector and civil society,
  - The fundamental requirement of building institutional capacity, ensuring the rule of law, attention to human rights and civic freedoms,
  - Be premised on democratic and deliberative decision-making (given the trends towards autocratisation and the restriction of freedoms witnessed in many countries as governments took emergency measures).
- **Scenarios** of how different kinds of shocks can impact societies across sectors, and countries/scales can be useful in identifying the key components of that global governance system.

## BREAKOUT GROUP 2: National systems governance.

Chair: Gordon Mc Bean. Rapporteur: Reinhard Mechler

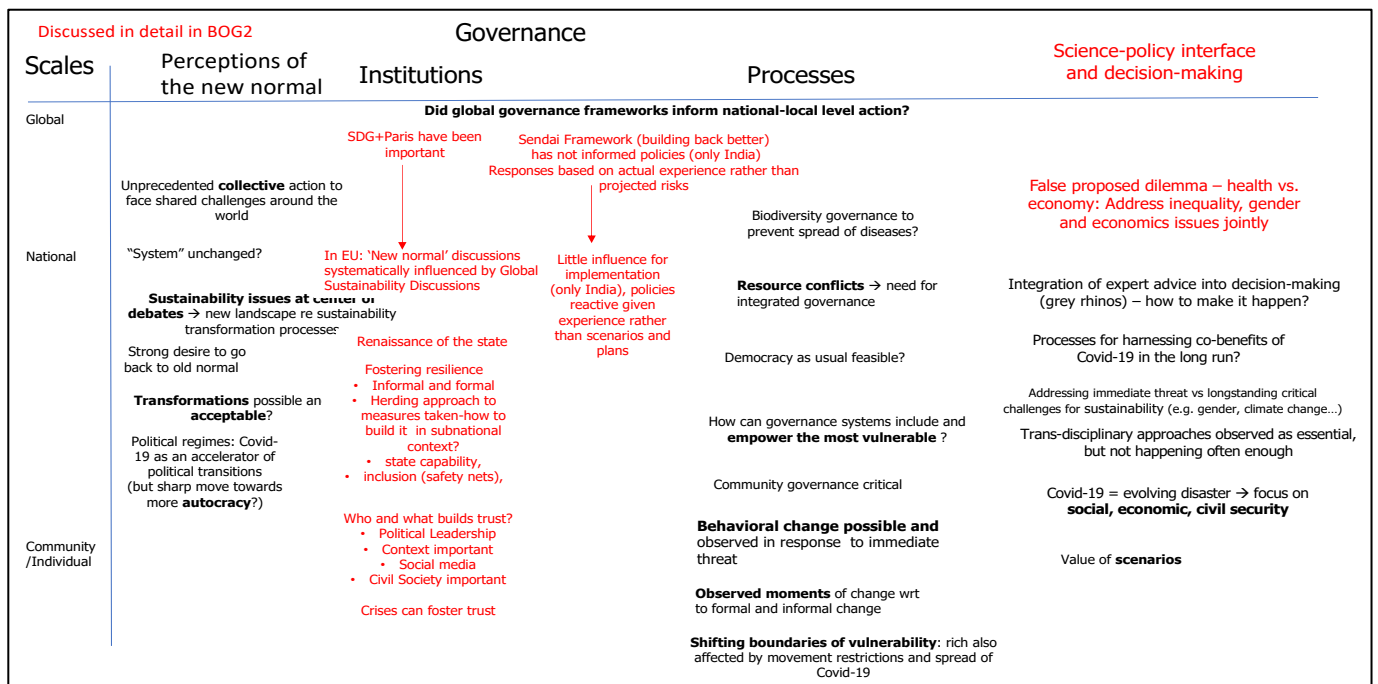
**Guiding question: How can national systems (national and subnational) effectively and inclusively govern compound and systemic risk for building resilience?**

*Additional questions to be considered*

- How is COVID-19 similar/different to other risks?
- What governance regimes are in place (or emerging) to deal with comparable global-reach risks (e.g., climate change, other pandemics, financial crises) and why are these more/less effective than COVID-19 governance?
- How do countries assign responsibility and liability for systemic risks that cross national borders?
- What are opportunities for compound (national) risk governance, i.e. tackling multiple shocks concurrently and creating co-benefits to further overcome silos in approaches that focus on either recovery or prevention?
- What institutional rearrangements would be needed for effective and adaptive systemic risk governance?



## 'Mindmap' for BOG2



### Key discussion points

- Did global frameworks inform national systems action on Covid?
  - YES: SDG+Paris have been important for e.g. shaping the EU new green deal and Covid recovery packages - EU EPAs are considering so as part of 'New normal' discussions.
  - NO: Sendai: not as much little scope for implementation (only India), responses based on actual experience rather than plans and projected risks.
- Trust in experts and decision-makers ? Can crises can foster trust
- Who and what builds trust?
  - Political Leadership,
  - Context important,
  - Social media,
  - Civil Society important.
- Renaissance of the strong state that builds resilience:
  - Informal and formal sectors,

- Herding approach to measures taken globally-how to build it in subnational context?
- Attention to be paid to state capability, inclusion (safety nets), science-policy interface.
- Risk-based decision-making to consider,
  - Covid and other diseases,
  - Health and economic outcomes,
  - Gender and inequality.

## Synthesis

Our consultation revealed various interesting and policy-relevant issues. In order to proceed, we suggest to focus on revising the original resilience proposition: Enhancing governance for resilience as a springboard for sustainability transformations.

Participants agreed that Covid-19 highlights the need to foster polycentric and inclusive, holistic governance approaches to that build resilience systemically (i.e., through an integrated approach across health, social and economic systems). The crisis is not only a chance to upgrade resilience-based efforts and build back better towards relevant transformations. In the absence of universal cures to ongoing epidemiological and climate crises particularly threatening the most vulnerable, socio-economic resilience is a necessity to build back at all and ensure that relevant transformations may further proceed, and needs to be integrated into governance provisions at the following scales:

- **Global and regional governance:** Systemic and compound risk governance through informal and formal institutions is to be enhanced so that the global 'web of security' is to be strengthened. A more integrative, globally coordinated governance approach to minimize the impacts of COVID-19's systemic risks. To better prepare for future events, better aligned international cooperation is needed including truly empowered global and regional institutions. In terms of curative efforts, this could mean
  - ✓ increased support for institutions such as the WHO (the only global institution of its kind) or strengthening the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM) for fighting health pandemics;
  - ✓ in terms of preventive efforts, it could also mean globally- coordinated levies on environmental externalities (carbon etc.) targeted at improving environmental and health outcomes as well as reducing the adverse effects of globalization through impacts on trade and travel, the latter having been a key COVID-19 driver,
  - ✓ overcoming silos between prevention, response and transformation,
  - ✓ Improved sharing of data on data, monitoring and (multi-hazard) early warning. Ensure data between states is reliable, shared appropriately so that it can be factored into decision-making,

- ✓ ensuring that 10% of ODA/climate funding to reach the most vulnerable at community levels for dealing with compound and systemic risks.
- **Governance in national systems:** We propose that governments put resilience centre-stage and thus help safeguard individual and collective rights (part for migrant labour, gender, the poor), liberties and achievements of democratically constituted welfare states. This may involve
  - ✓ Overcoming 'herding' approaches taken to fostering resilience to Covid-19 to account for specific national systems circumstances (incl. national, subnational, community-level),
  - ✓ Attention to be paid to improving state capability, inclusion (safety nets) as well as appropriate science-policy interfaces for taking 'right' and acceptable decisions.

### Next steps:

- Update background paper with additional authors to contribute to
  - Working report IIASA-ISC,
  - Commentary, e.g. in Nature Sustainability.
- Concretize scenario/pathways perspective,
- Direct 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation towards
  - Potential options and recommendations,
  - Scenario approach in 2 BREAKOUT GROUP: best and worst (systemic risk) governance outcomes at scales from global to national,
- 3<sup>rd</sup> consultation: elaborate recommendations and potential policy options.

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## Participants of the online consultations

### Chair:

**Adebayo Olukoshi**, Director for Africa and West Asia at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

### Participants:

**Ann Vaughan**, Director for Policy and Advocacy at Mercy Corps

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**Julia Leininger**, Head of Research Programme at German Development Institute (DIE)

**Kanako Morita**, Senior Researcher at Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute (FFPRI)

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**JoAnne Linnerooth-Bayer**, Emeritus Scholar with the Risk & Resilience research program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)

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