

# LESSONS IN MULTILATERAL EFFECTIVENESS

**MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS?:  
THE MULTILATERAL RESPONSE TO  
COVID-19**

**OVERVIEW**



**STOP**  
THE SPREAD  
OF CORONAVIRUS

PROTECT YOURSELF  
AND OTHERS AROUND YOU

KEEP YOUR  
DISTANCE





RESTAURANT

TOILET

**STOP**  
THE SPREAD  
OF COVID-19





# LESSONS IN MULTILATERAL EFFECTIVENESS

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This report is published under the responsibility of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). MOPAN is an independent body that is governed by a Steering Committee composed of representatives of all of its members and served by a permanent Secretariat. The Secretariat is hosted at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and bound by its administrative rules and procedures and is independent in terms of financing and the content and implementation of its work programme.

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The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is an independent network of 21 members<sup>1</sup> sharing a common interest in improving the effectiveness of the multilateral system. MOPAN commissioned this analytical study to build upon its well-established performance assessments, adding value by offering a contribution to system-level learning about the impact of COVID-19. This study is part of the series of Lessons in Multilateral Performance being conducted by MOPAN on a range of salient topics related to the multilateral system.

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<sup>1</sup> As of 1 August 2022: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States are members; the European Union and Türkiye are observers.

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# ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

<b>ACT-A</b>	Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>Africa CDC (AFR CDC)</b>	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>AiIB</b>	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
<b>APVAX</b>	Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AVAT</b>	AU African Vaccine Acquisition Trust
<b>BBB</b>	Build Back Better
<b>BWI</b>	Bretton Woods Institutions
<b>CAT DDOs</b>	World Bank's Catastrophic Draw Down Options
<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis
<b>CCRT</b>	IMF Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust
<b>CEPI</b>	Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations
<b>CERF</b>	UN's Central Emergency Response Fund
<b>CF</b>	Common Framework for Debt Treatments
<b>CFE</b>	WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies
<b>CGM</b>	Centennial Growth Model
<b>CM</b>	Coordination Mechanism
<b>CMT</b>	WHO Crisis Management Team
<b>CPRO</b>	Comprehensive Response to COVID-19
<b>CPRPs</b>	COVID-19 preparedness and response plans
<b>COVID-19</b>	Novel Coronavirus-19
<b>COVAX</b>	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
<b>CoT</b>	Comparability of Treatment
<b>CSCS</b>	COVID-19 Supply Chain System
<b>CSF</b>	ADB's Countercyclical Support Facility
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DMCs</b>	Developing Member Countries
<b>DSA</b>	Debt Sustainability Analysis

<b>DSSI</b>	Debt Service Suspension Initiative
<b>EPG</b>	The G20's Eminent Persons Group
<b>ERF</b>	Emergency Response Framework
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organisation
<b>FIF</b>	Financial Intermediary Fund
<b>FTFC</b>	Fast-Track COVID-19 Facility
<b>G7</b>	Group of 7
<b>G20</b>	Group of 20
<b>GAVI</b>	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GCM</b>	General Cooperation Mechanism for Education
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEEW/G</b>	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls
<b>GEM</b>	Global Education Meeting
<b>GEM3</b>	Gender Equality Marker Code of Three
<b>GFATM</b>	The Global Fund
<b>GHO</b>	Global Humanitarian Overview
<b>GHRP</b>	Global Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>GNI</b>	Gross National Income
<b>GPMB</b>	Global Preparedness Monitoring Board
<b>GPG</b>	Global Public Good
<b>GRID</b>	Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development
<b>H1N1</b>	Influenza A virus subtype H1N1 (Swine Flu)
<b>HC</b>	Humanitarian Coordinators
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Teams
<b>HIC</b>	High Income Country
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>HRBA</b>	Human Rights Based Approach
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>IADB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFI</b>	International Financial Institutions
<b>IHR</b>	International Health Regulations

<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INFF</b>	Integrated National Financing Framework
<b>IPPR</b>	Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response
<b>IsDB</b>	Islamic Development Bank
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>LIC</b>	Low Income Country
<b>LMIC</b>	Lower-Middle Income Country
<b>MAF</b>	Management and Accountability Framework
<b>MDB</b>	Multilateral Development Bank
<b>MDTF</b>	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
<b>MIC</b>	Middle Income Country
<b>MLTF</b>	Multilateral Leaders Task Force
<b>MO</b>	Multilateral Organisation
<b>MOPAN</b>	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MPA</b>	The IMF and the World Bank Multi-Pronged Approach
<b>MPA</b>	Global COVID-19 Multi-Phase Programmatic Approach
<b>MPTF</b>	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
<b>MS</b>	Multilateral System
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NRA</b>	Non-Resident Agencies
<b>OCHA</b>	UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OPAG</b>	IASC Operational Policy and Advisory Group
<b>PEF</b>	Pandemic Emergency Finance Facility
<b>PFM</b>	Public Financial Management
<b>PHEIC</b>	Public Health Event of International Concern
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>PPR</b>	Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response
<b>PPPR FIF</b>	Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response Financial Intermediary Fund
<b>PRGT</b>	IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust
<b>RC</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinators

<b>RCF</b>	Rapid Credit Facility
<b>RFI</b>	Rapid Financing Instrument
<b>RGAs</b>	Rapid Gender Assessment Surveys
<b>RC System</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinators System
<b>RG</b>	Reference Group
<b>RSF</b>	IMF Resilience and Sustainability Facility
<b>RST</b>	Resilience and Sustainability Trust
<b>SARS</b>	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SDR</b>	Special Drawing Rights
<b>SDRM</b>	Sovereign Debt Resolution Mechanism
<b>SEIA</b>	UN Socio-economic Impact Assessment
<b>SERP</b>	UN Socio-Economic Recovery Plan
<b>SLL</b>	Short-Term Liquidity Line
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>SPF</b>	Swiss Philanthropy Fund
<b>SPRP</b>	WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan
<b>SRF</b>	WHO Solidarity Response Fund
<b>SSA</b>	Sub-Saharan Africa
<b>SWE</b>	System Wide Evaluation
<b>TAG</b>	Technical Advisory Group
<b>TGE</b>	Transnational Giving Europe
<b>UFE</b>	Under-Funded Emergencies
<b>UMIC</b>	Upper Middle Income Country
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCMT</b>	UN Country Management Team
<b>UNCT</b>	UN Country Team
<b>UNDCO</b>	UN Development Coordination Office
<b>UNDP</b>	UN Development Programme
<b>UNDS</b>	UN Development System
<b>UNEP</b>	UN Environmental Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	UN Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
<b>UNF</b>	UN Foundation
<b>UNFPA</b>	UN Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	UN High Commissioner for Refugees

<b>UNICEF</b>	UN Children’s Fund
<b>UNOPS</b>	UN Office for Project Services
<b>UNRC</b>	UN Resident Coordinator
<b>US</b>	The United States of America
<b>UNSDCF</b>	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UNSDG</b>	UN Sustainable Development Group
<b>UNSG</b>	UN Secretary-General
<b>UN WOMEN</b>	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>WAHO</b>	West African Health Organisation
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WBG</b>	World Bank Group
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHE</b>	WHO Health Emergencies Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization



# OVERVIEW

**The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is an independent network of 21 members who share a common interest in improving the effectiveness of the multilateral system.**<sup>2</sup> MOPAN's mission is to support its members in assessing the effectiveness of multilateral organisations (MOs) that receive development and humanitarian funding. Aiming to strengthen MOs' contribution to overall development and humanitarian results, MOPAN generates, collects, analyses and presents relevant and credible information on their organisational and development effectiveness. This knowledge is intended to contribute to organisational learning within and among MOs, their direct clients, partners and other stakeholders.

**MOPAN's analytical studies series "Lessons in Multilateral Effectiveness" examines emerging challenges for MOs in delivering the Sustainable Development Agenda across the multilateral system.** Analytical studies provide an independent, evidence-based perspective on these challenges to identify underlying drivers and constraints and offer lessons for strengthening multilateral responses. Going forward, analytical studies will also inform how MOPAN implements its assessments, including incremental adjustments its approach to reflect contemporary challenges facing MOs and the concerns of its members.

**COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of co-ordination among MOs as they seek to address the multidimensional impacts of global challenges in an increasingly interconnected world.** While many assessments are being conducted of the way in which individual MOs have responded to the pandemic, less attention has been paid to how MOs have coordinated to make the multilateral response more than the sum of its parts. This study has been undertaken to:

- i. describe how co-ordination between MOs took place;
- ii. determine how MO co-ordination contributed to an effective multilateral response;
- iii. identify enabling and constraining factors for co-ordination; and
- iv. identify key lessons to strengthen MO co-ordination in responding of future crises.

**This study identifies lessons and potential policy implications for building upon MO Co-ordination in responding to COVID-19 to scale-up MO Co-ordination to address future crisis and deliver on the Sustainable Development Agenda.** The study will inform how MOPAN examines partnerships and coordination in its future assessments to to promote good practice and multilateral effectiveness.

This study covers a range of platforms and mechanisms through which the UN, MDBs and IMF coordinated to respond to the diverse impacts of COVID-19. For purposes of this study, co-ordination entails voluntary engagement cross different organisations for the purposes of sharing knowledge and evidence, achieving policy and operational coherence, mobilising resources for joint benefit, joint planning and operations and monitoring progress against collective outcomes.

Multiple lines of evidence were triangulated to address the following research questions:

- ❶ To what extent were MOs prepared to coordinate to respond to COVID-19?
- ❶ How did MOs coordinate to respond to COVID-19?
- ❶ What role did co-ordination play in delivering pandemic prevention, preparedness and response?
- ❶ What were the main factors that facilitated or constrained co-ordination?
- ❶ What are the key lessons learned for supporting enhanced co-ordination post-pandemic?

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mopanonline.org/>

**The study considers how co-ordination mechanisms and instruments helped contribute to coherence (rather than fragmentation) as well as country-level preparedness and response.** Each co-ordination mechanism is examined with respect to good practices for effective partnerships, including the “Ten success factors for effective post-2015 partnerships” identified in the OECD’s 2015 Development Co-operation Report. Additional information about the approach and the coordination mechanisms covered is provided in the Annexes.

### Key Findings

- There were important gaps in the preparedness of MOs and national governments to launch a coordinated, whole-of-society response to COVID-19.
- The United Nations (UN), Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), among other partners, scaled-up existing co-ordination and established new relationships and platforms to address the multi-dimensional impacts of COVID-19.
- MO co-ordination in the context of COVID-19 promoted sharing of knowledge and evidence, policy and operational coherence and joint planning and programming, ultimately contributing to pandemic preparedness and response.
- Five key factors enabled or constrained co-ordination, including the clarity of roles and responsibilities, the extent of high-level leadership support, inclusive and transparent governance, a clear results focus and coherent and effective resource mobilisation.

### Five Lessons for “Building Back Better” and the multilateral response to future crises

- Lesson 1: The ability to scale-up an existing co-ordination mechanism holds advantages for policy and operational coherence in responding to complex challenges.
- Lesson 2: Whereas co-ordination among UN Entities, MDBs and the IMF was scaled-up to respond to the pandemic, important barriers limit the extent of joint planning and programming.
- Lesson 3: Fragmentation in resource mobilisation contributes to competition among MOs, works against joint programming and undermines the achievement of collective outcomes.
- Lesson 4: Beyond policy coherence at the global level, effective MO co-ordination involves building national ownership striking a balance between global goals and national needs and priorities in decision-making
- Lesson 5: Delivering an equitable response to global emergencies requires not only leadership and engagement among MOs, but a “whole of society” approach.

### Policy Considerations

- Building platforms for global policy co-ordination across the UN, MDBs and IMF, with equity and the achievement of the SDGs as core principles.
- Enhancing regional level engagement to address transboundary issues, contextualise global policy frameworks in light of country needs and priorities and build national ownership.
- Strengthening country-level co-ordination through the promotion of government-led country platforms.
- Ensuring adequate capitalisation of pooled funds and use of resource mobilisation mechanisms to incentivise and scale-up joint programming across the UN, MDBs, IMF and other partners.

A blurred photograph of a person wearing a face mask sitting at a desk in an office. The person is in profile, facing right. The background is heavily blurred, showing horizontal streaks of light and dark colors, suggesting a fast-moving or busy environment. The word "CONTEXT" is overlaid in white, bold, uppercase letters in the center of the image.

**CONTEXT**

**As COVID-19 progressed from an outbreak to a pandemic, it has had severe, complex and intertwined impacts across countries.** These impacts have been far-reaching and more severe for vulnerable groups, reversing years of progress achieved for sustainable and inclusive development. Beyond an estimated 15-25 million excess deaths attributed to COVID-19, the pandemic limited access to a wide array of essential health services.<sup>3</sup> COVID-19 was a general catastrophe for education, with partial or full school closures implemented globally and uneven access to remote learning, leaving school children an estimated 8 months behind where they normally would be.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, an estimated 220 million people were pushed into poverty and 90 million into extreme poverty.<sup>5</sup> COVID-19 has also resulted in the largest single year jump in public debt since 1970, with 60 percent of LICs now assessed at high risk of debt distress or are already in debt distress.<sup>6</sup>

**Recognising the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis, there were early and widespread calls for cohesive global action.** Multilateral Organisations (MOs) were asked to step up existing co-ordination to mobilise a swift and coherent response to a threat that was rapidly evolving in scale and severity.<sup>7</sup> States, including the G20, declared their readiness to support a coordinated response alongside the World Health Organisation (WHO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank Group (WBG), United Nations (UN) and other MOs, within their respective mandates, to address the intertwined health, social and economic impacts of the crisis.

**MO co-ordination to respond to COVID-19 was equally unprecedented, building upon existing co-ordination and launching new partnerships.** Co-ordination across the UN, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), IMF and other MOs was scaled up considerably, building upon existing co-ordination and convening new platforms to address novel challenges. The MO response built upon: (i) the normative role of the WHO and global policy co-ordination among the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee; (ii) the role of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system in promoting joint planning and programming in line with country needs and priorities; and (iii) Co-ordination between the MDBs and IMF to address COVID's macroeconomic impacts while preserving stability. New partners were brought together to promote the accelerated development and equitable delivery of critical countermeasures such as vaccines, including through the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and the Multilateral Leaders Taskforce on COVID-19 Vaccines, Diagnostics and Therapeutics (MLTF).

**Nevertheless, COVID-19 has highlighted the challenges of launching a coherent global response to challenges that cannot be addressed successfully by individual countries.** Even where capacities for pandemic preparedness and response (PPR) were reportedly strong, the COVID-19 response was undermined by gaps in leadership, non-compliance, fragmentation of health systems and lack of effective whole-of-society response at the national and subnational level.<sup>8</sup> Among countries, trade and travel re-

3 Van Noorden, R. (2022) "COVID death tolls: scientists acknowledge errors in WHO estimates" Nature <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-01526-0>

4 The Economist (July 9th-15th, 2022): "Millions of wasted minds", pp. 59-61.

5 Centennial Growth Model

6 International Monetary Fund (2022) "Making Debt Work For Development and Macroeconomic Stability" <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2022/04/26/Making-Debt-Work-For-Development-and-Macroeconomic-Stability-517258>

7 G20 (2020) "Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit Statement on COVID-19" [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/dcomm/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_740066.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/dcomm/documents/genericdocument/wcms_740066.pdf)

8 The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (2019) "A World at Risk: Annual Report on Global Preparedness for Health Emergencies" [https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/annual-reports/gpmb-2019-annual-report-en.pdf?sfvrsn=bd1b8933\\_36](https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/annual-reports/gpmb-2019-annual-report-en.pdf?sfvrsn=bd1b8933_36); The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021)

"How an outbreak became a pandemic: The defining moments of the COVID-19 pandemic" [https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/How-an-outbreak-became-a-pandemic\\_final.pdf](https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/How-an-outbreak-became-a-pandemic_final.pdf)

restrictions and competition to secure limited supplies of vaccines and other countermeasures undermined MO co-ordination to promote equity and support LICs and MICs in mitigating the spread and impact of COVID.<sup>9</sup> In the context of pandemics where “no one is safe until everyone is safe,” unmitigated risks in a single country can have global consequences.

**Rather than being a failure of multilateralism, the coordinated response of MOs to COVID-19 demonstrated strengths that could be built upon to address ongoing global challenges and prepare for the next crisis.** Scaled-up MO co-ordination and new “coalitions of the willing” made critical contributions to facilitating the information sharing, services, research, institutional strengthening and emergency financial support that enabled an end to the acute phase of the pandemic. Co-ordination built upon the comparative advantages of different organisations to promote a more coherent response across the multilateral system. New partners came together to leverage data and digital platforms to promote transparency, identify critical bottlenecks and engage national governments, development partners and the private sector in a constructive dialogue.

**As we move toward “building back better,” the multilateral system needs to evolve and reflect on lessons learned from COVID-19 in addressing systemic global challenges more coherently.** In doing so, it will be necessary to consider how we can invest in global public goods more strategically and on a much larger scale than we have in the past and how we work together nationally and internationally to achieve them.<sup>10</sup> The pandemic underscored the need for whole-of-society approaches within countries that include the private sector, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Regional organisations are emerging as ever more important platforms for building national ownership of development platforms and facilitating south-south cooperation.<sup>11</sup> They have an important role in this renewed international dialogue. Finally, coordination at the country and regional level must be anchored by a coherent global vision that cuts across sectors and has buy-in across the multilateral system. How MOs coordinate across sectors going forward will play a key role in regaining ground on the SDGs and revitalising the role of multilateralism in addressing global challenges.

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- 9 The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “Background Paper 5: Access to Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics” <https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Background-paper-5-Access-to-vaccines-Therapeutics-and-Diagnostics.pdf>; World Trade Organisation (2020) “EXPORT PROHIBITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS” [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/covid19\\_e/export\\_prohibitions\\_report\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/export_prohibitions_report_e.pdf)
- 10 Okonjo-Iweala, N., Shanmugaratnam, T., & Summers, L. (2021) “Rethinking Multilateralism for a Pandemic Era” <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2021/12/Multilateralism-Pandemic-Era-Okonjo-Iweala-Shanmugaratnam-Summers>
- 11 G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “A Global Deal for our Pandemic Age” <https://pandemic-financing.org/report/foreword/#:~:text=In%20short%2C%20we%20need%20a,building%20resilience%20against%20future%20pandemics>; Jones, C, Sobngwi-Tambekou, J. et al (2022) “The Roles of Regional Organisations in Strengthening Health Research Systems in Africa: Activities, Gaps, and Future Perspectives” International Journal of Health Policy and Management, [https://www.ijhpm.com/article\\_4213\\_37a2adda3a90b4552da62064356a9134.pdf](https://www.ijhpm.com/article_4213_37a2adda3a90b4552da62064356a9134.pdf); Nkengasong, J. (2021) “A New Public Health Order for Africa: Regional solutions are what we need to get us through the next pandemic” <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2021/12/Public-Health-Order-Africa-Nkengasong>

A person's hand is visible on the left, pointing towards a whiteboard. The whiteboard is covered with numerous colorful sticky notes (orange, yellow, and green) arranged in several columns. In the foreground, a person is sitting at a desk with a laptop, looking towards the whiteboard. The background is a plain white wall with some faint markings like a checkmark, an 'X', and a heart.

# KEY FINDINGS ON COORDINATION IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

In this section we identify answers to the key research reflections based on triangulation of evidence sources identified above and our proposed success factors for effective MO co-ordination.

## MO preparedness to coordinate

*There were important gaps in the preparedness of MOs and national governments to launch a coordinated, whole-of-society response to COVID-19.*

**Limited progress has been made by state parties in implementing the IHRs since their adoption in 2005.** Despite pandemic risks being highlighted following the 2009 H1N1 pandemic and the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) noted mere months before the emergence of COVID-19 that just one third of countries has established the IHRs core capacities as of 2018.<sup>12</sup>

**Actions taken to reinforce WHO's ability to lead a coordinated response to health emergencies had not been adequately resourced.** WHO's Health Emergencies (WHE) Programme was established in 2016 following the 2014 Ebola outbreak to reinforce the WHO's critical normative role in responding to health emergencies. Its introduction was accompanied by revisions to the Emergency Response Framework (ERF) and the introduction of the IASC's "Humanitarian System-wide Scale-Up Activation Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events."<sup>13</sup> However, WHE and the Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) have been consistently under-resourced since that time, undermining readiness to respond to COVID-19. At the outset of the pandemic, WHE had 519 vacant positions and just USD 12.9 million remained in the CFE following the 2018 Ebola crisis in DRC.<sup>14</sup>

**The lack of an agreed means of working together to support the end-to-end development, production and delivery of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics undermined efforts to promote equitable access.** This gap had been noted previously following the 2009 H1N1 pandemic and 2014 Ebola outbreak, but had not been fully addressed.<sup>15</sup> Progress had been made in establishing the WHO's R&D Roadmap and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Initiatives (CEPI), which proved essential in accelerating

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- 12 The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (2019) "A World at Risk: Annual Report on Global Preparedness for Health Emergencies" [https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/annual-reports/gpmb-2019-annualreport-en.pdf?sfvrsn=bd1b8933\\_36](https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/annual-reports/gpmb-2019-annualreport-en.pdf?sfvrsn=bd1b8933_36); The Independent Panel Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) "COVID-19: Make it the Last Pandemic" [https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/COVID-19-Make-it-the-Last-Pandemic\\_final.pdf](https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/COVID-19-Make-it-the-Last-Pandemic_final.pdf); Kandel, N., Chungong, S., Omaar, A. and Xing, J. (2020) "Health security capacities in the context of COVID-19 outbreak: an analysis of International Health Regulations annual report data from 182 countries," *Lancet*, 395: 147-53 <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2930553-5>
- 13 World Health Organisation (2017) "Emergency response framework (ERF), 2nd edition" <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241512299>; Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2012) "Humanitarian System-Wide Emergency Activation: definition and procedures" [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy\\_files/2.%20System-Wide%20\(Level%203\)%20Activation%20\(20Apr12\).pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/2.%20System-Wide%20(Level%203)%20Activation%20(20Apr12).pdf)
- 14 World Health Organisations (2020) "2020 ANNUAL REPORT CONTINGENCY FUND FOR EMERGENCIES" <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-WHE-2021.06>; World Health Organisation (2020) "Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme - Looking back to move forward" [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/dco/independent-oversight-and-advisory-committee/a73\\_10-en-ioac-report1cc3d833-6979-4ac3-a0ea-21b4a6bf1670.pdf?sfvrsn=d2bcf955\\_1&download=true](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/dco/independent-oversight-and-advisory-committee/a73_10-en-ioac-report1cc3d833-6979-4ac3-a0ea-21b4a6bf1670.pdf?sfvrsn=d2bcf955_1&download=true)
- 15 The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) "Background Paper 5: Access to Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics" <https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Background-paper-5-Access-to-vaccines-Therapeutics-and-Diagnostics.pdf>; The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (2019) "A World in Disorder" <https://www.gpmb.org/annual-reports/annual-report-2020>;

the development of COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>16</sup> However, unresolved issues around global manufacturing capacity, trade barriers, intellectual property rights and harmonisation of regulatory approaches, among other challenges, created barriers to achieving equitable access to countermeasures for the benefit of LICs and MICs.<sup>17</sup> Absent a shared vision among stakeholders, including governments, MOs and the private sector, manufacturers reverted to a “business-as-usual” approach whereby essential supplies and countermeasures are developed on a proprietary basis for purchase by primarily HICs.<sup>18</sup>

**In general, countries have not been prepared to implement a “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach in responding to COVID-19.** Beyond uneven implementation of the IHRs across countries, health emergency preparedness has typically been siloed as a public health issue only, with limited high-level co-ordination to address broader socioeconomic impacts.<sup>19</sup> In reality, self-reported “preparedness” with respect to IHR implementation did not correspond to actual behaviour. Countries faced challenges in containing the spread of COVID-19 due to gaps in governance, decision-making and cross-sector co-ordination.<sup>20</sup> Resulting inconsistencies among health, trade, travel and customs policies exacerbated inequitable access to essential medical supplies and countermeasures.<sup>21</sup>

**Government-led co-ordination of development partners remains uneven.** Most survey respondents indicated that, prior to COVID-19, their duty country continues to lack a government-led co-ordination platform that brings different development partners together. In other countries, such co-ordination platforms are present, but are led by development partners or do not include government at all. The MDBs, UN and IMF tend to work with different partners and have different entry points with national governments. Resident Coordinators (RCs) have been proactive in establishing platforms that bring all development partners together, but these efforts have had uneven success. The absence of such platforms, including challenges related to uneven government ownership and participation among development partners, was noted by survey respondents to be a key constraint in implementing a coordinated response to the pandemic.

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- 16 The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “COVID-19: Make it the Last Pandemic” [https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/COVID-19-Make-it-the-Last-Pandemic\\_final.pdf](https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/COVID-19-Make-it-the-Last-Pandemic_final.pdf); The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “Background Paper 5: Access to Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics” <https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Background-paper-5-Access-to-vaccines-Therapeutics-and-Diagnostics.pdf>
- 17 The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “Background Paper 7: Access to Essential Supplies” <https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Background-paper-7-Access-to-Essential-Supplies.pdf>
- 18 The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “Background Paper 5: Access to Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics” <https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Background-paper-5-Access-to-vaccines-Therapeutics-and-Diagnostics.pdf>; The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2022) “Transforming or Tinkering? Inaction lays the groundwork for another pandemic” [https://live-the-independent-panel.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Transforming-or-tinkering\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://live-the-independent-panel.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Transforming-or-tinkering_Report_Final.pdf)
- 19 The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (2019) “A World at Risk: Annual Report on Global Preparedness for Health Emergencies” [https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/annual-reports/gpmb-2019-annualreport-en.pdf?sfvrsn=bd1b8933\\_36](https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/annual-reports/gpmb-2019-annualreport-en.pdf?sfvrsn=bd1b8933_36)
- 20 The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “How an outbreak became a pandemic: The defining moments of the COVID-19 pandemic” [https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/How-an-outbreak-became-a-pandemic\\_final.pdf](https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/How-an-outbreak-became-a-pandemic_final.pdf); Tsai, JF Lin, CP & Turbat, B. (2021) “Exploring association between countries’ self-reported International Health Regulations core capacity and COVID-19 control outcomes,” *Journal of Global Health Reports*, <https://www.joghr.org/article/21362-exploring-association-between-countries-self-reported-international-health-regulations-core-capacity-and-covid-19-control-outcomes>
- 21 The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “Background Paper 7: Access to Essential Supplies” <https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Background-paper-7-Access-to-Essential-Supplies.pdf>; World Trade Organisation (2020) “EXPORT PROHIBITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS” [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/covid19\\_e/export\\_prohibitions\\_report\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/export_prohibitions_report_e.pdf)

## How MOs coordinated

*The United Nations (UN), Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), among other partners, scaled-up existing co-ordination and established new relationships and platforms to address the multi-dimensional impacts of COVID-19.*

**UN entities scaled-up existing co-ordination mechanisms and ways of working to launch a coherent response to the health, socioeconomic and humanitarian impacts of the crisis.** The UN Response was guided by three overarching frameworks:

- ❶ The WHO's Strategic Preparedness Response Plan (SPRP) guided the global co-ordination of development partners in the health sector and the development of Country Preparedness and Response Plans (CPRPs);<sup>22</sup>
- ❶ The UN Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19 (UN Socioeconomic Framework) built upon existing co-ordination among the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) to promote policy coherence and was operationalised at country-level through the Resident Coordinator (RC) System;<sup>23</sup> and
- ❶ The Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) built upon existing co-ordination throughout the humanitarian response system and the IASC to launch the first global-level, event specific humanitarian appeal covering 63 countries.<sup>24</sup>

**MDBs reallocated resources and developed fast-track processes to deliver support to countries at an unprecedented speed and scale.** For many MDBs, support was primarily provided through development policy operations designed to provide additional financing for national emergency response plans, including initiatives to address the needs of the most vulnerable and promote continued delivery of basic services. This support necessitated large-scale cancellations, re-programming, reallocation and frontloading of resources as well as Executive Board waivers to speed up project design and approval processes. In the case of the World Bank, existing develop policy operations were expanded through flexible emergency components (e.g. Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Options (CAT DDOs) and Contingent Emergency Response Components (CERCs)). Throughout, there was continuous interaction between the MDBs, IMF and WHO to promote policy coherence across these operations and mitigate the consequences of COVID-19 for macroeconomic stability.

**The IMF provided complementary support by expanding access to existing instruments and identifying new instruments to provide debt service relief and enhance liquidity to support national COVID-19 responses.** In April 2020, the IMF expanded access to its emergency financing instruments

22 World Health Organisation (2020) "COVID-19 strategic preparedness and response plan : operational planning guidelines to support country preparedness and response (draft as of 12 February 2020)" <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3859863?ln=en>.

23 United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2020) "A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19" <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf>

24 Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation (2022) " COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan: Learning Paper" <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/IAHE%20COVID-19%20GHRP%20Learning%20Paper.pdf>; UNOCHA (2020) "Global Humanitarian Response Plan: COVID-19 (April – December 2020)" <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space/document/covid-19-global-humanitarian-response-plan>

as well as its traditional facilities (e.g. Extended Credit Facility (ECF)).<sup>25</sup> Changes were also made to the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT), which provides grants to pay debt service owed to the IMF, enabling the provision of immediate debt service relief for its poorest members.<sup>26</sup> In August 2021, the IMF's Executive Board approved a general allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) equivalent to USD 650 billion to further enhance available resources for the COVID-19 response as needed.<sup>27</sup> Finally, the IMF and World Bank coordinated to support G20 countries in suspending the bilateral debt service of LICs through the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI).<sup>28</sup>

**Scaled-up co-ordination in the health sector underscored the normative role of WHO and the importance of regional organisations in supporting Pandemic Preparedness and Response.** The World Bank delivered flexible support to national health responses through its Multi-Phase Programmatic Approach (MPA) instrument, a flexible instrument that provided packages of strategically-linked health sector projects aligned to the WHO's SPRP.<sup>29</sup> Most MDBs did not have large-scale operations in the health sector prior to COVID-19 and instead provided support through technical assistance operations and a limited number of investment projects. In this context, regional organisations such as PAHO, WAHO and Africa CDC as well as UN Entities such as WHO, UNICEF and WFP served as key implementing partners for the health response in terms of procuring medical products and equipment, training health personnel, upgrading infrastructure and reinforcing capacity for epidemiological surveillance, testing and case management.<sup>30</sup>

**MDB support to the private sector has primarily involved trade and supply chain financing as well as debt service deferrals, but has also supported access to needed medical supplies.** Notable initiatives include the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) supply chain maps and the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Africa Medical Equipment Facility, which help countries and private health care providers source essential equipment such as ventilators and PPE.<sup>31</sup> Work in this area has also sought to reinforce global manufacturing capacity for countermeasures. IFC's Global Health Platform provides financing to

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- 25 International Monetary Fund (2021) "The IMF's Response to COVID-19" <https://www.imf.org/en/About/FAQ/imf-response-to-covid-19#Q1>; International Monetary Fund (2022) "COVID-19 Financial Assistance and Debt Service Relief" <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/COVID-Lending-Tracker#APD>
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 International Monetary Fund (2021) "PROPOSAL FOR A GENERAL ALLOCATION OF SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS" <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2021/07/12/Proposal-For-a-General-Allocation-of-Special-Drawing-Rights-461907>
- 28 International Monetary Fund (2021) "JOINT IMF-WBG STAFF NOTE: DSSI FISCAL MONITORING UPDATE" <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2021/09/16/Joint-IMF-WG-Staff-Note-DSSI-Fiscal-Monitoring-Update-465864>
- 29 World Bank Group (2017) "Multiphase Programmatic Approach" <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/203081501525641125/pdf/MPA-07192017.pdf>; World Bank Group (2020) "COVID-19 STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAM AND PROPOSED 25 PROJECTS UNDER PHASE 1 USING THE MULTIPHASE PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH" <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/993371585947965984/pdf/World-COVID-19-Strategic-Preparedness-and-Response-Project.pdf>
- 30 Nkengasong, J. (2021) "A New Public Health Order for Africa Regional solutions are what we need to get us through the next pandemic" <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2021/12/Public-Health-Order-Africa-Nkengasong>; G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) "A Global Deal for our Pandemic Age" <https://pandemic-financing.org/report/foreword/#:~:text=In%20short%2C%20we%20need%20a,building%20resilience%20against%20future%20pandemics>
- 31 International Finance Corporation (2021) "IFC Financing to Increase Access to Essential Medical Equipment" [https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/industry\\_ext\\_content/ifc\\_external\\_corporate\\_site/health/ifc+africa+medical+equipment+facility](https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/industry_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/health/ifc+africa+medical+equipment+facility); International Finance Corporation (2021) "Private Health in Emerging Markets – Our Observations UHC2030 Private Sector Constituency" [https://www.uhc2030.org/fileadmin/uploads/uhc2030/Photos/News\\_articles\\_photos/July-Dec\\_2021/10\\_2021\\_PS\\_Blog\\_-\\_Tackling\\_the\\_big\\_challenges\\_presentation.pdf](https://www.uhc2030.org/fileadmin/uploads/uhc2030/Photos/News_articles_photos/July-Dec_2021/10_2021_PS_Blog_-_Tackling_the_big_challenges_presentation.pdf); Asian Development Bank (2021) "New ADB tool offers roadmap to unblock supplies of life-saving products" <https://www.adb.org/news/features/new-adb-tool-offers-roadmap-unblock-supplies-life-saving-products>

manufactures as well as suppliers of raw materials and health care service providers and includes a USD 25 million advisory services component to help open markets for local manufacturing of healthcare products and improve resource efficiency in the pharmaceutical sector.<sup>32</sup> As of March 2022, the platform has contributed USD 1.2 billion alongside co-financers to scale up capacity for the manufacture of vaccines with the Institute Pasteur de Dakar and Aspen Pharmacare in South Africa.<sup>33</sup>

**Co-ordination around procurement played an important role in the MO response to COVID-19.** New instances of UN system-wide co-ordination played a particularly critical role in addressing critical shortages of life-saving COVID-19 supplies in the early stages of the pandemic. Through the Commodities Supply Chain System (CSCS), multiple UN agencies worked together to support LICs and MICs in accessing critical supplies through pooled procurement as well as logistics and delivery support.<sup>34</sup> Other agencies such as the World Bank provided the option for “Bank-facilitated” procurement to help pool countries’ procurement needs, facilitate access to global suppliers and negotiate prices and other conditions.<sup>35</sup> Regional organisations such as Africa CDC similarly played an important role with support from MOs in facilitating procurement and linking countries to regional suppliers.<sup>36</sup>

**MOs came together alongside donors to address gaps in co-ordination around the development, production and delivery of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics as a “coalition of the willing.”** The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) brought together eight co-convening agencies alongside other partners to “develop essential health products for the fight against COVID-19 and ensure they are distributed equitably.” ACT-A, including its vaccine pillar, COVAX, was not a formal legal entity, but a means of promoting complementarity among the independent initiatives of the co-convening partners in line with their respective mandates to deliver this objective. Co-ordination fora as part of ACT-A include the Principals Group, which comprises the Principals (CEO or similar) of the co-convening agencies of each pillar as well as lead agencies for implementation, which met frequently to coordinate activities among participating agencies.<sup>37</sup> ACT-A’s Facilitation Council brings together political leadership, including founding donors, beneficiary countries and non-government partners such as civil society, the private sector and community representatives, to support resource mobilisation and advocate for collective goals and approaches.<sup>38</sup>

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- 32 International Finance Corporation (2021) “IFC Financing to Increase Access to Essential Medical Equipment” [https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/industry\\_ext\\_content/ifc\\_external\\_corporate\\_site/health/ifc+africa+medical+equipment+facility](https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/industry_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/health/ifc+africa+medical+equipment+facility)
- 33 International Finance Corporation (2021) “Private Health in Emerging Markets – Our Observations UHC2030 Private Sector Constituency” [https://www.uhc2030.org/fileadmin/uploads/uhc2030/Photos/News\\_articles\\_photos/July-Dec\\_2021/10\\_2021\\_PS\\_Blog\\_-\\_Tackling\\_the\\_big\\_challenges\\_presentation.pdf](https://www.uhc2030.org/fileadmin/uploads/uhc2030/Photos/News_articles_photos/July-Dec_2021/10_2021_PS_Blog_-_Tackling_the_big_challenges_presentation.pdf)
- 34 The Yellow House (2021) “Assessment of the COVID-19 Supply Chain System (CSCS) Summary Report” <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/assessment-of-the-covid-19-supply-chain-system-report>
- 35 <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/covid-19-how-world-bank-helping-countries-procure-critical-medical-supplies>
- 36 Nkengasong, J. (2021) “A New Public Health Order for Africa Regional solutions are what we need to get us through the next pandemic” <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2021/12/Public-Health-Order-Africa-Nkengasong>
- 37 ACT-Accelerator (2021) “ACT-Accelerator Strategic Review” <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-review>
- 38 Act-Accelerator (2020) “Facilitation Council: Terms of Reference” [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/act-accelerator-facilitation-council---terms-of-reference-english.pdf?sfvrsn=55190ad7\\_1](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/act-accelerator-facilitation-council---terms-of-reference-english.pdf?sfvrsn=55190ad7_1)

An overview of ACT-A's structure and co-conveners is provided in Table 2, below.

**Table 2: ACT-A pillar objectives and co-conveners<sup>39</sup>**

Pillar	Co-conveners	Objective
Diagnostics	FIND and Global Fund with WHO leading on regulatory policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerate development and production of high-quality rapid diagnostics tests and deliver them to L/MICs.</li> <li>Expanding laboratory infrastructure and increasing testing capacity.</li> </ul>
Therapeutics	Unitaid and Wellcome Trust with WHO leading on regulatory policy and Global Fund leading on procurement and deployment with UNICEF as a key partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerate the identification, development, production and deployment of effective therapeutics for prevention, early treatment, severe treatment and recovery.</li> <li>Key activities include evidence assessment, market preparedness and deployment.</li> </ul>
Vaccines (COVAX)	CEPI, GAVI and WHO with UNICEF as a key delivery partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerate progress across the vaccine value chain to achieve equitable global access and uptake.</li> <li>Broad investment into vaccine candidates and trials and manufacturing scale-up.</li> <li>Acting as a central vaccine procurer for all countries, with an Advance Market Commitment (AMC) enabling donor commitments to support the procurement of doses for the 92 lowest income participants.</li> <li>5% Humanitarian buffer to support vaccine access in humanitarian settings</li> </ul>
Health Systems Connector <sup>40</sup>	Global Fund, World Bank and WHO with support from the Global Financing Facility for Women Children and Adolescents (GFF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing oxygen and supporting PPE access</li> <li>Complementing and connecting the other pillars of ACT-A by supporting country readiness and health systems capacity.</li> </ul>

**MOs also convened new co-ordination platforms to advocate for needed actions on the part of governments and private sector to complement MO initiatives.** ACT-A and the activities of its co-conveners was complemented by the Multilateral Leaders Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics (MLTF). The MLTF brought together leadership from the WHO, WTO, World Bank and IMF to advocate for national actions to support the equitable development of deployment of countermeasures,

39 ACT-Accelerator (2021) "ACT-Accelerator Strategic Review" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-review>

40 The HSC eventually became the Health Systems and Response Connector. See: ACT-Accelerator (2021) "Strategic Plan and Budget: October 2021 and September 2022" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-plan-budget-october-2021-to-september-2022>

including financing, removal of trade restrictions and vaccine donations.<sup>41</sup> Its advocacy centred upon a common target to vaccinate at least 40% of people in LICs and LMICs by the end of 2021, noting that expanding vaccination in LICs and MICs is both an urgent economic necessity and a moral imperative.<sup>42</sup> One of the MLTF's key contributions has been to enhance the public availability of data to track progress towards the global targets for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, tests and PPE.<sup>43</sup> The MLTF's activities have helped increase transparency and accountability around vaccine contracts, agreements financing and delivery to help advocate for actions necessary to achieve equitable access.

## Outcomes of coordination

*MO co-ordination in the context of COVID-19 promoted sharing of knowledge and evidence, policy and operational coherence and joint planning and programming, ultimately contributing to pandemic preparedness and response.*

**MO Co-ordination facilitated the sharing of knowledge and evidence about the evolution of the pandemic and enhanced transparency around the multilateral response.** The participation of WHO across multiple co-ordination fora involving UN Entities, MDBs and the IMF made an important contribution to sharing knowledge across stakeholders about how the pandemic was evolving, ever more important given limited evidence to predict COVID-19's impact and spread. Several stakeholders noted that this information was critical in informing their institutions' COVID-19 responses.

**Co-ordination across UN Entities, the MDBs and the IMF contributed to policy and operational coherence in responding to COVID.** The SPRP, UN Socioeconomic Framework and GHRP contributed to operational and policy coherence across the UN system in responding to COVID-19's diverse impacts. The SPRP supported the normative role of WHO health emergencies, with at least 170 countries having produced a CPRP as of January 2021.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the Socioeconomic Framework and Socioeconomic Response Plans (SERPs) contributed to a "One UN" response to COVID across the UNDS, with 121 SERPs produced across 139 countries as of July 2021.<sup>45</sup> Whereas the GHRP was not a centralised instrument for resource mobilisation, it helped ensure coherence of humanitarian appeals across the 63 countries it targeted.<sup>46</sup> Close co-ordination between the MDBs and IMF enabled emergency support to address macroeconomic impacts while mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on public debt. Support provided by

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- 41 The Multilateral Leaders Taskforce on COVID-19 (2021) "Terms of Reference" <https://www.covid19taskforce.com/en/programs/task-force-on-covid-19-vaccines/about#2> ; The Multilateral Leaders Taskforce on COVID-19 (2021) "A New Commitment for Vaccine Equity and Defeating the Pandemic" <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/a-new-commitment-for-vaccine-equity-and-defeating-the-pandemic>
- 42 Agarwal, R. & Gopinath, G. (2021) "A Proposal to End the COVID-19 Pandemic" <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Staff-Discussion-Notes/Issues/2021/05/19/A-Proposal-to-End-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-460263>
- 43 See: <https://www.covid19globaltracker.org/> ; The Multilateral Leaders Taskforce on COVID-19 (2021) "Joint Statement of the Multilateral Leaders Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines, Therapeutics, and Diagnostics for Developing Countries following its Second Meeting" <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2021/07/30/joint-statement-on-second-meeting-of-task-force-on-covid-vaccines-therapeutics-and-diagnostics-for-developing-countries>
- 44 World Health Organisation (2021) "Looking back at a year that changed the world WHO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/looking-back-at-a-year-that-changed-the-world-who-s-response-to-covid-19>
- 45 United Nations Development Co-ordination Office (2021) "Report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group" <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/100/51/PDF/N2110051.pdf?OpenElement>
- 46 Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation (2022) " COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan: Learning Paper" <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/IAHE%20COVID-19%20GHRP%20Learning%20Paper.pdf>

the MDBs also supported the WHO's SPRP, requiring that countries have a national COVID-19 response plan and functional multi-partner co-ordination mechanism in place as a condition for the receipt of funds.

**Whereas the UN response emphasised the need to ensure the COVID-19 response reached the most vulnerable, challenges were faced in moving from global policy to operationalisation on the ground.**

In seeking to "Leave No One Behind," the UN Socioeconomic Framework identified fourteen marginalised populations to be given specific consideration and called for a gender lens and "human-rights based approach" to be applied in implementation, including a set of indicators to assess the human rights impact of the COVID-19 response.<sup>47</sup> A series of checklists and guidance documents were produced to promote the adoption of a HRBA and promote the mainstreaming of gender, disability and other issues into SERPs.<sup>48</sup> However, The UN System-Wide Evaluation of the COVID-19 Response found that the level of attention paid to gender equality, human rights and other issues in SERPs was highly uneven across case study countries. Cross-cutting reviews implemented by the UNSDG Task Team on LNOB and Human Rights indicated only a small minority of SERPs applied HRBAs or fully mainstreamed gender.<sup>49</sup> The Response and Recovery MPTF departed from this trend, coordinating with UN Women to help strengthen gender mainstreaming in joint programming as part of its second call for proposals.<sup>50</sup>

**Co-ordination around new resource mobilisation mechanisms helped "kick-start" the UN's early response to COVID-19 in the absence of sufficient emergency funding.**

The Solidarity Response Fund (SRF) and COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) were established to provide flexible resources to support the UN's initial responses to the health and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic.<sup>51</sup> The SRF played a particularly important role in supporting procurement of PPE for LICs in the beginning stages of the pandemic, allocating USD 74.9 million to the Commodities Supply Chain System as revolving funds, a critical innovation that helped achieve greater impact with donor contributions.<sup>52</sup> Together, these funds provided a source of flexible funds to support joint programmes and coordinated responses across different UN Entities.

**While there was greater inter-agency co-ordination across UN Country Teams (UNCTs), there is further room to improve joint planning and programming across the UN, MDBs and IMF.**

The development of SERPs under the leadership of RCs helped promote inter-agency co-ordination across UNCTs, particularly

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- 47 UNSDG (2020) "A Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19" <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf>
- 48 OHCHR (2020) "Checklist for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19" [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Events/COVID-19/Checklist\\_HR-Based\\_Approach\\_Socio-Economic\\_Country\\_Responses\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Events/COVID-19/Checklist_HR-Based_Approach_Socio-Economic_Country_Responses_COVID-19.pdf)
- 49 Internal UN Document as cited in: United Nations (2021) "Early Lessons and Evaluability of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF" [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report\\_April22.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report_April22.pdf); United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2021) "OPERATIONALIZING LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND GOOD PRACTICE NOTE FOR UN COUNTRY TEAMS" <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Operationalizing%20LNOB%20-%20final%20with%20Annexes%20090422.pdf>
- 50 United Nations (2021) "Early Lessons and Evaluability of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF" [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report\\_April22.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report_April22.pdf)
- 51 United Nations (2021) "Early Lessons and Evaluability of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF" [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report\\_April22.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report_April22.pdf)
- 52 IOD-PARC (2021) "UNF-WHO | COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund Joint Evaluation" [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/about-us/evaluation/joint-evaluation-of-covid-19-solidarity-response-fund-16-december-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=ccdbe037\\_6](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/about-us/evaluation/joint-evaluation-of-covid-19-solidarity-response-fund-16-december-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=ccdbe037_6)

among smaller, more specialised NRAs.<sup>53</sup> However, SERPs were less successful in promoting co-ordination across the IMF, MDBs and UN Entities beyond sharing of data and knowledge work. Relatively few SERPs demonstrated joint planning or programming across the UN and MDBs and most stakeholders regarded the SERPs as a parallel process to that of MDBs. Furthermore, the UN does not provide budget support and, as a consequence, is not typically involved in MDB-IMF coordination on this front. Similarly, integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) are one area where buy-in from MDBs and IMF have been uneven based on a perceived overlap with their perceived comparative advantage. In some instances, COVID did contribute to enhanced coordination among the UN and IMF where the UN provided inputs on budget support conditionalities for spending on health and social protection, but this practice was limited to specific countries.

**On the other hand, innovative digital platforms and resource mobilisation mechanisms facilitated operational co-ordination and joint planning and programming.** Innovative digital tools such as the COVID-19 Partners Platform supported real-time monitoring of planning and implementation for key SPRP actions, transparent communication of resource needs and visibility for commitments from donors and other partners, including MDBs.<sup>54</sup> Resource mobilisation mechanisms such as the SRF, Response and Recovery MPTF and Joint-SDG Fund all supported joint planning and programming during the pandemic. The SRF supported projects implemented by multiple agencies aligned to the SPRP whereas the Response and Recovery MPTF and the Joint SDG Fund both prioritised projects involving intra-agency co-ordination and whole-of-government approaches.<sup>55</sup>

**Global monitoring frameworks and efforts to share data across partners contributed to the overall transparency of the COVID-19 response and supported monitoring of progress against collective goals.** Global monitoring frameworks introduced in the context of the SPRP, UN Socioeconomic Framework and GHRP helped improve transparency around the UN's response to the pandemic across different sectors, aided by monthly updates and the introduction of digital platforms such as UNINFO. Furthermore, the MLTF's co-ordination with public and private sector actors to enhance data generation and development of publicly accessible dashboards allowed for greater transparency around the delivery and deployment of vaccines than would have been feasible previously, serving as a tool for advocacy and promoting critical actions on the part of states.<sup>56</sup> These data have also contributed to the ability of other organisations and platforms to report comprehensively on their results, including the creation of ACT-A's comprehensive dashboard and the World Bank's Vaccine deployment tracker.<sup>57</sup>

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- 53 United Nations (2021) "Early Lessons and Evaluability of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF" [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report\\_April22.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report_April22.pdf)
- 54 Shen, A.K., Yu, M.A. & Linstrand, a (2021) "COVID-19 Partners Platform—Accelerating Response by Coordinating Plans, Needs, and Contributions During Public Health Emergencies: COVID-19 Vaccines Use Case" Global Health: Science and Practice <https://www.ghspjournal.org/content/ghsp/9/4/725.full.pdf> ; World Health Organisation (2021) "COVID-19 Partners Platform: Programme Budget Portal/COVID-19" [https://apps.who.int/gb/COVID-19/pdf\\_files/24\\_09/SPH.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/COVID-19/pdf_files/24_09/SPH.pdf)
- 55 IOD-PARC (2021) "UNF-WHO | COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund Joint Evaluation" [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/about-us/evaluation/joint-evaluation-of-covid-19-solidarity-response-fund-16-december-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=ccdbe037\\_6](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/about-us/evaluation/joint-evaluation-of-covid-19-solidarity-response-fund-16-december-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=ccdbe037_6); United Nations (2021) "Early Lessons and Evaluability of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF" [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report\\_April22.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MPTF%20Lessons%20Learned%20and%20Evaluability-%20Final%20Report_April22.pdf)
- 56 <https://www.covid19taskforce.com/en/programs/task-force-on-covid-19-vaccines/data>
- 57 <https://www.covid19globaltracker.org/>; <https://covid19vaccinedeploymenttracker.worldbank.org/>

**Overall, MO Co-ordination contributed to progress in strengthening national capacity for pandemic preparedness and response.** The Global Monitoring Framework for the SPRP illustrates progress achieved by countries in implementing core actions for each pillar of the SPRP against baselines and targets.<sup>58</sup> It demonstrates clear progress for key indicators of pandemic response capacity in critical areas, including: (i) functional multi-sectoral, multi-partner co-ordination mechanisms for preparedness and response; (ii) COVID-19 laboratory test capacity; and (iii) clinical referral systems to care for COVID-19 cases, among several others. Furthermore, the DSSI contributed to overall COVID-19 spending and the maintenance of recurring spending on essential services, enabling beneficiaries to spend 1.6 % of GDP on COVID-related needs, including prevention and containment, support to households and support to businesses.<sup>59</sup>

**Although the collective initiatives of partners contributing to ACT-A fell short of its targets for promoting equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics, the course of the pandemic is likely to have been very different had it not been convened.** COVAX, co-convened by GAVI and CEPI, contributed to the development of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in record time and 1.64 billion doses have been delivered to LICs and MICs to date.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership (CoVDP), led by UNICEF, has made important gains in helping countries reach critical vaccination targets. Between January and July 2022, the CoVDP helped reduce the number of countries with less than 10% vaccination coverage from 34 to 18.<sup>61</sup> ACT-A has also contributed to the development and scale-up of diagnostic tests, with the first rapid antigen tests receiving Emergency Use Listing in September 2020.<sup>62</sup> Over 150 million tests have been purchased and delivered to LICs and MICs at increasingly more equitable price points, reaching 1-2 USD per test.<sup>63</sup> With respect to therapeutics, ACT-A helped identify dexamethasone as the first effective treatment for COVID-19 and secured advanced purchase of 2.9 million doses of dexamethasone for LICs and MICs. More than USD 7.9 million in therapeutics have been purchased and delivered overall, alongside USD 187 million in oxygen supplies.<sup>64</sup>

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- 58 World Health Organisation (2020) "COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan – Monitoring and Evaluation Framework" <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/monitoring-and-evaluation-framework>
- 59 International Monetary Fund (2021) "JOINT IMF-WBG STAFF NOTE: DSSI FISCAL MONITORING UPDATE" <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2021/09/16/Joint-IMF-WG-Staff-Note-DSSI-Fiscal-Monitoring-Update-465864>
- 60 UNICEF (2022) "Update on the progress achieved through the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership" [https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/11431/file/2022\\_AS-Item\\_4b-COVID-19\\_Vaccine\\_Delivery\\_Partnership-EN-2022.05.31.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/11431/file/2022_AS-Item_4b-COVID-19_Vaccine_Delivery_Partnership-EN-2022.05.31.pdf); UNICEF (2022) "COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership – Update for the UNICEF Executive Board" [https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/10176/file/2022-COVID-19\\_country\\_readiness-Chairman-PPT-EN-2022.02.21.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/10176/file/2022-COVID-19_country_readiness-Chairman-PPT-EN-2022.02.21.pdf); ACT-Accelerator (2021) "ACT-Accelerator Strategic Review" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-review>
- 61 Gavi (2022) "How can we boost COVID-19 vaccine coverage in lower-income countries?" <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/how-can-we-boost-covid-19-vaccine-coverage-lower-income-countries>
- 62 ACT-Accelerator (2022) "The ACT-Accelerator: Two Years of Impact" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/the-act-accelerator-two-years-of-impact>; ACT-Accelerator (2021) "ACT-Accelerator Strategic Review" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-review>; ACT-Accelerator (2021) "ACT Now, ACT Together 2020-2021 Impact Report" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-now-act-together-2020-2021-impact-report>
- 63 ACT-Accelerator (2022) "The ACT-Accelerator: Two Years of Impact" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/the-act-accelerator-two-years-of-impact>; ACT-Accelerator (2021) "ACT-Accelerator Strategic Review" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-review>
- 64 ACT-Accelerator (2022) "The ACT-Accelerator: Two Years of Impact" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/the-act-accelerator-two-years-of-impact>

## Enabling and constraining factors

*Five key factors enabled or constrained co-ordination, including the clarity of roles and responsibilities, the extent of high-level leadership support, inclusive and transparent governance, a clear results focus and coherent and effective resource mobilisation.*

**There is an inherent advantage in scaling-up existing co-ordination to respond to crises.** The SPRP, UN Socioeconomic Framework and GHRP each built upon established mechanisms for promoting policy and operational coherence, with clear channels for operationalisation at country-level. Scaled-up co-ordination between the MDBs and IMF similarly helped promote coherent policy frameworks as well as operational coherence through co-financing. Existing trust among these partners and familiarity with ways of working contributed to the agility of decision-making and operationalisation. Although the implementation of the GHRP benefited from work done previously to strengthen the IASC and establish scale-up protocol, challenges were faced due to the fact that the humanitarian response model is geared toward crises that have a specific geographic focus rather than crises occurring on a global scale.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, building upon existing structures supported a rapid scale-up of co-ordination across humanitarian agencies.

**Where no co-ordination mechanism existed to address a specific need, partners worked together through informal arrangements; however, these arrangements tended to face challenges related to decision-making and ways of working.** ACT-A came together as a “coalition of the willing,” whereby different agencies engage in dialogue to coordinate their individual activities around a common goal (accelerated, scaled-up and equitable delivery of countermeasures).<sup>66</sup> However, ACT-A faced challenges regarding the clarity of its governance processes for priority setting, especially as it sought to include a wider array of representatives and different bodies were established among the donors and MO principals. Furthermore, informal arrangements are not always fit for purpose; it was necessary to establish the COVAX Facility as a formal mechanism. The establishment and operationalisation of the Facility took time, being proposed in April 2020 and approved by GAVI’s Board in July 2022.<sup>67</sup> By this time, some governments had already entered into bilateral purchasing arrangements for vaccines that fundamentally undermined ACT-A’s collective goals.

**High-level leadership was essential for the effectiveness of co-ordination mechanisms.** Across mechanisms, co-ordination demanded an intensive, sustained time commitment from senior leadership. Across the UNCMT, the the UNSDG Covid-19 Socio-Economic Task Team and IASC Principals, weekly or bi-weekly meetings held virtually were well-attended. Similar meetings were held among the MDBs, IMF and WHO as well as the Principals Group of ACT-A. The participation of high-level leadership helps align the policies and operations of each partner to the achievement of joint outcomes. In the case of the MLTF, high-level leadership supported effective advocacy for provision of up-front financing for ACT-A, vaccine donations and the removal of trade restrictions.<sup>68</sup>

65 Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation (2022) “COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan: Learning Paper” <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/IAHE%20COVID-19%20GHRP%20Learning%20Paper.pdf>

66 ACT-Accelerator (2021) “ACT-Accelerator Strategic Review” <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-review>

67 Gavi (2020) “Report to the Board – AVI COVAX AMC 30 July 2020” <https://www.gavi.org/sites/default/files/board/minutes/2020/30-july/04a%20-%20Gavi%20COVAX%20AMC.pdf>

68 The Multilateral Leaders Taskforce on COVID-19 (2021) “Joint Statement of the Multilateral Leaders Taskforce on the Strategies to Accelerate the Supply and Deployment of COVID-19 Vaccines Following its Fifth Meeting” <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2021/10/30/joint-statement-of-the-multilateral-leaders-taskforce-following-fifth-meeting>

**However, co-ordination mechanisms did not always secure sufficient support from donors and beneficiary countries, which limited the contribution of MO co-ordination to achieving joint outcomes.**

ACT-A lacked leadership and participation among some countries with an important share of global manufacturing.<sup>69</sup> Some actions taken by donors and the private sector, including bilateral deals and trade restrictions, undermined the equitable delivery of vaccines and other countermeasures, including PPE and vaccines.<sup>70</sup> As noted above, the MLTF was an important vehicle for highlighting the consequences of these actions and advocating for their reversal or steps to mitigate their impact. National government support and ownership is also essential for the sustainability of country-level co-ordination platforms. Lack of government ownership for multi-partner co-ordination platforms was noted by survey respondents to be a key impediment to MO co-ordination and, where ownership is lacking, new platforms established to respond to COVID-19 are already being dismantled.

**Decision-making that was not inclusive of key stakeholders, particularly beneficiary countries, similarly undermined the effectiveness of co-ordination mechanisms.**

Leadership should consider the perspectives of key stakeholders, including beneficiary governments as well as implementing partners who play a critical role in delivery. The SPRP, UN Socioeconomic Framework and GHRP all benefited from country-driven processes that put global policies and priorities into context. Furthermore, the MDBs and IMF leveraged their country-driven business models to address the needs of LICs and MICs. In the case of partnership around ACT-A, there was insufficient emphasis on addressing country-level barriers for vaccine delivery early in the initiative, with UNICEF later taking on a larger role through the CoVDP. Limited involvement in ACT-A among MOs with operational presence in-country and underrepresentation of LICs and MICs on the Facilitation Council contributed to the perceived “supply-driven” nature of initiatives implemented through ACT-A.

**Global-level policy co-ordination was complemented by results frameworks that contributed to agility, responsiveness and transparency.**

Scaled-up mechanisms such as the SPRP, UN Socioeconomic Framework and the GHRP benefitted from global results frameworks with clear roles and responsibilities for reporting across country teams. These monitoring and reporting structures helped create feedback loops to adjust the response as the pandemic and country-level needs evolved. By contrast, the use of flexible instruments such as budget support among the MDBs made it more difficult to monitor how funds were being used on a global scale and sometimes even within specific countries, demonstrating a trade-off across flexibility, speed and accountability. ACT-A lacked a unified results framework among partners, which posed challenges for transparency and weakened its resource mobilisation case.<sup>71</sup> The MLTF filled this gap by bringing data together from different sources and using digital platforms to advocate for national actions around vaccines and other countermeasures. However, some stakeholders felt that there was fragmentation between these mechanisms, including increased transaction costs, and were skeptical about its impact on national actions and fundraising.

69 Act-Accelerator (2020) “Facilitation Council: Terms of Reference” [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavi-ruse/act-accelerator-facilitation-council---terms-of-reference-english.pdf?sfvrsn=55190ad7\\_1](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavi-ruse/act-accelerator-facilitation-council---terms-of-reference-english.pdf?sfvrsn=55190ad7_1)

70 The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “Background Paper 5: Access to Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics” <https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Background-paper-5-Access-to-vaccines-Therapeutics-and-Diagnostics.pdf> ; The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “Background Paper 7: Access to Essential Supplies” <https://theindependentpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Background-paper-7-Access-to-Essential-Supplies.pdf> ; World Trade Organisation (2020) “EXPORT PROHIBITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS” [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/covid19\\_e/export\\_prohibitions\\_report\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/export_prohibitions_report_e.pdf)

71 ACT-Accelerator (2021) “ACT-Accelerator Strategic Review” <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-review>

**An overall lack of up-front funds to support an emergency response contributed to a proliferation of resource mobilisation mechanisms with many of these failing to meet their targets by considerable margins.** The SRF and Response and Recovery MPTF were both established to “kick-start” the UN’s immediate response to the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID in the absence of flexible funds for an emergency response. Aside from the SRF, there was little progress made in diversifying resource mobilisation away from a few core donors who themselves were impacted by the pandemic. Initiatives such as the Response and Recovery MPTF and ACT-A, which sought to address lack of up-front funding for the development and scale-up of countermeasures, have fallen consistently short of resource mobilisation targets despite efforts to diversify donor contributions, including through the ACT-A Facilitation Council’s “Fair Share Framework.”<sup>72</sup>

**Fragmentation in resource mobilisation contributed to competition for resources among partners and worked against operational coherence.** The GHRP consolidated appeals rather than acting as a single resource mobilisation mechanism, with individual agencies launching their own appeals in line with Humanitarian Response Plans.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, some UN agencies launched appeals for humanitarian funding linked to COVID-19 outside of the GHRP’s coordinated appeals.<sup>74</sup> While this approach contributed to better coherence across appeals, the actual funds mobilised varied widely across countries, which is inconsistent with the pandemic mantra that “no one is safe until everyone is safe.”<sup>75</sup> Because ACT-A is not a legal entity, partners mobilised resources separately through their own systems, which sometimes resulted in multiple resource requests targeting the same pool of donors. Resource mobilisation tended to favour vaccines versus diagnostics and therapeutics in line with donor priorities; however, stakeholders noted that diagnostics and therapeutics also have an important role in limiting the spread of COVID-19, particularly where vaccines cannot be accessed.

72 ACT-Accelerator (2022) “ACT-Accelerator ‘fair share asks’ - by country” <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-fair-share-asks--by-country>; ACT-Accelerator (2021); ACT-Accelerator (2021) “Consolidated Financing Framework for ACT-Agency and In-Country Needs” <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/consolidated-financing-framework-for-act-a-agency-in-country-needs#:~:text=Specifically%2C%20this%20Financing%20Framework%20seeks,other%20initiatives%20and%20domestic%20efforts.>

73 Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation (2022) “COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan: Learning Paper” <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/IAHE%20COVID-19%20GHRP%20Learning%20Paper.pdf>

74 UNOCHA (2020) “Global Humanitarian Response Plan: COVID-19 (April – December 2020) July Update” <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-response-plan-covid-19-april-december-2020-ghrp-july-update-enar>

75 <https://www.who.int/news-room/photo-story/photo-story-detail/No-one-is-safe-from-COVID19-until-everyone-is-safe>

A blurred photograph of a supermarket aisle. In the foreground, a person's arm and hand are visible, pushing a metal shopping cart. The cart is filled with various items, including what appears to be a red bag. In the background, several other people are walking through the aisle, also pushing shopping carts. The scene is brightly lit, typical of a modern grocery store. The overall image has a soft, out-of-focus quality, emphasizing the movement and activity of the environment.

**FIVE LESSONS FOR “BUILDING  
BACK BETTER” AND  
MULTILATERAL RESPONSES TO  
FUTURE CRISES**

Lessons from the COVID-19 response provide an opportunity to consider how future co-ordination can build upon success factors and address barriers to effective co-ordination, further promoting policy and operational coherence in support of collective goals. We identify five lessons to strengthen MO co-ordination going forward based on answers to the study's first four research questions.

## The benefits of scaling up existing co-ordination

**Lesson 1:** The ability to scale-up an existing co-ordination mechanism holds advantages for policy and operational coherence in responding to complex challenges.

**In general, there were advantages in scaling up existing co-ordination mechanisms to respond to the pandemic.** Building upon existing mechanisms for global policy co-ordination and operationalisation in beneficiary countries benefited from clear roles and responsibilities and known ways of working. Furthermore, leadership and governance of scaled-up mechanisms tended to be perceived as legitimate by stakeholders and often involved transparent means of decision-making that is inclusive of key stakeholders, including country-level beneficiaries. These platforms helped promote policy and operational coherence across different MOs as well as the implementation of global results frameworks that enhanced accountability and transparency.

**New, informal partnerships, such as ACT-A, can achieve important results quickly where there is a gap in existing co-ordination platforms and a shared imperative among members to address a common challenges.** ACT-A was unprecedented and, absent its creation, the course of the pandemic is likely to have been very different. However, due to its informal nature, ACT-A faced challenges around clarity of governance processes, leadership participation, joint resource mobilisation, joint planning and operations and measurement of results in achieving collective outcomes.

**Important gaps in existing co-ordination contributed to fragmentation in MO responses to the pandemic.** The lack of flexible resources to provide up-front funding for emergencies, including the chronic underfunding of WHE and the CFE, contributed to the creation of new resource mobilisation mechanisms to support the UN response, some of which were similarly underfunded. The absence of a “binding playbook” and upfront financing for the development of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics, centred around the core principle of equity, creates risk that a “business as usual” approach may again prevail, not only for the next pandemic but also for neglected diseases. Finally, the uneven presence of government-led country platforms for promoting co-ordination among development partners creates challenges for an agile scale-up of co-ordination to respond to complex crises.

## Barriers to joint planning and programming

**Lesson 2:** Whereas co-ordination among UN Entities, MDBs and the IMF was scaled-up to respond to the pandemic, important barriers limit the extent of joint planning and programming.

**Scaled-up co-ordination among UN Entities and among the MDBs and IMF contributed to operational and policy coherence in responding to the diverse impacts of COVID-19.** The SPRP, UN Socioeconomic Framework and GHRP all promoted enhanced inter-agency co-ordination to build upon their respective comparative advantages, address the needs of the most vulnerable and promote greater coherence in the UN's response to the diverse impacts of the pandemic. Similarly, co-ordination across the MDBs with

the IMF helped promote policy and operational coherence in responding to the macroeconomic impacts of the crisis while mitigating the impact of the response on debt vulnerabilities.

**Co-ordination across UN Entities, MDBs and the IMF was similarly scaled-up for the purposes of sharing knowledge and evidence, promoting policy coherence and measuring progress achieved in delivering collective outcomes.** Co-ordination between the WHO, IMF and the MDBs, notably the World Bank, helped keep key stakeholders updated on the evolution of the crisis and reinforced the normative role of WHO in ensuring that MOs’ health sector responses adopted the SPRP as a guiding framework. ACT-A and the MLTF contributed to new partnerships and policy coherence as organisations sought to combine their mandates to address the need to accelerate development, scaled-up production and equitable delivery of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics. In particular, the MLTF resulted in new partnerships between the WHO and IMF as well as the WTO and World Bank which facilitated the consolidation of data and evidence to enhance transparency and accountability around the delivery of vaccines and other countermeasures.

**Although there was an increase in joint programming among the UN and MDBs, UN and MDB operations often continue to be planned and implemented in parallel.** Throughout the pandemic, there was enhanced technical co-ordination among UN Entities and the MDBs, particularly in the areas of health and procurement wherein UN Entities served as key implementing partners. However, operational planning on the part of UN Entities and the MDBs continues to proceed through largely parallel processes. Whereas SERPs often cited evidence and data from MDB partners, evidence of policy co-ordination at the country level or joint planning and programming was far less common. Similarly, there has been limited involvement of the UN in co-ordination linked to development policy operations. New initiatives such as the Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) continue to have limited buy-in among the MDBs and IMF in a space that they consider to be their comparative advantage.

**Barriers to deeper UN, MDB and IMF co-ordination stem from differences in business models, fiduciary policies and financial instruments.** Differences in fiduciary policies and procedures, including procurement, undermined the effectiveness of partnerships between UN Entities, MDBs and regional organisations in responding to COVID-19. In some cases, Executive Board waivers needed to be sought in order to work with UNICEF to procure essential medical supplies. Fiduciary requirements as well as limited absorption capacities on the part of recipients contributed to challenges, including both delays and return of funds. UN Entities, MDBs and the IMF tend to most closely work with different partners and have different entry points in working with national governments.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, an ongoing tension was noted in the context of ACT-A between donor funded initiatives that are disbursed immediately to support a response versus funds allocated through MDBs that are subject to uptake by countries to respond to national priorities, which may occur over a longer timeframe.

**Country-level co-ordination remains essential for ensuring buy-in and contextualising global policy initiatives in light of country needs and priorities.** Survey respondents emphasised the importance of

government-led country platforms as one of the key factors facilitating a coordinated pandemic response among development partners. Such platforms are an important means of contextualising global policies in light of national priorities and needs, promoting national buy-in and helping to identify and address critical gaps for implementation. Ensuring these platforms remain functional is a potential means of

76 Stakeholders note that MDBs and the IMF work primarily with central banks and the Ministry of Finance and the UN Entities having multiple relationships with ministries across governments. MOPAN’s Country Co-ordination Survey indicated that UN Stakeholders tend to coordinate most closely with other UNCT entities and the RC, bilateral partners and civil society organisations. MDBs tend to coordinate most closely with the World Bank, bilateral partners and the IMF.

ensuring that technical working relationships across the IMF, MDBs and UN at the country level are less dependent upon personalities and can be scaled-up when needed.

## Fragmentation in resource mobilisation undermines collective outcomes

**Lesson 3:** Fragmentation in resource mobilisation contributes to competition among MOs, works against joint programming and undermines the achievement of collective outcomes.

**In light of limited funds to support an emergency response, new resource mobilisation mechanisms were created to support the UN's initial response to the pandemic.** Resources for the initial emergency response were severely limited when action was needed to respond to a critical shortage of medical equipment and supplies, including PPE for health workers. As organisations moved to re-allocate existing resources, the Response and Recovery MPTF and SRF were created to support coherent responses across MOs to the health and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. These funds competed for resources among other resource appeals. Funding eventually became available for the first time through the World Bank's PEF insurance window; however, were only made available in April 2020 and were dwarfed against the needs of a global response, being spread over more than 60 countries.<sup>77</sup> The MDBs and IMF provided financing to support countries at an unprecedented speed and scale, but are not designed to address this need for emergency funds that can be disbursed more quickly.

**The lack of centralised resource mobilisation mechanisms for some initiatives resulted in fragmented appeals and competition for resources.** The GHRP promoted coherence among humanitarian appeals but was not a centralised resource mobilisation mechanism itself, with different agencies launching their own financing appeals and some INGOs working outside the GHRP Framework to address needs on a global scale. Finally, informal partnerships such as ACT-A did not have a joint resource mobilisation approach due to its lack of legal entity, with each partner mobilising resources through their own systems without a centralised strategy during the beginning stages of the crisis. Consequently, donors were confronted with fragmented financing appeals and financing ultimately favoured vaccines despite the importance of diagnostics and therapeutics. Although an attempt was made to consolidate financing needs through the "Fair Share" Framework, some co-convening agencies noted this framework did not consider the existing relationships participating agencies had across different donors.

**Limited progress has been made in diversifying funding away from a core group of donors, with many new platforms left underfunded.** New initiatives were mostly unsuccessful in diversifying funding away from a small group of traditional donors, who themselves suffered serious socioeconomic impacts from the pandemic. A notable exception was the SRF, which mobilised resources from the general public and companies through innovative campaigns leveraging social media platforms and donation matching.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, the SRF had a revolving component, which allowed for funds to be reallocated repeatedly to underfunded priority needs, which supported the purchasing of PPE in the early days of the crisis.<sup>79</sup> Other

77 "Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF): Proposed Financing from IDA" <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/176611494727224133/pdf/IDA-Financing-for-PEF-April-19-2017-04202017.pdf> ; <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/pandemics/brief/fact-sheet-pandemic-emergency-financing-facility>

78 World Health Organisation (2021) "COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund Playbook – A Guide for a Collaborative Journey" [https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.unfoundation.org/2022/01/EDUN01\\_CovidPlaybook\\_2021.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.unfoundation.org/2022/01/EDUN01_CovidPlaybook_2021.pdf)

79 The Yellow House (2021) "Assessment of the COVID-19 Supply Chain System (CSCS) Summary Report" <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/assessment-of-the-covid-19-supply-chain-system-report>; IOD-PARC (2021) "UNF-WHO | COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund Joint Evaluation" [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/about-us/evaluation/joint-evaluation-of-covid-19-solidarity-response-fund-16-december-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=ccdbe037\\_6](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/about-us/evaluation/joint-evaluation-of-covid-19-solidarity-response-fund-16-december-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=ccdbe037_6)

mechanisms which have relied more on traditional donors, including the Response and Recovery MPTF, the Joint SDG Fund and appeals supporting ACT-A initiatives have been chronically under-resourced.

**Pooled resource mobilisation mechanisms can support joint programming, but insufficient funding prevents joint operations in support of collective goals from being scaled.** The Response and Recovery MPTF, SRF and Joint SDG Fund all supported inter-agency co-ordination either by providing support to multiple agencies under a single policy framework or by prioritising joint programming and whole-of-government approaches. However, as noted above, the overall scale of these funds has been limited, reducing their ability to incentivise and scale joint programming as intended. The undercapitalisation of multiple resource mobilisation mechanisms that support either single agency and joint-agency programming threatens the achievement of collective outcomes these initiatives seek to support.

## Linking global policies to country-level priorities

**Lesson 4: Beyond policy coherence at the global level, effective MOCO-ordination involves building national ownership and striking a balance between global goals and national needs and priorities in decisionmaking.**

**In addition to promoting a more coherent UN response, the SPRP, UN Socioeconomic Framework and GHRP benefitted from clear mechanisms to contextualise global frameworks in light of national needs and priorities.** The UN System promoted inter-agency co-ordination at country level under the RCs to contextualise global frameworks at country level. Tools such as Socioeconomic Impact Assessments, SERPs, Humanitarian Response Plans provided a mechanism to take stock of country-level needs and inform a more coherent inter-agency response in line with global policy frameworks. Furthermore, new tools such as the COVID-19 Partners Platform helped coordinate a broader scope of partners, including MDBs and bilateral partners in real time around a changing landscape of national needs.<sup>80</sup>

**Similarly, the response of MDBs was driven by national needs and priorities while promoting coherence around global policy frameworks.** The World Bank’s COVID-19 MPA provided a range of flexible options for support aligned to the WHO’s SPRP, with early co-ordination between the two organisations contributing to its development.<sup>81</sup> This financing was subsequently extended to support vaccine purchasing and deployment readiness. Emergency budget support provided by the World Bank and other MDBs identified very limited conditionalities that were designed to support key features of the SPRP, including the requirement for a national response plan and functional country-level multi-partner co-ordination mechanisms.

**By comparison, ACT-A emphasised the upstream aspects its mandate with too little emphasis on downstream delivery and readiness.** Despite clear collective results targets and ongoing engagement to promote operational coherence, ACT-A initially lacked systematic channels for including the needs of beneficiary governments in decision-making. The participation of LICs on the Facilitation Council was

80 Shen, A.K., Yu, M.A. & Linstrand, a (2021) “COVID-19 Partners Platform—Accelerating Response by Coordinating Plans, Needs, and Contributions During Public Health Emergencies: COVID-19 Vaccines Use Case” Global Health: Science and Practice <https://www.ghspjournal.org/content/ghsp/9/4/725.full.pdf>

81 World Bank Group (2020) “COVID-19 STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAM AND PROPOSED 25 PROJECTS UNDER PHASE 1 USING THE MULTIPHASE PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH” <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/993371585947965984/pdf/World-COVID-19-Strategic-Preparedness-and-Response-Project.pdf>

more limited and had only an indirect influence on decision-making.<sup>82</sup> Aside from participation by the World Bank in a Secretariat role, MDB and IMF participation in the initiative among the Principals Group was more limited. UNICEF was identified as a lead implementing partner for the CoVDP, which scaled up existing work around country readiness and delivery, but much later in the course of the initiative as vaccines were becoming available. Overall, there were fewer opportunities to take stock of country needs, gaps and priorities in early decision-making and align strategies and operations accordingly. This gap contributed to a perception that ACT-A was primarily supply-driven rather than demand-driven.

**Regional organisations emerged as important partners in reinforcing national capacities, contextualising global policy frameworks and building national ownership.** COVID-19 underscored the important role regional organisations play in PPR, including with respect to surveillance, research, critical infrastructure, equipment and technical assistance. These organisations also provided countries with supply chain support and centralised purchasing capacity for diagnostics, tests, clinical management equipment and vaccines, obtaining critical supplies on more favourable terms that would have been feasible by countries individually.<sup>83</sup> This role was even more important where country presence of MOs and operational capacity in the health sector was more limited. Regional organisations also acted as a “policy bridge” by translating global policy priorities into harmonised and contextualised country-level guidance, promoting national commitment and facilitating joint positions on behalf of members.<sup>84</sup>

## A “whole-of-society” response to global crises

Lessons 5: Delivering an equitable response to global emergencies requires not only leadership and engagement among MOs, but a “whole of society” approach.

**Despite unprecedented MO co-ordination to address COVID-19, these efforts were sometimes undermined by contradictory national actions and policies.** Travel and trade restrictions running counter to advice from WHO and WTO as well as bilateral vaccine purchase agreements outside of the COVAX worked against multilateral efforts to promote equitable access to countermeasures among LICs and MICs. Furthermore, co-ordination among national actors, facilitated by co-ordination between the World Bank and IMF, has been essential in the context of the DSSI.<sup>85</sup> Finally, national ownership of government-led country platforms for co-ordination among development partners established during COVID-19 is essential for their sustainability. Where such ownership is lacking, survey respondents note that such platforms

82 ACT-Accelerator (2021) “ACT-Accelerator Strategic Review” <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/act-accelerator-strategic-review>

83 G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “A Global Deal for our Pandemic Age” <https://pandemic-financing.org/report/foreword/#:~:text=In%20short%2C%20we%20need%20a,building%20resilience%20against%20future%20pandemics>; Jones, C, Sobngwi-Tambekou, J. et al (2022) “The Roles of Regional Organisations in Strengthening Health Research Systems in Africa: Activities, Gaps, and Future Perspectives” International Journal of Health Policy and Management, [https://www.ijhpm.com/article\\_4213\\_37a2adda3a90b4552da62064356a9134.pdf](https://www.ijhpm.com/article_4213_37a2adda3a90b4552da62064356a9134.pdf); Nkengasong, J. (2021) “A New Public Health Order for Africa Regional solutions are what we need to get us through the next pandemic” <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2021/12/Public-Health-Order-Africa-Nkengasong>

84 Amaya, A. & Lombaerde, P. (2021) “Regional cooperation is essential to combatting health emergencies in the Global South” Globalisation and Health <https://globalizationandhealth.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s12992-021-00659-7.pdf>;

85 International Monetary Fund (2020) “Update on the Joint IMF-WB Multipronged Approach to Address Debt Vulnerabilities” <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2020/12/10/Update-on-the-Joint-IMF-WB-Multipronged-Approach-to-Address-Debt-Vulnerabilities-49946>

are already being dismantled. In addressing complex global challenges in an increasingly inter-connected global context, it is essential that national actions and MO Co-ordination pull in the same direction.

**MO operations supporting the private sector played a critical role and there are important opportunities to build upon the gains achieved.** The behaviour of the private sector influenced the achievement of collective goals such as equitable access to countermeasures both positively and negatively. On one hand, co-ordination between the WHO, CEPI and vaccine manufacturers was instrumental in enabling the development of effective vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics in record time. Some companies even committed to sell vaccines at a no-profit / no-loss rate to support more equitable access. On the other hand, lack of diversified manufacturing capacity, limited access to inputs and lack of access to upfront funding for at-risk production and refusal of some companies to support equity goals worked against the equitable pricing and distribution of supplies. Supply chain support provided by MDBs was important for linking private health care providers to critical supplies and equipment, enhancing the contribution of the private sector to national COVID-19 responses. Going forward, work undertaken by IFC and the World Bank to leverage its Cascade model and enhance regional vaccine manufacturing capacity through its Global Health Platform will be important for building regional response capacity for future outbreaks.<sup>86</sup>

**NGOs and Civil Society Organisations continue to play a critical role in reaching vulnerable populations.** Mobility restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 made co-ordination with NGOs and CSOs even more critical to access the most vulnerable beneficiaries in the context of the socio-economic and humanitarian response to COVID-19.<sup>87</sup> Community representatives and organisations have played a similarly important role in promoting the uptake of public health measures, including vaccination.<sup>88</sup> Ensuring that these stakeholders have a means of contributing to priority-setting, decision-making and dialogue will help ensure that global initiatives take stock of and respond to local contexts and challenges. However, consultations with large networks of NGOs created challenges in the context of COVID-19 due to required time and transaction costs. OCHA faced challenges in ensuring an ideal depth of coordination with NGOs when trying to launch the first version of the GHRP quickly, which contributed to tensions with the NGO community throughout the initiative. As with all coordination, there is a need to identify agreed means of scaling-up consultation and participation while avoiding prohibitive transaction costs.

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- 86 Dalton, C., Song, Z. & Basak, S (2022) “Private Health in Emerging Markets – Our Observations” [https://www.uhc2030.org/fileadmin/uploads/uhc2030/Photos/News\\_articles\\_photos/July-Dec\\_2021/10\\_2021\\_PS\\_Blog\\_-\\_Tackling\\_the\\_big\\_challenges\\_presentation.pdf](https://www.uhc2030.org/fileadmin/uploads/uhc2030/Photos/News_articles_photos/July-Dec_2021/10_2021_PS_Blog_-_Tackling_the_big_challenges_presentation.pdf); Report of the G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) “A Global Deal for our Pandemic Age” <https://pandemic-financing.org/report/foreword/#:~:text=In%20short%2C%20we%20need%20a,building%20resilience%20against%20future%20pandemics>
- 87 Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation (2022) “ COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan: Learning Paper” <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/IAHE%20COVID-19%20GHRP%20Learning%20Paper.pdf>
- 88 [https://hlh.who.int/docs/librariesprovider4/hlh-documents/role-of-community-health-workers-in-covid-19-vaccination.pdf?sfvrsn=5f07b8e2\\_5](https://hlh.who.int/docs/librariesprovider4/hlh-documents/role-of-community-health-workers-in-covid-19-vaccination.pdf?sfvrsn=5f07b8e2_5); <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/352496/WHO-EURO-2022-2756-42514-59053-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

# POLICY CONSIDERATIONS



In addition to supporting resilience and preparedness for the next crisis, ensuring the MO response is “more than the sum of its parts” will continue to be important for “building back better” and regaining lost ground on the SDGs. Building upon the lessons learned from MO coordination in the context of COVID-19, the following policy considerations speak to potential actions at the global, regional and national level that could be taken to enhance MO co-ordination to respond to global challenges and support global development outcomes.

## Strengthening global policy coordination across the UN, MDBs and IMF

### 1. Building platforms for global policy co-ordination across the UN, MDBs and IMF, with achievement of the SDGs as a core principle.

COVID-19 demonstrated the importance of global policy co-ordination and dialogue to address a crisis with diverse and interconnected impacts across sectors. Close interaction between the WHO, MDBs and IMF throughout the pandemic is now yielding a more integrated response to address ongoing liquidity challenges and systemic challenges such as climate change and pandemic preparedness. For example, the recent approval of the Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST) will provide a means for HICs to reallocate SDRs to LICs with sustainable debt. These reallocations will support long-term concessional loans linked to policy conditionalities in the areas of climate change and pandemic preparedness. The IMF is currently engaging the WHO and World Bank to support the development of policy frameworks for these loans and to promote policy and operational coherence in these areas.<sup>89</sup>

**Boosting global policy co-ordination across the UN, MDBs, IMF, national governments and other partners such as regional organisations could have broader impacts on co-ordination throughout the multilateral system.** As focus shifts toward “building back better” and regaining ground on the SDGs, enhanced global policy co-ordination across the UN, MDBs and IMF as envisioned in the UN Secretary General’s Common Agenda could yield important benefits, including:

- i. building upon policy co-ordination to identify joint approaches to address long-term challenges;
- ii. resolving areas of potential fragmentation and overlap;
- iii. filling gaps in global co-ordination to address new challenges; and
- iv. monitoring joint progress in achieving collective goals.

Beyond strengthening coherence at the global level, several stakeholders noted that enhanced co-ordination between organisations at the level of senior leadership facilitates broader technical co-ordination at the operational level. National governments, as key “shareholders” of MOs have a role to play in promoting better coordination at the global level and promoting coherence and coordination in their governance of these institutions.

**Co-ordination mechanisms like ACT-A and the MLTF could provide a model for addressing complex multi-dimensional challenges, including regaining ground on the SDGs.** The MLTF provides an important example of how co-ordination across the multilateral system can be used to bring evidence together from diverse sources to monitor progress achieved against collective goals, enhancing transparency and

89 International Monetary Fund (2022) “PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY TRUST” <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2022/04/15/Proposal-To-Establish-A-Resilience-and-Sustainability-Trust-516692>

accountability while providing an evidence-based platform to advocate for supportive actions from other stakeholders such as national governments. Beyond responding COVID-19, lessons learned from ACT-A will be important to enhance MO co-ordination around the end-to-end development of countermeasures to address both pandemic threats and neglected diseases primarily impacting the developing world, with equity as a central principle.

## Enhancing regional-level engagement

### 2. Enhancing regional level engagement to address transboundary issues, contextualise global policy frameworks in light of country needs and priorities and build national ownership.

**The pandemic demonstrated the role that regional organisations play in supporting countries to prepare for and respond to global challenges and crises.** Regional and sub-regional organisations provided an important bridge between global normative perspectives and country priorities in the context of COVID-19, putting global policy advice into context and building demand and ownership among member states. These organisations reinforce the capacities of their member states by providing technical advice around a coordinated research agenda, promoting access to critical infrastructure such as advanced laboratories, supporting the harmonisation of regulatory environments and trade policies and providing consolidated purchasing power for critical goods. Most critically, expanded dialogue with regional organisations around PPR could help ensure global initiatives and MO co-ordination reflect the needs and priorities of the countries they are meant to benefit. Enhanced MDB co-ordination with regional organisations as implementing partners and provision of financial and technical assistance could help further expand their capacity to play this role.

**Fully implementing UNDS reform commitments to enhance collaboration at the regional and sub-regional levels is an opportunity to strengthen linkages among regional, sub-regional and national actors to address transboundary development challenges.** The UN's work at the regional level complements the efforts of UNCTs in boosting analytical and policy development capacity around regional issues and challenges. To date, Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs) in each region have convened experts from UNDS entities around issue-based coalitions on sub-regional and regional development priorities and promoted more systematic interactions with Regional Economic and Social Commissions (RECs).<sup>90</sup> Strengthening linkages between these regional platforms and the RCs and have helped reinforce the capacities of UNCTs to address both country-level and cross-border challenges, with regional commissions increasingly forming part of UNCTs<sup>91</sup>. Working across regional and sub-regional organisations may be one means of building upon the UN's analytical and policy development capacity and expand access to RECs and RCPs support among national governments.

90 [https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2021doc/RC\\_system\\_review\\_SG%20REPORT\\_FINAL\\_07June2021.pdf](https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2021doc/RC_system_review_SG%20REPORT_FINAL_07June2021.pdf)

91 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/326/75/PDF/N2232675.pdf?OpenElement>; [https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/11\\_%20The%20Regional%20Approach.pdf](https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/11_%20The%20Regional%20Approach.pdf)

## Government-led country platforms

### 3. Strengthening country-level co-ordination through the promotion of government-led country platforms.

**Increased emphasis on government-led country platforms is a potential means of building upon the scaled-up technical co-ordination and joint programming observed during the pandemic.** Government-led country platforms for co-ordination proved crucial to the pandemic response. Ensuring they remain functional could be a means of further promoting operational coherence and joint programming across the IMF, MDBs and UN at the country level, making these relationships more systematic and less dependent upon personalities. Such platforms build upon the role of Resident Coordinators (RCs) envisioned in UNDS Reform in working with different partners at country-level and the convening power of other partners such as the World Bank. Enhanced cross-system co-ordination at the global and regional levels would be important for building ownership of these platforms among national governments and promoting participation across different partners. Donors have a role to play in promoting coordinated approaches in their dialogue with national governments and their partnerships with MOs.

**Government-led country platforms support policy coherence across different MOs by promoting dialogue around complex problems in line with their respective areas of comparative advantage.**

The UN-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Situations provides an example of how such platforms can be used to identify opportunities for scaled-up joint programming to respond to risks and remove potential barriers to implementation.<sup>92</sup> The IMF has identified a similar approach for working with UN partners in its Strategy for Fragile and Conflict-Affected States.<sup>93</sup> Adopting lessons from implementing coordinated approaches to address fragility risks was also recently proposed at COP26 as a means of scaling-up co-ordination around climate change and could equally support strengthened co-ordination around PPR.<sup>94</sup>

**Such platforms play a role in promoting whole-of-society responses to development challenges.** The country co-ordination survey illustrated that the UN and MDBs each work with a distinct groups of partners, with MDBs having closer ties to private sector organisations and UN entities working more closely with NGOs and CSOs to help reach more vulnerable populations. Country platforms promote dialogue around a coherent approach in working with these partners to address respond to complex development challenges from different perspectives, including whole-of society responses to emergencies. These platforms could also provide a mechanism to strengthen NGO and CSO consortia through support from development partners, providing a mechanism for these actors to feed into development strategies and planning in a more coherent way while avoiding increased transaction costs.

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- 92 World Bank Group (2017) "United Nations-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Situations" [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un-wb\\_partnership\\_framework\\_for\\_crisis-affected\\_situations\\_signed\\_april\\_22\\_2017.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un-wb_partnership_framework_for_crisis-affected_situations_signed_april_22_2017.pdf); World Bank Group (2019) "2019 UN-WB PARTNERSHIP MONITORING REPORT: United Nations – World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Situations" <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/542911571851125027/pdf/United-Nations-World-Bank-Partnership-Framework-for-Crisis-Affected-Situations-2019-UN-WB-Partnership-Monitoring-Report.pdf>
- 93 International Monetary Fund (2022) "IMF STRATEGY FOR FRAGILE AND CONFLICTAFFECTED STATES (FCS)" <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2022/03/14/The-IMF-Strategy-for-Fragile-and-Conflict-Affected-States-515129>
- 94 <https://ukcop26.org/country-platforms-action-plan-from-mark-carney-un-special-envoy-on-climate-action-and-finance-and-the-prime-ministers-finance-adviser-for-cop26/>

## Pooled resource mobilisation for joint programming

### 4. Ensuring adequate capitalisation of pooled funds and use of resource mobilisation mechanisms to incentivise and scale-up joint programming across the UN, MDBs, IMF and other partners.

**Pooled funds provided a means of incentivising joint programming, but they need to be properly capitalised to support implementation at scale.** The percentage of non-core resources for development-related activities channelled by member states through interagency pooled funds has more than doubled since 2017. However, key pooled funds for interagency programming such as the Joint SDG Fund remain considerably undercapitalised.

**In the context of COVID-19, this challenge was compounded by the lack of flexible funds to respond to global health emergencies, which limited progress achieved in increasing the core share of financing for development activities.** Absent this more flexible funding, new funds established to address the emergency response competed with existing pooled funds for donor resources. Furthermore, existing funds were re-positioned for the emergency response, potentially undermining their original objectives. Recent changes to increase core funding for the WHO through assessed contributions will help address this challenge, but there is a continuing need to promote access to core funds that provide greater flexibility more broadly.<sup>95</sup> A similar challenge was noted among MDBs with respect to reallocations from thematic response windows to support the COVID-19, including those meant to address vulnerable groups such as refugees, calling into question whether MDBs remain sufficiently capitalised to respond to crises.<sup>96</sup>

**New resource mobilisation mechanisms such as the Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response FIF could build upon good practices from the SRF and COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF to incentivise joint programming.** Beyond creating incentives for national investments in pandemic preparedness through mechanisms such as matching, the PPPR FIF also provides an opportunity to prioritise and incentivise proposals that bring different organisations and government ministries together to address preparedness through a whole-of-government approach.<sup>97</sup> Country platforms could play an important role in identifying opportunities that are likely to yield the most value and promoting national ownership. This approach may not only incentivise co-ordination across a broader range of stakeholders, but could also generate implementation efficiencies and deepen technical co-ordination between national governments and trusted partners.

95 <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/2022/Annex-FundingCompact-IndicatorsTable-Ver2b-25Apr2022.pdf>

96 <https://odi.org/en/insights/scaling-up-multilateral-bank-finance-for-the-covid-19-recovery/>

97 World Bank Group (2022) "ESTABLISHMENT OF A FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARY FUND FOR PANDEMIC PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE" <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/733191656685369495/pdf/Establishment-of-a-Financial-Intermediary-Fund-for-Pandemic-Prevention-Preparedness-and-Response.pdf>

# APPROACH



**This study covers a range of platforms and mechanisms through which MOs coordinated to respond to the diverse impacts of COVID-19.** It covers the period of January 30 2020, when the WHO declared COVID-19 a Public Health Event of International Concern (PHEIC), to July 2022.<sup>98</sup> During this timeframe, we consider how MOs across the UNDS, IFIs and IMF came together to promote a more coherent multi-lateral response to COVID-19 across different sectors. A full list of co-ordination mechanisms covered in this study is provided in the next Annex.

This study considers how co-ordination mechanisms and instruments helped contribute to coherence (rather than fragmentation) as well as country-level preparedness and response. In doing so, the study seeks to identify different factors that have either enabled or constrained co-ordination in the context of COVID-19 for the purposes of achieving these goals.

For the purposes of this study, co-ordination entails voluntary engagement across different organisations for the purposes of:

- i. sharing knowledge and evidence;
- ii. achieving policy and operational coherence;
- iii. mobilising resources for joint benefit;
- iv. joint planning and operations; and
- v. monitoring progress against collective outcomes.

We assume that the overall objective of co-ordination is to reduce duplication and fragmentation. Additionally, we assume that more intense co-ordination involving multiple activities identified above is often more desirable, promoting coherent and coordinated responses to complex challenges and the achievement of common goals. Ideally, MO co-ordination should contribute to policy and operational coherence with joint planning and operations implemented where such an approach is found to potentially add value.

**Multiple lines of evidence were triangulated to address key research questions.** Lines of evidence include a document and literature review, interviews with key stakeholders implicated in different co-ordination mechanisms and a survey of Resident Coordinators (RCs), UN Country Team (UNCT), Country Managers and Country Representatives from seven organisations across 92 countries (see Annex 2). These lines of evidence were triangulated to address the following research questions:

- ❶ To what extent were MOs prepared to coordinate to respond to COVID-19?
- ❶ How did MOs coordinate to respond to COVID-19?
- ❶ What role did co-ordination play in delivering pandemic prevention, preparedness and response?
- ❶ What were the main factors that facilitated or constrained co-ordination?
- ❶ What are the key lessons learned for supporting enhanced co-ordination post-pandemic?

98 [https://www.who.int/news/item/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/news/item/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov))

**Each co-ordination mechanism is examined with respect to good practices for effective partnerships.** This study considered the “Ten success factors for effective post-2015 partnerships” identified in the OECD’s 2015 Development Co-operation Report as a good practice standard for co-ordination.<sup>99</sup> We considered reduced duplication and fragmentation as a key outcome of successful co-ordination.

Five factors were retained for the analysis, described in Table 1, below.<sup>100</sup>

**Table 1: Success factors for effective co-ordination<sup>101</sup>**

Factor	Description
Clear roles and responsibilities	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities that maximise comparative advantage, supported by well-defined processes and accountability mechanisms.
High-level leadership	Participation and ownership by senior-level decision-makers that mobilises critical political, financial, and operational support for co-ordination mechanisms.
Inclusive and transparent governance	Key stakeholders at different levels, including beneficiaries, are involved in decision-making. Implementation is country-led and reflects the local context, needs and priorities.
Results Focus and Accountability	There is a clear link between resources, activities and outcomes to support transparency and accountability through results frameworks and reporting. Data are collected and presented to support evidence-based decision-making and the creation of feedback loops.
Mobilise the required financial resources and use them effectively.	Predictable and adequate funding is available to develop and implement long-term strategies and bring solutions to scale. Funds are pooled where possible to reduce fragmentation and promote joint action.

99 Although few established good practices exist specifically for co-ordination beyond acknowledging its importance, the OECD report frames partnerships as a range of diverse groupings of development stakeholders convened with the purpose of working together more effectively. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2015) “Development Co-operation Report 2015 Making Partnerships Effective Coalitions for Action” <https://www.oecd.org/dac/developmentco-operationreport2015makingpartnershipseffectivecoalitionsforaction.htm>

100 Ibid.

101 The description of partnership factors have been modified to align to the context of this study.



# ANNEX : OVERVIEW OF COORDINATION MECHANISMS

## Annex : Overview of co-ordination mechanisms

Mechanism	Sector	Description
Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)	Health	The SPRP, coordinated by the UN Crisis Management Team under the leadership of the WHO's Emergencies Programme outlines the public health measures that the international community stands ready to provide to support all countries to prepare for and respond to COVID-19. The document guides the efforts of all national and international partners when developing context-specific national and regional operational plans. <sup>102</sup>
Access to COVID Tools Accelerator (ACT-A)	Health	The ACT-A is a global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. <sup>103</sup> It brings together the WHO, World Bank, Global Fund, GACI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Wellcome Trust, Unitaid, UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
Multilateral Leaders Task Force for COVID-19 Vaccines, Diagnostics and Therapeutics (MLTF)	Health	A joint initiative from the IMF, World Bank Group (WBG), WHO, and World Trade Organization (WTO) to accelerate access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics by leveraging multilateral finance and trade solutions, particularly for low- and middle-income countries. <sup>104</sup>
UN Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19 <sup>105</sup>	Social	The UN Socioeconomic Framework, developed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), sets out the priorities for the United Nations' urgent socioeconomic support to countries and societies in responding to COVID-19. It operationalises the UN Secretary-General's Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity report. <sup>106</sup>
COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF)	Social	The Secretary-General's UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Trust Fund is a UN mechanism to address the unprecedented socio-economic threats of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for countries and populations most vulnerable to the pandemic. The Fund mobilised the UN's global reach for rapid integrated UN responses, led by the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC), to support countries and safeguard their progress towards the SDGs. <sup>107</sup>

102 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/strategic-preparedness-and-response-plan-for-the-new-coronavirus>

103 <https://www.act-a.org/about>

104 <https://www.covid19taskforce.com/en/programs/task-force-on-covid-19-vaccines>

105 <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf>

106 <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/SG-Report-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Covid19.pdf>

107 <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/cov00>

Mechanism	Sector	Description
Solidarity Response Fund (SRF)	Health	The Solidarity Response Fund is a resource mobilisation mechanism for the early health emergency response to COVID-19 aligned to the SPRP. It was established and managed through an innovative partnership between the WHO, UN Foundation, Swiss Philanthropy Foundation and Transnational Giving Europe. <sup>108</sup>
Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP)	Humanitarian	The COVID-19 Global HRP is a joint effort by members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), including UN, other international organizations and NGOs with a humanitarian mandate, to analyse and respond to the direct public health and indirect immediate humanitarian consequences of the pandemic. It aggregates relevant COVID-19 appeals and inputs from WFP, WHO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF and NGOs, and it complements other plans developed by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. <sup>109</sup>
G20 Principles for Effective Co-ordination between the IMF and MDBs	Macroeconomic	The G20 Principles guide IMF-MDB co-ordination in cases where countries request financing while facing macroeconomic vulnerabilities and highlight the importance of the co-ordination between the institutions in the decision-making process for such financial assistance to be most effective. <sup>110</sup>
IMF-World Bank Multi-Pronged Approach to Address Debt Vulnerabilities	Macroeconomic	The IMF and the World Bank Multi-Pronged Approach (MPA) identifies joint actions to address debt vulnerabilities and risks from global economic shocks. The MPA seeks to strengthen debt transparency, support capacity development in public debt management, provide suitable tools to analyse debt developments and risks and explore adaptations to the IMF's and World Bank's lending policies to better address debt risks and promote efficient resolution of debt crises. <sup>111</sup>
G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI)	Macroeconomic	The DSSI involved cooperation among G20 bilateral creditors with support from the IMF and World Bank in suspending the debt service payments of LICs in line with the processes and principles of the Paris Club during the acute phases of the pandemic. The World Bank and IMF have supported the initiative through monitoring spending and enhancing public debt transparency. <sup>112</sup>

108 [https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.unfoundation.org/2022/01/EDUN01\\_CovidPlaybook\\_2021.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.unfoundation.org/2022/01/EDUN01_CovidPlaybook_2021.pdf)

109 <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global-Humanitarian-Response-Plan-COVID-19.pdf>

110 International Monetary Fund (2018) "Co-ordination Between the International Monetary Fund and Multilateral Development Banks on Policy-Based Lending: Update on the Implementation of the G20 Principles" <https://www.imf.org/external/np/g20/pdf/2018/082918.pdf>

111 International Monetary Fund (2020) "Update on the Joint IMF-WB Multipronged Approach to Address Debt Vulnerabilities" <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2020/12/10/Update-on-the-Joint-IMF-WB-Multi-pronged-Approach-to-Address-Debt-Vulnerabilities-49946>

112 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/covid-19-debt-service-suspension-initiative>



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