

# INTERSECTING

**VOLUME 05/2021**

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Sustainable Responses  
to the COVID-19 Pandemic

#systems #solutions #agendas

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VOLUME 05/2021

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Image Source: In a salty, heavy metal polluted desert in the former seabed of the evaporated Aral Sea, Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan, October 2019.  
Image by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.






Which of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have gained importance since the beginning of the pandemic?

Image Source: Ferry crossing Butterworth and Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia.  
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# preface





“One of these ideas was the proposition that infrastructure, that old dependable sector for spending, did not have to only be justified by invoking its essential role in supporting economic growth, but rather could be viewed as a key instrument in distribution.”

– Michael COHEN, The New School, New York

Image Source: King Abdullah Financial District and the 'Seven Moons' projects from Riyadh Park Mall, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (2020).  
Image by Nicolas J.A. Buchoud, all rights reserved ©.





Michael COHEN  
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### From networks to the Global Solutions Dialogue: designing a new space for global solutions

The Global Solutions Dialogues on Intersecting represent a promising step in expanding the dialogue on urgent global issues. Having participated in United-Nations “expert working groups”, World Bank task forces, civil society encounters and debates, and hundreds of meetings discussing “the need for new directions in development” over many years, I was surprised and delighted with the online dialogues organized during the second half of 2020 and which gave birth to this very first volume of the innovative Intersecting series. Two aspects of these dialogues deserve particular attention: the participants and the content of the discussions.

First, the participants represented a notable diversity of origins, disciplines, and institutions from around the globe. Unlike many international events where people “preach to the converted”, it was not at all clear from the convening of

these dialogues who would take the lead and how others would react. Sharing the table has become an increasingly important dimension of global debates. As we New Yorkers say, “If you are not at the table, you’re on the menu”. This important and provocative cautionary note suggests that representation is an essential part of global debates. It is the opposite of “leave no one behind”, which has become a mantra in the global community, even if many “globalists” continue to exclude divergent and critical voices from critical debates.

Secondly, the content of the dialogues was also important, even if some participants took some “predictable” positions reflecting their institutions. Rather than stick to old formulae and time-worn and perhaps stale recommendations, participants were seeking to find the “frontier” in the debate. What was new? How did it relate to current practice? What were the obstacles it would face? And how could political coalitions be organized to overcome those obstacles?

One of these ideas was the proposition that infrastructure, that old dependable sector for spending, did not have to only be justified by invoking its essential role in supporting economic growth, but rather could be viewed as a key instrument in distribution. The phrase “infrastructure for distribution” had a new ring to it, suggesting that participants might see whether trying out new combinations of “development language” might actually provoke some new thinking.



But words are not enough, so the real challenge implied by the Global Solutions Dialogue is to try out these ideas in real situations, in diverse geographies and scales, with different social structures, income levels, and political cultures. Some of these ideas might actually “have legs” and prove to be useful in designing and implementing change. If so, the Global Solutions Dialogue will have been a moment(s) when it was possible to see the outlines of the footprints of the future.

Despite the many obstacles to global communications and building global understanding, the Global Solutions Dialogue has continued to move forward in 2021. A notable event was a two-day international workshop held online by the O.P. Jindal Global University in India together with the Global Solutions Initiative to further explore the meaning of “intersecting”. This fruitful conversation examined the philosophical meanings of intersection, what it means operationally about how institutions at all scales understand problems and work to develop solutions, and also identified intriguing questions for further research. Speakers from Indonesia, which holds the presidency of the G20 for 2022, illustrated how processes of change are by nature integrated, not divided into predefined categories, and they welcomed new ways of framing development challenges for a large and very diverse country. Intersecting is a verb. It is a call to think and to act differently.





# CENTRAL & SOUTH ASIA<sup>2021</sup>

JULY 15-16, TASHKENT

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE «CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIA:  
REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES».

“Intersecting is not just a book about cities or infrastructure. Built across months-long dialogues and ad hoc panels, Intersecting is also a visual reflection of a major crisis and its aftermath.”

– Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative, Paris

Image Source: At the opening plenary of the 'Central and South Asia Connectivity' international summit in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, July 15-16 2021.  
Image by Nicolas J.A. Buchoud, all rights reserved ©.





Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD (ed.)  
Global Solutions Fellow  
Paris, France

## INTERSECTING as a compass for recovery

The pandemic is over (isn't it?).

When in the spring of 2020, we first initiated the Solutions Dialogues which would then become INTERSECTING, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported 10 million COVID-19 cases and half a million dead across the globe. When we released INTERSECTING's first edition a year later, the Coronavirus Update Live reported 115 million cases and 2,5 million dead. Halfway to 2021, over 220 million cases have officially been reported and nearly 5 million dead.

Much has been said about the pandemic, and often as quickly forgotten. It is unclear what we have learned from the crisis and yet, the world has moved from research to large scale industrialization of vaccines -and so far, a very uneven distribution of them. The global lockdowns of the spring 2020 have allowed for an instant photography of our interconnected world. Following the SARS, MERS and Ebola

pandemics, the COVID-19 has forced us to break all routines abruptly and at massive scale. Governments, together with Central Banks and International Financial Institutions have spent staggering amounts to mitigate the crisis' macroeconomic impacts, especially in developed countries.

INTERSECTING's exploration from the Amazonian to Central Asia to the Arctic, from neighborhoods to urbanization corridors, from health to inequalities, warns that painting in green and inclusive colors the same institutional and networking patterns as before the crisis will quickly fall short.

Few countries and institutions, including local governments and their advocacy networks, have admitted how little prepared they were to cope with the pandemic. The global community has consolidated knowledge from the management of previous pandemics in too scarce and random a way, a situation accurately described by the Center for International and Strategic Studies in 2019 as a 'cycle of complacency.

The New Urban Agenda celebrated at the Habitat III Summit in Quito in 2016 was silent about pandemic risks. In 2020, the final Declaration of the 10th World Urban Forum held in Abu Dhabi remained equally mute, whereas cities and billions of urban dwellers were hard hit by the pandemic's many impacts.

Infrastructure investments are widely thought to be a key to recover from the crisis, to reach out to a new sustainable

economy, especially if we favor a new paradigm of infrastructure for distribution. Yet a decade of rebuilding growth through connectivity after the 2008 global financial crisis has painstakingly exposed people to the pandemic, showing the limitations of existing investment models. Multiple pleas for cities to implement sustainable pandemic responses locally and play a new role globally could just add more complexity to clogged global decision mechanisms.

INTERSECTING is a call for knowledge generation and distribution to become the cornerstone of future good government but this will be done in a world that is, if not in disorder, in transformation. The race for post pandemic leadership has started for good but delivering on a global roadmap of sustainable recovery will require coherent and accountable institutional frameworks and implementation mechanisms.

Formidable change has occurred already. In the United-States, the new presidential administration elected in 2020 has issued a bipartisan trillion dollars' infrastructure plan in the summer of 2021, with even more to come. The European Union also approved a large recovery plan of more than 750 billion euros. In the meantime, profound geopolitical shifts are happening and one could only think that the United-States could no longer continue fight a war in Afghanistan while massively investing at home.

INTERSECTING was built as a compass or even as an astrolabe, pointing out to multidimensional combined social,

political, infrastructural, geo-economical and scientific challenges and recovery options. It reflects over 18 months of debates, research, exchanges, dialogues, explorations and publications.

INTERSECTING is based upon multiple, interlinked entry points, from 'disease' to 'cooperation', looking into possible future world structures. We believe it is ours to decide how infrastructure can serve other purposes than trade development and resources consumption, ours to understand the social factors of global warming and other ecosystem alterations, ours to assess how cities can continue to be places of innovation while re-valuing rural geo-economics and while understanding that they are also the places where resentment and distrust are articulated.

One of INTERSECTING's main finding is that lethality of the SARS-Cov-2 virus is redoubled not only by its multiple variants, but also by a knowledge and even a cognitive crisis accelerated by the development of the digital space and media transformation. Therefore, solutions are to be found at the edges. At the intersections of disciplinary and policy borders. At the intersections of short and long term. At the intersections of community and global scales. At the intersections of systems, institutions and cultures. At the intersections of entrepreneurship and society. Otherwise, what lessons from biotechnologies and vaccine development could we ever learn to serve for better policy-making in the urban age?




INTERSECTING is a collective work, the result of the dedicated engagement of five co-editors, several supporting knowledge partners, ADBI and OECD, nearly a hundred co-authors, including strong voices and ones from future leaders, from all regions of the globe, with two dozen of some of the world's very best universities and research centers taking part. Incubated by the Global Solutions Initiative, supported by GIZ, it also marks the 10th anniversary of the Grand Paris Alliance for Sustainable Investments.

You can read INTERSECTING piece by piece, photography by photography, quote by quote and as a whole.

This very first volume of INTERSECTING 'On sustainable urbanization and infrastructure response to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis' is the cornerstone of several upcoming policy, research and advocacy global initiatives addressing resources and circular economy, the future of work and creative economy, and the delivery of the 2030 Agenda, in the context of the Troika of G20 presidencies by Indonesia, India and Brazil from 2022 to 2024.

Welcome to INTERSECTING.

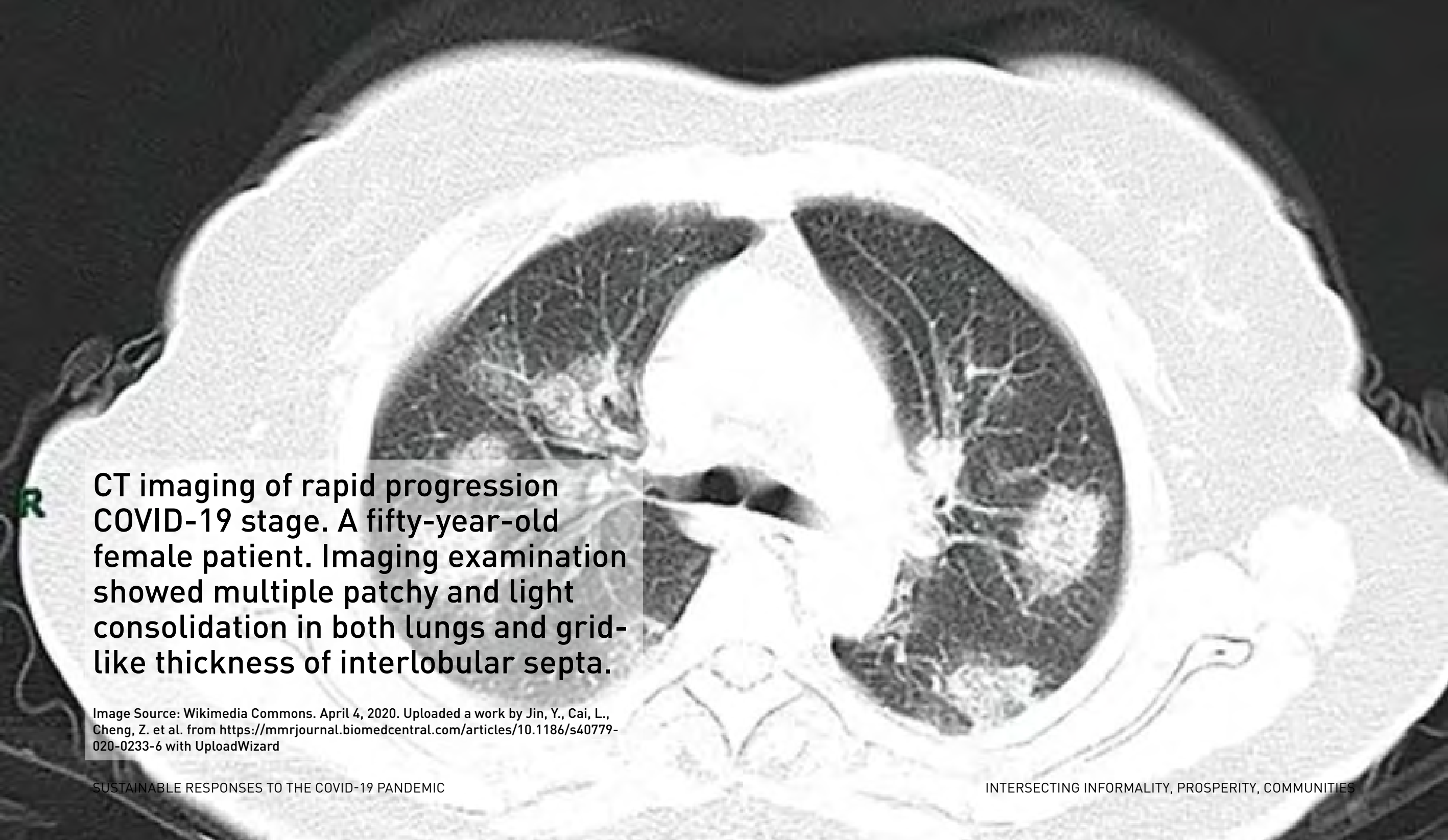


An aerial photograph showing the white hull of a large ship, likely a cruise ship, with black degree markings (42° and 25°) and a small red dot. Below the hull, a smaller cargo ship is visible on the dark blue sea.

# Intersecting as a collective compass for recovery.

Image Source: A sea and aerial landscape over the North Sea between Amsterdam and Leeds. Image by Nicolas J.A. Buchoud, all rights reserved ©.





**CT imaging of rapid progression COVID-19 stage. A fifty-year-old female patient. Imaging examination showed multiple patchy and light consolidation in both lungs and grid-like thickness of interlobular septa.**

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. April 4, 2020. Uploaded a work by Jin, Y., Cai, L., Cheng, Z. et al. from <https://mmrjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40779-020-0233-6> with UploadWizard

# systems solutions agendas

## 1. Avoiding another wasted decade of growth

Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative, Paris, France

## 2. The Global Solutions Summit in 2021: framing the crisis

Markus ENGELS, Secretary General, Global Solutions Initiative, Berlin, Germany

## 3. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) after 2020

Stefano MARTA, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Paris, France

## 4. Bridging the gap between global and community resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Carmen VOGT, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Bonn, Germany

## 5. Cities and infrastructure investment for an inclusive economic recovery

Sarah COLENBRANDER, Overseas Development Institute, London, the United-Kingdom

## 6. A participatory process to redefine the Milan City approach towards sustainable development in a pandemic context

Edoardo CROCI, Bocconi University, Milan, Italy



# systems solutions agendas

## 7. Partnerships for the 2030 Agenda

Sébastien DAZIANO, SUEZ, Paris, France

## 8. Creative solutions to 'building forward better'

Ricky Joseph PESIK, Ministry for Tourism and Creative Economy, Jakarta, Indonesia

## 9. Enacting creative economy

Tia LARASATI, Indonesia Creative Cities Network, Bandung, Indonesia, Fiki SATARI, Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, Jakarta, Indonesia

## 10. Back to growth? The 2030 Agenda, the G20 and the aftermath of the crisis

Nella Sri HENDRIYETTY, Senior Economist, Asian Development Bank Institute, Tokyo, Japan

## 11. Welfare, social and spatial organization in the post-COVID global urban age

Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative, Paris, France; Eduardo LÓPEZ MORENO, UN-Habitat, Nairobi, Kenya

## 12. Cross border data management and regional value chains: a tentative agenda for recovery through smart urbanization in the ASEAN context

Riatu MARIATUL QIBTHIYYAH and Teuku RIEFKY, University of Indonesia (LPEM-UI), Jakarta, Indonesia

### 13. Twenty-four months to build and implement a paradigm shift

Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative, Paris, France; Katharina Lima DE MIRANDA, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Kiel, Germany; Hazem GALAL, PwC Middle East, Dubai, the United Arab Emirates; Luca TRIFONE, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Municipality of Rome, Italy

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“Fostering more aligned cooperation is on the agenda of the G20 Italy in 2021. Moving from good intentions to a global roadmap of urban recovery will require strong and accountable implementation mechanisms and institutional frameworks.”

– Nicolas BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. February 23, 2020. Italian government task force to face coronavirus outbreak. Image by the Governo Italiano.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2020\\_coronavirus\\_task\\_force.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2020_coronavirus_task_force.jpg)





Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD (ed.)  
Global Solutions Initiative  
Paris, France

## Which growth can we achieve?

Nearly fifteen years ago, the subprime mortgage crisis in the United-States triggered a global financial crisis. It was largely a consequence of real estate finance going wrong, supplying massive quantities of housing nowhere near basic services and urban amenities and mobility infrastructure. Since then, new prudential regulations and global financial, macro-economic governance mechanisms have been entailed by the G20, which has successfully secured the global banking system.

The same G20 has yet devoted much less efforts to address the urban roots of the crisis, whereas massive amounts of constructions have continuously been delivered across the globe without much corresponding urban and infrastructure planning. Then in less than a year in 2020, many social and economic indicators have declined to pre-2010's level, erasing years of growth while the environmental costs are yet to be paid for.

The prediction of what kind of economy will emerge from the pandemic is currently difficult to make but INTERSECTING argues we should not wait to take responsibility and refine our collective understanding of the crisis several causes and of the options that are at our hand. Even if it had a spatial expression, the financial crisis of 2008 could clearly be attributed to actors and processes of financial markets and reforms could be built accordingly and economists' recommendations targeted central banks as saviors to restore confidence in markets. In 2020, the problems caused by the pandemic have affected all sectors. As we perceive urbanization has something to do with the unfolding of the crisis, no single explanation can account for the disruptions it has triggered. Therefore, no sectoral reform could help restore confidence in economic demand and supply after the pandemic. 'Framing the crisis' (M. Engels) depends on our collective ability to align and intersect various factors, from bridging the gaps between global resilience and community resilience, to enact creative economy, to entail stronger partnerships to support the 2030 Agenda, to shape health and welfare policies that fits the dimensions of our urban age, to revive global agreements.

One of INTERSECTING's findings is that cross-border data management and regional value chains could well become the foundations of more active and inclusive regional agendas, including smart urbanization and infrastructure in a wider social and political perspective. In any case, trust is



a critical dimension of all post-COVID-19 options and recovery scenarios, one which has to be (re)built not only in the alleys of global conferences but also in the backstreets of every neighborhoods. Even in the digital society, it is not all about data superhighways, as even the G20 sustainable development agenda that has emerged since 2016 has demonstrated.

The Italian G20 presidency has made clear the local level should become part of post COVID-19 recovery solutions and to tackle longer term environmental challenges, and it has announced the organization of several meetings, including an international summit of environment and energy ministers scheduled in the summer of 2021 in Napoli and connecting with the Urban 20, to make the case for G20 action on urbanization. Even before the pandemic outbreak, more than 80% of the regions in OECD countries were not keeping on track on any of their seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs). Key report from 2019 and 2020 were pointing out to the pre-pandemic period immense challenges to reach out the targets of the 2030 agenda, including urbanization and infrastructure development as critical issues.<sup>1</sup> Unless coordinated local and global efforts are undertaken to reposition the SDGs at the core of recovery policies, the delivery of the Agenda 2030 will be slowed down for a long time, with rising disparities among local and regional governments hampering global climate and carbon neutrality goals.<sup>2</sup>

Issuing a G20 agenda on urbanization that is effective depends on many factors. Locally, such a move is complicated by the fact that most local government leaders are called to undertake long-term transformative actions and plans that will bear consequences well after their own particular mandate. Therefore, it is not only about understanding the role of infrastructure in building up resilient societies, it is also about creating new forms of productive and transformative partnerships at the confluence of previously unconnected spheres of knowledge and policy. To bridge the gaps between global and community resilience, data should become a public good shared between city governments, urban communities and citizens, by decision makers at national levels and international financial institutions. Digital governance is key to sustain multilateralism in an interconnected urban world, whereas a handful of monopolistic companies are now accumulating data from billions of people around the world.

INTERSECTING is edited at pivotal moment when the reconciliation between the macroeconomic objectives of the G20 and the regional recovery strategies can additionally leverage large scale social and environmental investments and benefits. This is a chance. The development and coordination of data collection and of a shared smart city agenda -including smarter infrastructure systems and mobility services- across key economic regions, such as the ASEAN or Europe could provide a robust leverage and drive the economy out of the crisis in an inclusive and sustainable

way. But this has to go with creativity. From Milan to Bandung, cities' creativity has not been erased by the crisis and prove there can be many creative ways to build the infrastructure of a new sustainable economy. The conjunction of infrastructure for distribution and the development of creative economy is a way to support local communities, create jobs and maximize the inclusion potential of digital services, while taking into account that large segments of labor markets are informal, especially in emerging and lower income countries. Improving the articulation between multilevel governance and local responses could help address the vulnerabilities and exposure of poorer communities to pandemics and other global risks. It would also give more leverage to local governments and civil society players to address growing fragmentations within the middle-classes.


The COVID-19 pandemic has added a new challenge to 'recouple economic progress with social progress' and made this historic commitment of the Global Solutions Initiative more pressing and more necessary. The pandemic's aftermath might become one of greater fragmentations, greater inequalities. Addressing the 'Reversals of Fortune' the World Bank has identified in its report of the fall of 2020 requires global thinking but also to develop a common consolidated knowledge of local solutions that have been implemented successfully in the past years, understanding that cities, subnational governments and national governments closely depend on each other. National policies and

the enforcement of future climate, biodiversity or other trade, social and digital global commitments would benefit from redesigning a robust, multilateral new urban agenda.

1. The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development, United-Nations Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2019, co-chaired by Peter Messerli and Endah Murniningtyas, [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR\\_report\\_2019.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf)

2. Sustainable Development Report 2020, The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19, SDSN, Bertelsmann Stiftung, June 30, 2020, [https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/2020\\_sustainable\\_development\\_report.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/2020_sustainable_development_report.pdf) See and Europe Sustainable Development Report 2020, Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, SDSN, IEEP, Dec. 08, 2020 [https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/europe\\_sustainable\\_development\\_report\\_2020.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/europe_sustainable_development_report_2020.pdf)



An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. In the center, there is a large, irregularly shaped lot that appears to be under development or is a large undeveloped area. This lot has a mix of green grass, brown dirt, and some low-lying vegetation. To the left of this central lot, there is a smaller, more developed area with a baseball field and some buildings. The surrounding area is densely packed with residential houses, mostly with red-tiled roofs, and some commercial buildings. The overall scene suggests a suburban area with a large, central undeveloped lot.

“A decade ago, the subprime mortgage crisis in the United-States triggered a global financial crisis. It was largely a consequence of real estate finance going wrong, supplying massive quantities of housing nowhere near basic services and urban amenities and mobility infrastructure...”

– Nicolas BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative

Image Source: Over Nevada, the United States. Image by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.



“In the light of climate change and COVID-19 it is apparent that real progress can only happen if it includes progress for the whole of society, the people within it and the environment around us.”

– Markus ENGELS, Global Solutions Initiative

Image Source: Image by the Global Solutions Initiative, all rights reserved ©.







Markus ENGELS  
Global Solutions Initiative  
Berlin, Germany

### **The Global Solutions Summit in 2021: Framing the crisis**

I am sure everybody will agree that the COVID-19 challenge will be formative for an entire generation. It has exposed the vulnerability of the modern world, it has underlined the inter-connectivity between societies and it has shown us that something as small as a virus can easily stop the world from turning and the economy from working.

While the COVID-19 crisis delivered more bad news each and every day, killed and debilitated people, widened social gaps and challenged the world economy, it proved at the same time how incredibly powerful a united world society working in cooperation can be: Within weeks, we managed to approve multiple vaccines and organized distribution of vaccines around the world. The G20 pledged not to forget the poorer regions and the EU agreed on a common purchasing policy to make sure that the richest nations could not buy all vaccines at the expense of the poor. These later trends make me optimistic, because COVID-19 highlighted

one thing: that either everybody must be protected against the virus or nobody will be safe. We are all sitting in the same boat in fighting the virus. And obviously it is crucial not to forget that COVID-19 is only one crisis in an orchestra of urgent global challenges like climate change, loss of biodiversity, global inequality, and technological disruption which is changing everything in politics, economy, society, communication and personal relations. All of these challenges, some call them mega-crises, are interconnected and can't be answered as long as people remain in their silo-mentalities. Interconnectivity of crises requires the interconnectivity of thinking!

### **The Global Solution Initiatives (GSI), and its Summit**

The purpose of the non-profit GSI is to support the G20 and its related engagement groups, especially the Think20, the G20's global network of think tanks, which provides research-based policy advice to the G20. It is critical in this respect to overcome silo-mentality, thinking just within disciplines, and to understand the links between the greatest challenges of our days, and some fundamental misconceptions.

Therefore, the Global Solutions Initiative aims to provide a platform for the G20 and other international organizations and to all G20-related engagement groups. It offers a forum for the global civil society to strengthen interna-

tional cooperation and put forward evidence-based and research-based policy recommendations. Within the GSI network the researchers and think tanks discuss their research-based proposals with thought leaders from politics, business and civil society to make sure that the recommendations can be implemented. The Global Solutions Summit, which takes place in Berlin in the middle of every G20 Presidency, was transformed into a digital format in 2020 and reached thousands of participants and brought together 220 panelists from around the world. In 2021 the Summit will take place on May 27-28th and will promote the Italian G20 priorities while building bridges to the upcoming Indonesian and Indian G20 Presidencies in 2022/2023.

Whoever is registered to our network will be informed on a regular basis about the formats for the Summit in 2021, the topics and concepts, and all GSI activities.

## **Recoupling-Narrative of the GSI**

The key narrative of the GSI is “recoupling” which was established by the GSI president Dennis Snower. It argues that there has been a process of decoupling of economic progress and social prosperity, of technological progress and progress in sustainability, and there is a growing gap between wealth and health. This is one reason why globalization is under pressure and why the world is witnessing rising populism and conspiracy theories. To combat this rise

in “me-first” thinking, which is a response to people and societies not seeing the economic progress of nations and companies reflected in their individual and social wellbeing, we must bring these diverging strands back together. It is obvious that there is a need for a recoupled world and for a aligning progress in different areas, including social and environmental progress for the many, not just the few.

COVID-19 has partly exacerbated the gaps in and between societies and therefore it is consistent that the G20 in 2021 is focusing on the overcoming of the social crisis linked to the pandemic, under the framing of “people, planet and prosperity”. Therefore, the Global Solutions Summit in May will underline the need for a great realignment in economy, society and politics and highlight ways to recouple societies and different forms of progress. Empowering people, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity for all is what recoupling is all about. To do this, it is crucial that a great realignment in multilateralism includes both different local perspectives and regional experience. The regions and cities around the world are dealing with and managing the mega-crises on a daily basis with. As a consequence, we offer the Urban20, the G20 engagement group focused on cities and urbanization, a platform to discuss their global solutions.

There is also a need for a new understanding of the role of basic infrastructure in building up resilient societies. There needs to be a realignment here as well. As the GSI



aims to become a common global good fostering a civil-society-driven multilateralism, it recognizes that societies need sustainable infrastructure as the figurative cement between young and old, different genders, poor and rich, and cities and countryside.

All of these discussions on implementable solutions to global problems that simultaneously envision a recoupled world of empowered individuals within thriving societies will be deepened during the Global Solutions Summit in May 2021.

### **New measurement of wealth, The Great Realignment and digital governance**

One fundamental misconception which leads to a faulty incentive system is a narrow concept of wealth and progress. In the light of climate change and COVID-19 it is apparent that real progress can only happen if it includes progress for the whole of society, the people within it and the environment around us. True resilience requires unity in society as well as individuals ready to handle the rapid change and an environment which is healthy. All of these criteria are neither fulfilled in the growth-orientated concept of GDP nor in the traditional understanding of the purpose of economy and business. We must see the purpose of economies as the gratification of people's needs and the purpose of business as serving demands in the interests of social

progress and social cohesion.

The recoupling dashboard, which was proposed in 2020 by Dennis Snower, Katharina Lima de Miranda and the GSI, addresses this misconception of wealth and progress. It proposes a new measurement of success by bringing together economic growth and wealth on the one hand, and the environment, social impact and empowerment of people on the other. The new measurement is crucial in the context of COVID-19 recovery, as we strive for simultaneous goals including economic stimulation, job creation, climate change mitigation, inequality reduction and multilateral system renewal. Hence, it is important to have a new approach to the question: what is success and wealth?

In this context one must also take into account the situation in the digital world: in a nutshell, just a few companies are accumulating data from billions of people around the world. This neither serves the interest of innovation, because it limits the chances of start-ups and SMEs, nor consumer rights protection or data safety. The issue of digital governance related to ownership of data might further worsen poverty and inequality as the benefits from digitalization are unevenly distributed between the few and the many. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a new digital system. Dennis Snower, together with Paul Twomey, has proposed a new data regime on digital governance which serves to give individuals back control over their own data and is currently being discussed in the EU. The Global Solutions Summit

will widen this discussion and include players from business and civil society to foster recoupling in the digital age.

## Outlook

Digital formats are offering fantastic options to include more stakeholders and diverse perspectives in these discussions around the world. While the Global Solutions Summit in the age pre-COVID-19 could only host around 1,200 participants from around the world, its digital twin in 2021 opened the floor for the highest number of participants in the history of the GSI. This “forced innovation” will remain in 2021 and afterwards and the GSI will upgrade its digital competence while bringing back its physical meetings as soon as possible. We are all eager to meet in person again and have an exchange without a screen between us, but only as soon as this is responsible and in the interest of everyone’s health.





“The Global Solutions Summit of 2021 will underline the need for a great realignment in economy, society and politics and highlight ways to recouple societies and different forms of progress. The GSI aims to become a common global good fostering a civil-society-driven multilateralism.”

– Markus ENGELS, Global Solutions Initiative

Image Source: Celebrating the New Urban Agenda after a decade of urbanization in October 2016. Image by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.





Stefano MARTA  
Organization for Economic  
Cooperation and  
Development (OECD)  
Paris, France

## The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) after 2020

Investment is a specific and key aspect of OECD's work on the SDGs, and countries, cities and regions would benefit by referring to the 2030 Agenda in order to recover from Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, we believe that decentralized development cooperation (DDC) is an undervalued asset that could come in support of local government, particularly in developing countries, and could contribute to the local implementation of the SDGs.

Decentralized development cooperation represents only a fraction of annual official development assistance (ODA) with about 6% of the total ODA, but volumes have grown by 25% over the last 15 years, reaching \$2.4 billion as of 2018. In some countries the DCC volumes can be significant, such as in Austria, Canada or Spain, where DDC represents between 23% and 16% of total national ODA.

As numerous local and regional governments in Europe are working on territorialized approaches to the SDGs, DDC can be a relevant driver of SDGs localization all the more as local and regional governments should be on the frontline of the implementation of long-term Covid-19 recovery plans. Among the 17 SDGs, SDG 3 (health) and SDG 11 (cities) were the main targets of DCC, making the connection between DCC, SDGs and Covid-19 recovery all the more relevant.

Partnership is another key dimension of DCC, which finds further relevance in the Covid-19 crisis context. In the past decade, the approach has gradually shifted from classical North to South ODA and financial transfers to models based upon knowledge transfer, peer-to-peer and capacity building among local governments. Territorial partnerships models have emerged and illustrate the development of DDC based on a network of actors, with local or regional governments as anchors that catalyse the engagement of civil society and the private sector. This model has been applied in the region of Tuscany in Italy, which has focused its decentralized development cooperation policies upon health and circular economy, in support of partner cities and regions overseas.

The city of New-York is structuring a number of global partnerships through its 'Voluntary Local Review' of the SDGs, a process that has gained in visibility and impact in the past 2 years with over 200 cities aiming at preparing local reviews in addition to the countries national reviews. The

cities of Bonn in Germany and of Kitakyushu in Japan offer two other good examples of how the SDGs are nurturing and structuring local policies and investments.


The city of Bonn has been using the SDGs to develop and formulate its Sustainability Strategy 2019. In that sense, the SDGs are no longer a rigid framework of 169 targets but a policy-framework that allows to manage trade-offs even between competing priorities such as between increasing and strengthening sustainable mobility and reducing CO2 emissions in the city, providing affordable housing and maintaining the green spaces in the city. Lately, Bonn has also started to use the SDGs as a budgeting tool and to engage the private sector in support of a comprehensive sustainability strategy. The SDGs can provide a universal language that allows to strengthen private-public-partnerships to enhance sustainability. As many local governments, especially in lower-income countries, cannot benefit from the same levels of resources than in developed or some emerging countries, the SDGs should become an accelerator of decentralized cooperation and support.

The city of Kitakyushu in Japan is using the SDG framework to strengthen and value its green economy assets and in particular circular economy, out of a long heavy industries history. The city is using the SDGs to address social and economic challenges such as the need to provide more attractive job opportunities for the youth to meet Tokyo's competition or to provide opportunities to the elder popula-

tion that is left out of job markets.

The Covid-19 crisis will be the real stress test for the SDGs, especially for cities and regions. To recover from the economic shock of the Covid-19 pandemic, local and regional governments will need national and multilateral support to implement sustainable recovery strategies and continue to foster effective decentralized development cooperation. The ability of local and regional governments to cope with the crisis by using the SDGs as a policy-making framework is among the main new challenges that face the 2030 Agenda. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, more than 80% of the regions in OECD countries were not keeping on track on any of their 17 goals. Unless coordinated local and global efforts are undertaken to reposition the SDGs at the core of Covid-19 recovery strategies, there are risks that the delivery of the Agenda 2030 is slowed down for a long time, combined with rising disparities among local and regional governments, that might also hamper global climate and carbon neutrality goals.



A group of photographers and videographers are positioned behind a white and yellow striped barrier, ready to capture footage. They are equipped with professional cameras, many with large telephoto lenses, mounted on tripods. The setting appears to be an outdoor event space with a brick wall in the background. A sign on the wall reads "SALA DE EMERGENCIAS" with an arrow pointing right. The photographers are dressed in business casual attire, including suits and vests. One man in the foreground is wearing a light blue shirt and a grey vest, looking at his phone. Another man in a dark suit is adjusting his camera. A man in a tan vest is also visible, looking towards the camera. The overall atmosphere is one of professional media coverage at a significant event.

“The ability of local and regional governments to cope with the crisis by using the SDGs as a policy-making framework is among the main new challenges that face the 2030 Agenda. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, more than 80% of the regions in OECD countries were not keeping on track on any of their 17 goals.”

– Stefano MARTA, OECD, Paris

Image Source: The media at the final plenary of the Habitat III Summit in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016. Image by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.





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### **Bridging the gap between global and community resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**

Amid the current global pandemic, how we address urban and community resilience has become even more critical. We can assume that the COVID-19 crisis will affect societies and economies not only in the upcoming two years but in the decades to come. Depending on actions taken now, the impact could be significant, including for the achievement of international commitments and sustainability targets or for the social and economic stability in many countries around the globe.

In the past year, we have witnessed in many partner countries how city governments and local actors have been under unprecedented stress during the fight against the pandemic. Unfortunately, the often fragile health, financial, political and social systems in developing countries and emerging economies have been affected disproportionately, amplifying existing inequalities and creating new ones.

As cities and citizens are greatly exposed to the physical, mental, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, addressing basic needs and services at community level is as important as addressing the pandemic on global level. As partners and donors, we are asked to rethink how we provide financing and support for inclusive and green recovery to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and address the scarcity of resources sharpened by the pandemic. Without the right political will and the integration of SDGs in recovery measures, we face a high risk that economic restarts and stimuli in cities, if not countries, might fail or be pursued at the expense of social and environmental goals. The consequences would be fatal, especially, for informal settlements and workers that are already hit hard due to a lack of sufficient social infrastructure and basic services.

It is, therefore, essential that the most vulnerable benefit directly from recovery programs - for example from quality infrastructure investments spill-over effects. At this moment, only an estimate of 3 to 5 per cent of the USD 12 to 15 trillion international COVID-19 stimulus programs are targeting green initiatives and even fewer amounts are devoted to support for local and community resilience. On this account, together with our partners and commissioning parties, we work towards combining the opportunities of economic stimulus packages with necessary climate resilient, transformative structural reforms to trigger a double dividend and avoid a trade-off between economic growth and progress on social

equality, sustainability and climate goals.

The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ), as the main commissioning party of GIZ, has recently introduced a reform concept that constitutes sustainable urban development as a stand-alone field of action, aiming to create climate impact and a green post-COVID-19 future. This reform concept was initiated before the pandemic crisis but has become even more relevant now. It will be reflected in GIZ's priorities and drive forward sustainable urban development projects.

Already now, GIZ provides structural support to the recovery of cities and citizens, by developing capacities, processes and organisations on different fronts, supporting multi-level-governance and fostering the exchange of knowledge. GIZ is present in partner countries and can react to their demands, while maintaining close relations to national ministries and city governments to strengthen the multi-level governance in recovery measures.

GIZ's engagement focuses on the several aspects of urban development, the first of which is evidence-based and participatory planning for the reorientation of the urban development strategies after the pandemic. This includes new political prioritization of green recovery measures and support for the functioning of public services, like mobility, health, education, buildings, housings, spatial planning, etc. To advance the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in the

context of the pandemic, a GIZ project in Ghana for example supports the decentralization reform at the local level while retaining a multi-level approach. This includes data-based development planning for the implementation of the Agenda 2030. Another illustration is the Transformation Fund Agenda 2030, which works towards achieving the SDGs in the Philippines by increasing the participation of relevant stakeholder groups to make COVID-19 stimulus programs more inclusive and sustainable. Further, the Open SDG Club, that is set up in India, addresses the needs of vulnerable groups in the context of reconstruction programs via multi-stakeholder dialogues on recovery plans, the identification of the core principles for inclusive reconstruction and the formulation of political advice on post-COVID-19 reconstruction plans for the Agenda 2030 decade of action.

Secondly, GIZ's engagement includes driving forward sustainable infrastructure development and investments in cities as they present a unique opportunity to combine economic stimulus measures with climate resilient, transformative structural reforms and job creation. An example for this is the C40 Cities Finance Facility (CFF), which develops fit for purpose solutions for its partner cities. As a project preparation facility, the CFF identifies and prepares climate mitigation and adaptation infrastructure projects, strengthens related capacities within city administrations and disseminates lessons learned and best practices. CFF helps to build a sustainable, low-emission and climate resilient infrastructure project pipeline and is an experienced broker between



financial institutions and city governments, supporting cities to access a broader range of financing solutions, including stimulus packages. An illustration of the project's impact can be found in Bogota, Columbia, where it has supported establishing the city's first large scale cycling avenue – one of the city's key response to the COVID-19 pandemic and for a green recovery. Further, the City Climate Finance GAP Fund, which is initiated by BMU and BMZ, similarly addresses the infrastructure investment gap. It will provide technical assistance to cities at an early stage of planning and project preparation to attract financing for sustainable infrastructure. Considering the entrenched local and national budgets, the lack of infrastructure development and investment, the GAP Fund and CFF realise an important task by enabling local governments to access infrastructure finance. Therefore, it is necessary that a considerable amount of the stimulus packages is directed in sustainable urban development and infrastructure. In this respect, the G20 as well as Multilateral and National Development Banks have a crucial role in deciding on financial resources and mechanisms, by which the local level can be included. They can contribute greatly to coordinated interventions with climate- and social-positive impacts.

Thirdly, GIZ's engagement in urban development revolves around innovation in and for cities. Fostering innovation will remain important during the COVID-19 pandemic and to manoeuvre out of the crisis. Citizen-centred innovation processes with the purpose to co-create digital solutions

can increase the resilience of cities and their transformative adaptation to climate change. GIZ focuses on inter alia mainstreaming digital solutions in urban processes and sharing successful models and experiences. An example of this is the initiative #solutionsforcities, and the "Call for Digital Solutions" initiated by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community with the to identify scalable solutions for urban challenges caused by the pandemic. This is an interesting and important field for future dialogues with highly innovative potential.

In summary, GIZ's experience in partner countries and in the area of sustainable urban development shows how city governments and citizens - especially the most vulnerable groups - are under great stress while coping with the pandemic and its short- to long-term impacts. To address their needs and demands in this crisis and increase urban resilience, all current efforts will gain impact from a coordinated approach at global level. The pandemic is an opportunity to revisit inefficiencies, gaps and flaws of contemporary urban policy making and development, including direct infrastructure investments to cities, digital solutions for better services and citizen participation in integrated planning. In this respect, there is a need for new forms of productive and transformative partnerships, a confluence of so far unconnected knowledge as well as an exchange of data as public good between city governments and urban communities, political decision makers at national level and international financial institutions.





“The pandemic is an opportunity to revisit inefficiencies, gaps and flaws of contemporary urban policy making, including direct infrastructure investments to cities, digital solutions for better services and citizen participation in integrated planning.”

– Carmen VOGT, GIZ, Bonn

Image Source: In the province of Nairobi, Kenya, and along the Neckar Valley in the Geidelberg-Mannheim metropolitan region, Baden-Württemberg, Germany.  
Images by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©





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But COVID-19 is almost certainly a temporary blow. Urban areas will recover as the threat of the pandemic recedes, whether that happens in a few months or a few years. Cities simply offer too many advantages: the productivity gains that come from sharing knowledge and ideas, the lower costs that come from sharing specialised infrastructure, the social and cultural opportunities that come from meeting a much wider range of people.

## Cities and infrastructure investment for an inclusive economic recovery

### The urban impacts of COVID-19

The early impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were concentrated in global cities. The connectivity, density and dynamism that make these cities such rewarding places to live and work also facilitated the rapid transmission of the virus. Accordingly, the epicentre of the pandemic shifted from Wuhan, to Milan, to London, New York and Mexico City.

The costs went beyond disease. Jobs and incomes disappeared overnight as governments locked down urban economies. In India, this fuelled the largest migration of people since Partition as millions returned to the countryside, often bringing the novel coronavirus with them. Months of lockdown in tiny apartments without greenspace have inspired a more gradual exodus, as inner-city residents flock to the suburbs or further afield.

### The future of cities

The inevitable revival of cities offers an opportunity to improve living standards for an increasingly urban population. 4.4 billion people live in towns and cities today, and that number will rise to 6.7 billion by 2050. The vast majority of these people live in poverty. Most lack access to basic services such as clean drinking water, sanitation and affordable modern energy, and work in unsafe conditions for inadequate wages. And increasingly, they are battered by the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, heatwaves and storm surge. Landlords have captured most of the gains of agglomeration.

Despite these policy and market failures, urbanisation will continue because cities are sites of economic and social opportunity.

Supporting economic development while mitigating the

climate and biodiversity crises will demand massive investment in sustainable urban infrastructure. Mass transit, stormwater drains, sewers, electricity grids and decent housing are preconditions for healthy, dignified, productive lives. Accordingly, in advance of the G20 leaders' meeting, the International Monetary Fund has called for a collective infrastructure push to create jobs, stimulate growth and address climate goals. The challenge is to ensure that these investments also deliver an inclusive recovery that tackles inequalities and injustices.

### Who gets to decide?

When questions of social justice are being considered in fiscal stimulus packages, they have largely focused on the distribution of costs and benefits. Infrastructure investments can directly create jobs for less-skilled workers; better transport can also improve their access to jobs, while improved energy access can enhance their productivity. Infrastructure investments in water, sanitation and solid waste management can reduce the environmental pollution that disproportionately affects low-income and other marginalised communities.

These outcomes would all lead to more equitable cities. However, 'distributive justice' – that is, a fairer allocation of resources – is not sufficient on its own. 'Procedural justice' – that is, fairer decision-making and dispute resolution

processes – will be equally important to drive an inclusive recovery.

Large infrastructure investments are almost always going to be designed, financed and delivered by powerful players: national and state governments, large engineering firms, commercial banks and institutional investors. But in the end, these systems will be used and paid for by households and small- and medium enterprises, who rarely have a voice in planning or implementation. Exclusionary decision-making processes too often means that infrastructure investments do not meet their needs.

### What are the key ingredients?

A narrow focus on city leadership or project financiers will not deliver an inclusive recovery. These constituencies are rarely interested in projects where they cannot cut a ribbon at the opening ceremony or that do not generate a commercial return on investment. The overwhelming evidence from most countries shows that city leaders, bankers and investors are – for the most part – happy to let low-income and other marginalised communities fall through the cracks.



Therefore, an inclusive recovery driven by green infrastructure investment also needs:

- Local governments with sufficient capacities and resources. Municipal officials have an important role to play in mediating among different interests and crafting a shared vision for the city. They need to work with universities to build the human resources that cities need: planners, architects, engineers, administrators and more.
- A culture of rights and justice. People move to cities in search of opportunity. They want to contribute to urban economies and societies. A culture of rights and justice can create the space for them to pursue those opportunities so that “the right to the city” does not only extend to those who can afford it.
- A far-sighted and coordinated fiscal framework. Urban projects should not just be funded by narrowly defined beneficiaries. A good municipal transport network, for instance, benefits almost everyone in the city by reducing congestion and air pollution while boosting access to jobs and services. These infrastructure projects will also benefit future generations. National and local governments therefore need to look beyond project finance and think about how area-wide tax policies, general obligation debt and land value capture can be used in an integrated way to finance projects that serve the city as a whole.

In the wake of COVID-19, the G20 plans an immense programme of infrastructure investment. We need to understand who will get a say in what kind of infrastructure is built, as well as for whom, when, where and why. Otherwise, the inequalities laid bare by the pandemic will only become more severe.





“In the wake of COVID-19, the G20 plans an immense programme of infrastructure investment. We need to understand who will get a say in what kind of infrastructure is built, as well as for whom, when, where and why. Otherwise, the inequalities laid bare by the pandemic will only become more severe.”

— Sarah COLENBRANDER, Overseas Development Institute, London

Image Source: Final voting on the conclusion of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York, in July 2018. Images by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.





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### **A participatory process to redefine the Milan City approach towards sustainable development in a pandemic context**

The Mayor of Milan initiated a public consultation to define a strategic approach to redefine policies and measures to relaunch the urban economy, taking into account environmental and social priorities, in a pandemic and post pandemic context. At this purpose seven leading independent institutions were appointed, under the “Fare Milano” project run by a public agency (Milano and partners) owned by the Milan Municipality and the Milan Chamber of Commerce to involve key stakeholders in seven strategic areas. Bocconi University, through its research center GREEN was in charge of the Environmental Transition topic.

In October 2020 four stakeholder consultation sessions were organized at Bocconi premises under the coordination of my research team, on the following topics: 1. Energy Transition, 2 Circular Economy, 3 Digital Innovation, 4 Livable city for all. Forty one top representatives of industry,

academia and NGOs participated, providing inputs to guide the transition.

Overall, the pandemic crisis has put in evidence that is no longer possible to postpone the resolution of pre-existing critical issues and delays, and at the same time has provided evidence of the urgency of changes and innovations. This has imposed a process of acceleration of public and private choices, to which Milan has been able to respond in a flexible and effective way. The persistence of the crisis, however, requires the construction of a strategy of integrated responses also in the medium-long term, which combines environmental quality, economic recovery and social dynamism. A return to the status quo is neither possible nor desirable, but the opportunity for a transition that is based on the attractiveness and inclusiveness of the city must be seized. At the same time, it is necessary to evaluate and manage risks of various kinds (environmental, health, technological, etc.) in order to prevent their harmful impacts and support the transformations of the economic and social fabric.

In this context, digital technologies have increased the efficiency of some processes, but they have also shown that they cannot completely replace the dimension of sociality, which remains an intrinsic human need both in the workplace and in the personal sphere. The vision of the Milan Smart City can combine digital and social innovation by enhancing their respective strengths, to improve the

functioning of the city, redefine and redesign services, create new social centers and communities and redefine new governance and business models, able to maintain the international attractiveness of Milan.

Reports of consultation are here condensed in the following thesis which emerged as transversal to the four sessions:

- Innovate the governance model of the city through the definition of a medium-long term municipal strategic plan
- Reorganize and rethink the districts of Milan as places of socialization, innovation and sustainability
- Plan public policies in an integrated way and at multiple scales
- Create a digital ecosystem and common standards to share data
- Monitor and report the impacts of the measures adopted
- Rethink the relationship between public spaces, the built environment, the mobility system and energy, water, and ICT networks
- Differentiate times of the city in the workplace and school
- Promote the energy transition and reduce the ecological divide
- Make Milan an innovation center for the circular economy and the bioeconomy
- Complete the environmental transition with the elimination of private traffic within the external ring road and the elimination of fossil fuels from heating systems
- Pursue a great symbolic project

## ANNEX

1. Innovate the governance model of the city through the definition of a medium-long term municipal strategic plan, centered on environmental transition as an element capable of combining an increase in environmental and social resilience, improvement of the quality of the environment and reduction of negative externalities, increasing healthiness, safety and urban livability. In this context the contribution of private entities, which can be facilitated by innovative forms of partnership and bureaucratic simplification, can be relevant in order to activate investments, additional to the ones funded by the public administration.

2. Reorganize and rethink the districts of Milan as places of socialization, innovation and sustainability: the neighborhoods of Milan should offer decentralized services in a 15 minutes range, to allow citizens to optimize travel, while at the same time rediscovering a sense of community.

3. Plan public policies in an integrated way and at multiple scales (district, municipality, metropolitan city, etc.), up to considering the urbanized area of regional dimension (which even goes beyond regional administrative borders). In this sense, the concept of urban periphery must be overcome and the provision of services and relations between neighborhoods must be redefined, in order to guarantee widespread quality of environment.

4. Create a digital ecosystem and common standards to share data and increase collaboration between different entities: data platforms fed by a variety of actors should interact and put in connection to stimulate new uses and develop new services, for the benefit of both the Public Administration and citizens. Federated data platforms, also based on the experience of the international EXPO 2015, can support value-added services through apps. Interoperability between systems is a prerequisite at this purpose. This path can lead, in addition to generating new business opportunities also for start-ups, to promote social innovation and reduce the digital divide.



5. Monitor and report the impacts of the measures adopted, in order to make citizens aware of the results of innovation processes, through the definition of clear indicators and communication tools, digital and accessible in real time. Information such as the crowding of public spaces and public transport, the increase in walking, cycling and sharing, the use of digital administration tools can be encouraged through the socialization of knowledge.

6. Rethink the relationship between public spaces, the built environment, the mobility system and energy, water, and ICT networks. The lockdown periods required to review the characteristics of the work and domestic environments, in order to increase both the energy performance (reduction of consumption and micro-generation), and the level of healthiness and comfort, starting from schools and public buildings. The redesign of the built environment also recalls the theme of the re-appropriation of collective and public space, facilitated by tactical urban planning processes.

7. Differentiate times of the city in the workplace and school, to reduce crowding in public transport and traffic congestion. The spread of smart working in recent months has shown how it is possible to adopt flexible working hours, which allow to maintain productivity by reconciling work and personal needs. This “desynchronization” should go hand in hand with a lengthening of city times, with an extension of the hours of basic services and shops.

8. Promote the energy transition and reduce the ecological divide. Energy efficiency of the building stock, the use of renewable sources, associated with storage systems, widespread micro-generation and collective self-consumption - at a condominium and district scale -, together with electrification, represent crucial factors for increasing the quality of air. Electrification also makes it possible to give greater impetus to the spread and use of electric means of transport, which are more efficient and have less impact in terms of emissions. District heating networks can contribute to the reduction of emissions and support the electrification process,

ensuring grid stability and reducing emissions. However, energy requalification and clean means transport are not yet accessible to everyone, often reducing the effectiveness of support policies. In order to make the energy transition more equitable, it is necessary to support the weakest social categories, through refurbishment interventions aimed at public residential complexes and collective services, such as schools, sports facilities, etc.

9. Make Milan an innovation center for the circular economy and the bio-economy. Reuse, recycling and sharing, applied to different supply chains, can become a new paradigm of value generation in the name of sustainability. Milan could become a new innovation hub in this area, enhancing the work of research institutes and universities and encouraging start-ups to attract new investments and businesses. The sharing of spaces, services and tools, assuring sanitization, represents a relevant trend. The digitization and automation of processes offer the availability of data and information which, if properly socialized, can lead to optimization in the use of resources and new applications. It is necessary to upgrade the infrastructure, use tariff and tax levers to encourage virtuous behaviors, train operators and inform citizens to accompany this process. Green procurement rules of the Public Administration can play an important role in this sense. In perspective, the Public Administration could offer guarantee and qualification functions for suppliers and activate One Stop Shops that offer information, training and services to citizens and the business.

10. Complete the environmental transition with the elimination of private traffic within the external ring road and the elimination of fossil fuels from heating systems: progressively Milan mobility should entirely rely on soft mobility and public transport. Air pollution is one of the major problems affecting the city of Milan and a reduction, towards total elimination of private vehicles, is necessary in order to make improvements in that direction. Together with the reduction of fossil fueled vehicles, the elimination of fossil fueled heaters is a fundamental step towards improving the air quality of the city of Milan. The transition to alternative sources for urban heating must therefore be accelerated.

11. Define a green sectoral plan: Nature-based solutions can play an important role in the redevelopment of suburbs and abandoned areas. The creation of new green infrastructures cannot depend almost exclusively on land development taxes and the management and maintenance of green spaces has to be performed professionally. The Municipality should adopt a sectoral plan for green infrastructures. Projects such as “Forestami”, envisioning planting 3 million trees, and “green rays”, envisioning greened cycle lanes from the city center to the outskirts, can insert greenery into a wider urban design and perform relevant environmental functions. The main parks should be managed by park managers with functions of protection and enhancement of the natural capital. Green, pedestrian, and open spaces also constitutes important social places in a pandemic phase.

12. Pursue a great symbolic project. Milan’s environmental transition should make use of one or more major symbolic projects that bring together public and private energies towards a common purpose (also based on the EXPO experience). The reopening of the “Navigli” channels could represent this transition, affecting at the same time the water, mobility and energy systems. The convinced participation of a variety of stakeholders is necessary to develop such ambitious processes.



“Digital technologies have increased the efficiency of some processes, but they have also shown that they cannot replace the dimension of sociality, which remains an intrinsic human need both in the workplace and in the personal sphere.”

– Edoardo CROCI, Bocconi University, Milan

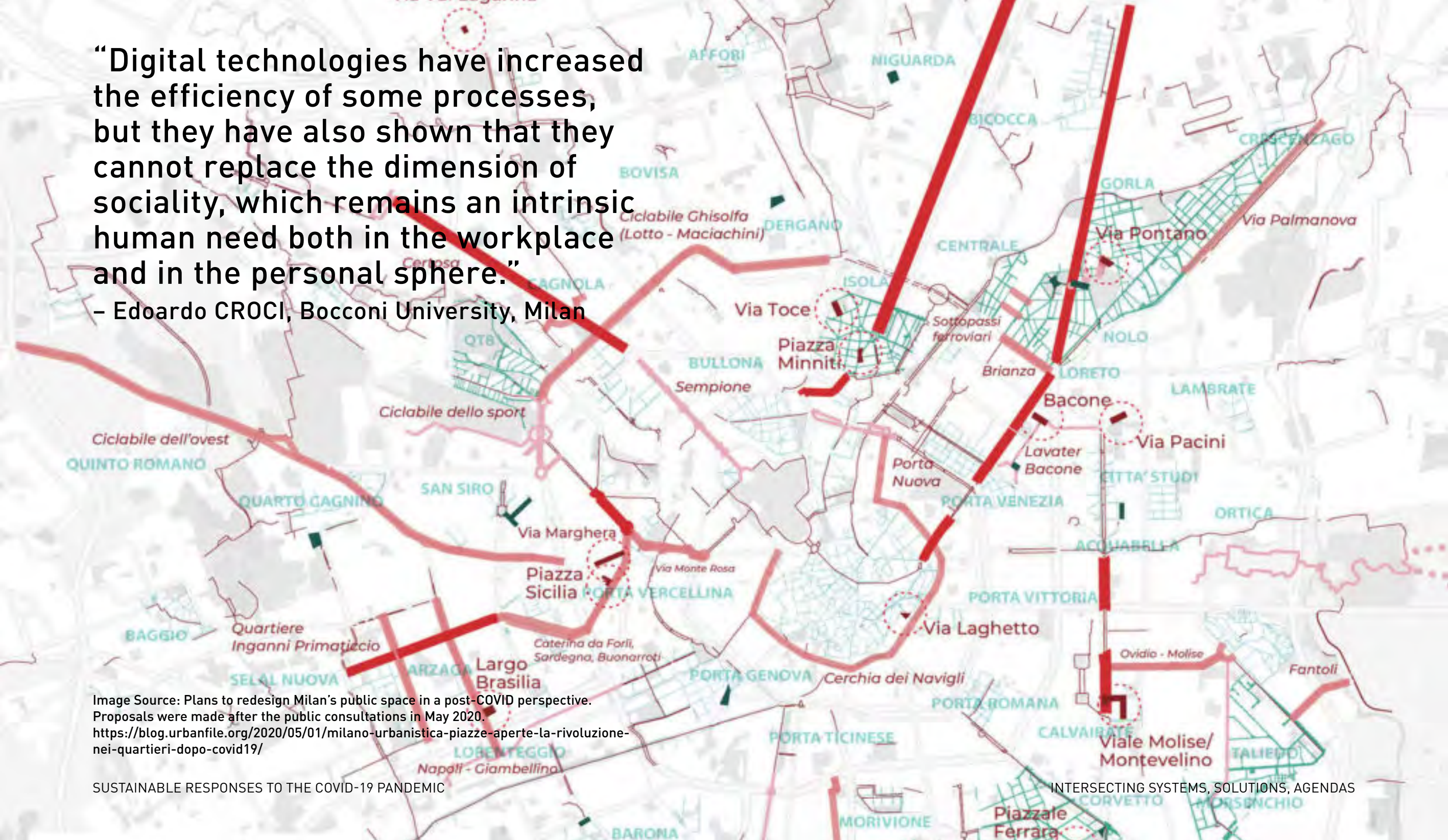


Image Source: Plans to redesign Milan's public space in a post-COVID perspective. Proposals were made after the public consultations in May 2020. <https://blog.urbanfile.org/2020/05/01/milano-urbanistica-piazze-aperte-la-rivoluzione-nei-quartieri-dopo-covid19/>





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## Partnerships for the 2030 Agenda

The Covid-19 crisis is the second global major crisis in only a decade, following the financial crisis of 2008. It could prove a more substantial and durable game changer provided Europe steps up to champion multilateralism and environmental innovation.

As it accelerates the digitization in the industry, services and finance, the pandemic questions the economic organization and governance of a rapidly changing world. Asia, especially South-East Asia and China, or Africa, where endogenous growth factors are increasingly important, have not been as brutally and directly impacted by the pandemic as Europe or North America. What might trigger long term geopolitical changes also reinforces the relevance of a coordinated European recovery plan.

From the spring of 2020, voices were raised like that of Joseph Stiglitz pleading that the recovery plans do not serve

as an addition of shock absorbers to the crisis but drive future investments that would be as 'green' as possible. Whereas growth forecasts are quite different among economic sectors, with air transport or tourism much more impacted than other key infrastructure and digital services, global growth is made of interdependence and the Covid-19 crisis highlights the needs for cooperation and coordinated investments of an unprecedented magnitude. Monetary policies that support an abundance of liquidity and low lending rates can help but it will be up to the stimulus plans to strengthen strategic investments in the long run.

Private sector players' ability to work in partnership with regions and cities will be another factor of sustainable growth. Meeting the CO2 reduction imperative depends not only on the adoption and strengthening of environmental criteria in banking and finance. The role of local governments, in particular in large-scale metropolitan regions, will be key to build innovative forms of sustainable public procurements, while also including citizens in change processes.

Moving towards zero carbon mobility and public transportation, improving outdoor but also indoor air quality, are among major local and global public health priorities. In Europe, the crisis has pushed towards more fiscal and economic convergence among the EU members, reflected by the German presidency of the EU in the second half of 2020. As multilateral institutions have been challenged by the



crisis, whereas the 2030 Agenda, the negotiations around the COPs on climate and biodiversity or the G20 remain of tantamount importance. After essentially virtual meetings in 2020, we can only hope that the Italian presidency of the G20, that of the G7 by the United Kingdom, as well as the co-presidency by the United Kingdom and Italy of the COP26 on climate, design a new consensus around shared environmental and socio-economic objectives. The work and reflections of the multiple bodies that coexist within the G20, such as think-tanks, cities, or the private sector, will need to be streamlined around shared priorities to deepen and connect those groups' cross-sectoral proposals with ministers and leaders.

We are at a pivotal moment when the reconciliation between the macroeconomic objectives of the G20 and the regional recovery strategies can leverage environmental investments at unprecedented scale, an opportunity that Europe must seize.

The European Commission Green Deal has defined climate transition as a cornerstone for the Union, but China has also announced its commitment to carbon neutrality by 2060, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in September 2020. The new administration of President Joe Biden has confirmed the United-States would return to the Paris Agreement. Meanwhile, fifteen countries in the Asia Pacific region have signed a regional trade agreement covering a market of 2.2 billion people and more

than 30% of the world total GDP, making it the designated 'largest trade agreement in the world.' While Asia, the world's leading industrial and exporting region, emerges rather strengthened from the Covid-19 crisis, environmental stakes are economically and politically huge.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) appear all the more relevant a policy framework as they are well acknowledged not only by national governments, but also by the private sector, local governments, the civil society, research and academia. The way to achieve the SDGs will probably have to be reframed in light of the crisis and multiple finance gaps such as in sustainable infrastructure. Yet, we do need harmonized multilateral drivers should we want to fully overcome the crisis and change growth trajectories.

Profiling recovery plans through climate, biodiversity, social and corporate responsibility priorities can shape sustainable responses to the crisis of Covid-19 and we argue Europe should value its unique assets in the many global negotiations yet to come. As compared to the United States or China, the EU may be lagging behind in fields such as artificial intelligence, IT or biotechnologies, but it does have a competitive advantage in anticipating ecological transition, be it about regulation, norms and standards, industrial and technological innovation, notwithstanding the integration of local governments and the civil society in decision processes.

We should value the potential for cooperation between Europe and the countries of the Asia Pacific zone, including Central Asia, within the G20, bringing together global and national green recovery policies and enhancing the role of European countries in responding to global environment and development challenges. Europe is the cradle of environmental services companies which have become world leaders in key markets of the future. They have in-depth and proven know-how and expertise, in particular for valuing ecosystem services. The European Green Deal is all the more important as most countries also have to cope with the costly obsolescence and lack of resilience of infrastructure systems inherited from the 19th and the 20th centuries.

Existing infrastructure stocks have often locked-in too much carbon intensive development pathways and therefore, governments and private sector leaders should champion a real paradigm shift. Long-term investment in environment and energy related infrastructure, services and technologies should also be designed to support MS-MEs and to transform entire value chains including R&D, construction, equipment, manufacturing, control etc. In return, this would help accelerate the delivery of new, higher value services, based on artificial intelligence and the use of environmental data at the service of many sectors of the economy such as agriculture, industry or services. Implementing a systemic transformation also calls for a better territorial anchoring of large companies and the de-

velopment of new industrial alliances to develop innovation, new jobs, new skills, new scientific and industrial models... and patents. While interactions between human health and the environment are at the heart of post-Covid-19 concerns, better traceability and management of flows and pollution could also contribute to the development of the circular economy at all scales, another field of sustainable growth for which Europe could lead the way forward.



“While interactions between human health and the environment are at the heart of post-COVID-19 concerns, better traceability and management of flows and pollution could also contribute to the development of the circular economy at all scales, another field to develop partnerships for sustainable growth and the 2030 Agenda.”

– Sébastien DAZIANO, SUEZ, Paris



Image Source: In a salty, heavy metal polluted desert in the former seabed of the evaporated Aral Sea, Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan, October 2019.  
Image by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.





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Ministry for Tourism and  
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## Creative solutions to 'building forward better'

### Infrastructure and the creative economy agenda

The world conference on creative economy initiated by Indonesia in Bali 2018 proposed a resolution to the United Nations General Assembly declaring creative economy as one of the main focuses of the global economy. Particularly, in Indonesia, the creative sector has been primarily dominated by small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Through economic crises, SMEs have proven to be the most resilient organisations with high survival rate. The UN approved the global agenda that 2021 will be the year of international economy year. In Indonesia, SMEs have shown to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic by taking advantage of digital transformation.

Since early March 2020, Indonesia introduced lockdowns unevenly across the country and created major disruption to SMEs' business operations. As a result, we launched

ideas to explore opportunities to accelerate the digital transformation for SMEs. This is a necessary measure as Indonesia is projected to become the 5th largest economy in the world and the biggest e-commerce market in the region. However, a major issue remains as digital transformation among SMEs in creative sectors varies. Despite the large size of the e-commerce marketplace, the share of local product in Indonesia is currently less than 20%.

The lockdown became the opportunity for us to give incentives for SMEs, especially in creative sectors, to digitally transform and move their businesses to e-commerce platforms. Within three months, there are almost 2 million new SMEs in creative sectors joining e-commerce marketplace. With these results, one of the priorities in Indonesia's pandemic recovery is to accelerate digital transformation of businesses to e-commerce. Another key topic for future agenda is infrastructure distribution. One of highly prioritized post-pandemic responses is digital sovereignty. The key issues to be discussed in the second world conference on creative economy in Bali next year:

- digital transformation and digital sovereignty for SMEs
- how to create a more inclusive global economy
- what collaborations to support SMEs in creative sectors that can provide more inclusive access to finance and fair distribution
- new regulations about the intellectual property right as a guarantee for access to finance (in addition to current creative economy laws in Indonesia and other countries)



“We have launched ideas to explore opportunities to accelerate the digital transformation for SMEs. This is a necessary measure as Indonesia is projected to become the 5th largest economy in the world and the biggest e-commerce market in the region.”

– Ricky Joseph PESIK, Ministry for Tourism and Creative Economy, Jakarta

Image Source: The Art Jog contemporary art fair held in Taman Budaya, Yogyakarta, was not canceled despite for COVID-19 and bringing support to the creative economy sector has been part of COVID-19 mitigation measures in Indonesia. Photo: Courtesy of Art Jog and Ricky Pesik.





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## Enacting creative economy

Since its establishment in 2008, Bandung Creative City Forum (BCCF), an independent community hub in Bandung, West Java, has played a significant role in directing the dynamics of the creative economy sector in Bandung and beyond. BCCF's efforts to improve the city through public space interventions and urban-scale prototypes to find solutions for local issues have led to innovations in bureaucracy. BCCF has implemented the design thinking method and the urban acupuncture concept as tools in all its programs to connect government, policy, and citizens. Thanks

to this approach and its track record, the city of Bandung joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) as a City of Design in 2015. BCCF also contributed to the preparations for the World Conference on Creative Economy (WCCE), held by the Indonesian Agency for Creative Economy (BEKRAF), whose proposal on the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development was approved and declared by the United Nations General Assembly for 2021. In 2018, BCCF chairperson joined the International Advisory Council of Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) UK.

In 2015, BCCF initiated the establishment of Indonesia Creative Cities Network (ICCN), which currently connects 220 cities from all over Indonesia through their respective leading independent communities, who are all committed to implement the 10 Principles of ICCN, highlighting keywords such as 'compassionate', 'inclusive', 'solidarity', and 'human rights'. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, ICCN launched the Solidarity Act program, featuring five task forces that work through the phases of survival & mitigation, recovery, re-establishment, and grow & sustain, aiming to assist ICCN's impacted members and local communities. The activities of the task forces include fundraising, data collection, distribution of PPE and fresh-food packages, online classes for capacity building, re-/up-skilling for creative industries workforces, shifting parts of production lines for traditional liquor to produce hand sanitizer, and so on; all are conducted independently and on a voluntarily basis, us-



ing the strength of the ICCN network that is spread all over the archipelago.

ICCN published “White Paper on the Creative City: The Ecosystem That Creates”, containing an adaptation of ICCN’s 10 Principles to the Indonesian Government’s Key Performance Index as a strategy for mainstreaming culture and the creative economy in a development plan. Part of this strategy is the building of a digital dashboard as a tool for local governments to make decisions and policies based on real-time data of creative economy potentials in their respective areas. In 2020, ICCN became a knowledge partner for U20 (Urban 20/the group of mayors of the G20) in formulating policy recommendations for “The Inclusive Creative Economy and the Future of Work”, including human-centred development and increasing the resilience of the creative economy sector through the creation of inclusive future jobs.

Based on all these experiences, since 2018 BCCF has been working on officiating a creative economy bill for Bandung City. Starting with the bill’s academic script, continued with the legal drafting, followed by a series of hearing sessions with the legislative body, BCCF has been deeply involved throughout the whole process. The bill, which was initiated by an independent community and academic institutions and is supported by the Research & Development Agency of Bandung Municipality, was passed in January 2021. Once effective, the bill guarantees that whoever takes office as

Mayor of Bandung will have to include the creative economy in the city’s development agenda, next to being committed to eight other related main issues, such as creators and IP rights holders, creative hubs, data collection, creative city development, and incentives and financing for the creative economy sector.

Zoom:

Banyuwangi, the biggest regency in Indonesia, is located at most eastern part of Java Island, earning its “The Sunrise of Java” nickname. This rural-dominated regency used to have the stigma of being only a ‘rest area’ for people who are on their way to Bali Island, which is one strait-cross away. However, this and many other stigmas of Banyuwangi, along with its poverty, have become a thing in the past, due to the innovative leadership of Banyuwangi Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas (2010-2020).

His first strategy was to open a convenient access to Banyuwangi by building an airport, which was designed by a renown architect, who applied the vernacular architecture of Banyuwangi that is not only iconic, but also ecologically sound. Expecting the flow of visitors, the regent imposed a regulation that allows only the operations of star hotels and homestay. He also regulated the improvement of local stores and traditional markets, while strictly limiting the development of chain convenience stores and modern shopping malls, in order to promote local brands and prod-

ucts. Regent Anas also built a “public service mall” that provides all residents’ administrative needs in a much more practical way that reduces bureaucracy complexities, time and budget consumption; from basic documents such as ID cards and marriage certificates, to confirmation of social grants and other government programs.

Within the office periods of Regent Anas, Banyuwangi has gone through huge improvements. Between 2010-2019, income per capita increased up to 148%; GDP went up to 157%; domestic tourists multiplied up to 979% and foreign tourists up to 712%. Banyuwangi poverty rate was reduced from 20.9% (2010) to 7.52% (2019); taking Banyuwangi as the best performing place among all Indonesian cities/regencies (2018), and reaching the highest marks for local government performance for four years in a row (2016-2019). Other awards include The Best Indonesian Festival City, The Cleanest ASEAN City in ASEAN Tourism Standard 2018, and UNWTO Award for Public Policy Innovation and Government Management in Tourism Category (2016).

During the pandemic, Banyuwangi equipped its citizens with a digital application that enable anyone to apply for the social fund and to check all beneficiaries, from the central government to the regency level; increased the onboarding of Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to digital platform by collaborating with delivery services and e-commerce platforms; assisted all tourist facilities (kiosks, restaurants, hotels, attraction spots, etc.) and

workers (guides, service personnels, etc.) to comply to the health protocol standards, in order to receive “Destination Certificate” from the National Covid-19 Task Force; provided a system for controlling visitors crowd in both tourist destination areas and public service offices. Due to these efforts, Banyuwangi is declared as the safest place in Indonesia for both work and leisure purposes.





“ICCN is an example of emerging new civil society and research organizations. Being endorsed as a knowledge partner for the U20 in 2020 helped us to support the successful introduction of a ‘creative economy bill’ by Bandung municipal government (West Java, Indonesia) in December 2020.”

– Tita LARASATI, Indonesia Creative Cities Network, Bandung

Image Source: The U20 brings together 42 cities in collaborative process, Urban20 Riyadh, October 2020, <https://www.urban20riyadh.org/riyadh-led-urban-20-u20-brings-together-42-cities-collaborative-process>



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## Back to growth? The 2030 Agenda, the G20 and the aftermath of the crisis

The Group of Twenty (G20) was born to respond to global crises in 1998 and 2008 and was focused on the financial stability and governance of the global economy. Since the Republic of Korea's presidency in 2010, the G20 has made strong efforts to place development issues in the G20 agenda and established development working groups to facilitate discussions. Since then, development issues have been discussed in many working groups in the G20 and cover cross-cutting issues, such as infrastructure, financial inclusion, agriculture and food security, anti-corruption, climate finance and green finance, and domestic resource mobilization. After the 2030 Agenda was adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the G20 held its 2016 Hangzhou Summit and agreed upon a G20 Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda.

When the world was worried about the impact of a “trade

war” in 2018 and prepared efforts in anticipation for a 10-year cycle of economic crisis, there was an argument whether the G20 should focus only on financial and economic issues. While policy makers have worked hard to cushion economic turbulence by trying to renegotiate commitments and agreements and strengthen consensus, the recent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has shut down the global economy. The impact has been tremendous, far greater than the 1998 and 2008 crises, but this time the trigger is global health, an issue that is related more to development and is included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pandemic inevitably answers the question of whether G20 should focus more on financial and economic issues or not.

The G20 needs to synergize with the SDGs 2030 Agenda more than before, because the crisis now is not sourced from financial or economic activities but from global health and depends on vaccines. Therefore, the G20 challenges to implement the 2030 Agenda include not only on how to reinvigorate and reshape implementation but also how to design a rapid, effective response to the pandemic and its socioeconomic aftermath in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

Basically, there is no pressure to restructure the SDGs agenda. The agenda includes all aspects needed by countries to fight poverty and inequality. However, the approach for effective implementation and greater efforts on specific issues should be discussed.



Until recently, the G20's role in supporting the SDGs agenda was to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by setting up a consensus for G20 members to adopt both a collective and national action approach. The strong contribution of the G20 is to facilitate discussion and coordination among countries institutions that are in charge for the SDGs. Therefore, the G20 provides a platform for countries to interact, share experience, and convene discussions among countries. The limitation of the G20 is that the statements made by it are not binding. However, the G20 can mandate international organizations to create platforms or groups for discussion that can have binding commitments, such as the Automatic Exchange of Information as implemented in the OECD/G20 BEPS framework. With that, the G20 should collaborate with international financial institutions and mandate them to set up guidelines and procedures for countries to achieve the SDGs. The G20 and the institutions chosen must revisit the 2030 Agenda and formulate an approach to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, including economic recovery and the global health system.

Furthermore, in this COVID-19 related economic crisis, the G20 should focus on finding solutions in specific sectors. There are two areas that are expected to be able to jump-start the global economy: global stability and local resilience. To create global stability, it is necessary to define global public the goods that need to be jointly supported by all countries. One of the global public goods is global

connectivity. Global stability, together with local resilience (covering health and infrastructure), will become a new model of global growth in the world.

Research also shows that the COVID-19 pandemic creates higher disparities between countries, where rich countries will become richer and poor countries will become poorer. This will be exacerbated as the vaccines that can be provided vary between countries. International arrangement and consensus should be considered to solve this problem.

Human capital is one of the many sectors that has been badly affected by COVID-19. This is not only because of the halt and obstruction of formal education but also the limited development of social characteristics as an impact of social distancing and confinement. Therefore, the first pillar in building sustainable economic growth in the future is rebuilding human capital, which is currently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.





“The G20 should focus on two areas to jumpstart the global economy: 1) global stability, 2) local resilience, covering health and infrastructure. This could become a new model of growth.”

– Nella Sri HENDRIETTY, Asian Development Bank Institute, Tokyo

Image Source: On the rooftop in the old Medina of Casablanca, Morocco, fixing satellite antennas. Image by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.





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## Welfare, social and spatial organization in the post-COVID global urban age

For the first time since the creation of the United-Nations, a unified contribution gathering the efforts and inputs of many UN agencies and programs has showcased a photography of our urban world in 2020.<sup>1</sup> The New Urban Agenda issued at the Habitat III summit in 2016 was completely silent about the risks of pandemics and their consequences and the role that human settlements can play.<sup>2</sup> However in 2020, the United Nations has proven up to the task, calling for 'an urgent need to rethink and transform cities to respond to the reality of Covid-19 and potential future

pandemics.' Yet, designing a much-needed urban response to this disease cannot be just about cities, mayors and advocacy networks; it requires to articulate as well a social, institutional and political response. The urban world of the Covid-19 isn't just one of places or connectivity but that of powerful transformations in various domains, as the recent World Cities Report 2020 highlighted.<sup>3</sup> Rethinking the notion of welfare will depend on physical as much as on social capital investments, supported by new forms of spatial-constitutional organization.

Whereas 'cities' are often used as synonymous for sub-national governments, in reality urban geography and the configuration of human settlements has changed faster than institutions and existing categories of city sizes in the past two or three decades. Somehow, it has also outpaced research. The classification of cities in the urban geography of the turn of the millennium defined cities of small, medium size, large or big size. Since then, typologies and classifications have reflected on a new economic geography through mega-regions, urban corridors and city- or metropolitan regions. This new constellation of large scale urban and territorial arrangements remained too much about space and not enough about system connections. As an illustration, the first framework of the planetary boundaries issued in 2009 completely ignored urbanization, whereas urban research from a decade ago barely noticed the rise of a new generation of science of complex systems and their interactions. Despite confirmed economic benefits

and spillovers also applying to rural livelihoods, we argue that agglomeration economics have exposed a global urban system in the making to very high levels of risks and deep vulnerabilities. This is also a consequence of incomplete and partially obsolete forms of political and institutional organization in response to profound economic and societal changes.

Recovering from the Covid-19 through cities, which are the frontline of the response, might only reinforce pre-existing social and economic imbalances and governance flaws, unless 'cities' become part of larger scale coordinated responses. A critical problem that lies ahead of us is that mega-regions and urban corridors have become key drivers of wealth creation, with barely any corresponding political incarnation and institutional organization. Such political entities would indeed largely run counter to national and even to local/mayoral interests if they are not properly integrated. In the absence of new forms of power balance, the 'metropolitan century'<sup>4</sup> has become a loosely governed period with negative impacts at city and country level, in urban but also in rural environments and globally and that should not continue.

We argue that the better responses to the Covid-19 throughout 2020 have been achieved in places where the mega-regional scale plays a primary role and the articulation of cities within this space a secondary but essential intermediation role. This large scale territorial aspect

aligns well with local governments, and in some cases, self-contained local areas and sustainable neighborhoods. In Asia, the emergence of such more mature socio-political urban structure could explain, in part, the relative success of China but also Vietnam, South-Korea or the connected metro areas of Taipei/Taichung/Kaichung in addressing the pandemic and benefiting from a collective sense of social solidarity and empathy and a strong neighborhood based social organization.

As a mega trend, as a series of intertwined social, spatial and economic transformations, urbanization has been a driving force at the crossroads of production and trade systems, jobs and the future of work, wealth distribution, consumption, spatial and societal changes. Yet, aspirations for development and shared prosperity have been overshadowed by a premium for connectivity and mobility with real estate, housing and physical infrastructure as primary goals, a direction that has only been reinforced by the G20 macro-economic response to the 2008 global financial crisis.

Physical and digital infrastructure have taken over social infrastructure but as the world has been urbanizing steadily in the past decades, its cumulative impacts have also triggered an emerging societal substructure made of culture, creativity, innovation, ethnic and cultural diversity, community governance with a global reach, and the development of new productive and cognitive capacities. Therefore,



urbanization deep impacts are also about memory and values, singular and collective identities, the symbolic uses of space, the reevaluation of the soul of a city –another word for sense of place– the development of new cultural-spatial nexus. All this does not happen in one specific city at a time, but across urban regions and neighborhoods in the world, creating the bricks and mortar of future urban culture.

The level of cohesiveness of the mega-regional cultural and economic space within national political and/or regional organizations, could become a relevant indicator for future policy making and a distinctive feature in a post Covid-19 recovery and development perspective. Empirical illustrations seem to confirm that countries suffering from public distrust, discontentment, related conflicts among governance levels and poor metropolitan redistribution may be more acutely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Better articulation of multilevel governance and local responses could dramatically reduce the vulnerabilities and exposure of poor communities to pandemics and other global risks by addressing structural inequality problems that have exacerbated contagion and death tolls. Vulnerability is not just about place but also about mobility and work organization. In the United-States, studies have shown that more than 60% of people infected in New York were blacks and Hispanics, a direct consequence of their exposure to contagion risks in their workplace and while commuting to work across metro areas. In the United-Kingdom,

10 to 15 categories of jobs have been accounting for over 60% of reported cases in 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic highlights that in many cities in developed countries, the vulnerabilities associated to mobility, public transportation and type of work transcend political and territorial boundaries and are more significant than those associated to place in the sense of housing typologies. Empirical evidence tends to be confirmed by growingly consolidated research about the metropolitan imbalances of Covid-19 dynamics. A recent study by Marron Institute of Urban Management of New York University in the fall of 2020 has shown how much the contagion patterns were linked with the spatial distribution of economic activities and flows within multi-county metropolitan areas... 'without an additional and critical institutional layer (...) for the effective management of present and future pandemics.'<sup>5</sup>

Transport and development planning, combined with a notion of welfare and social and political participation, need to be added to the post Covid-19 equation of our global urban age. This would be the very right moment for a third way beyond centralized planning and laissez-faire. In the past twenty years, the benefits of urbanization and connectivity have contributed to support global growth but many national governments, notwithstanding multilateral institutions, have failed at capturing the benefits to reinforce welfare, adding to inequalities in various grounds. In developed and emerging countries alike, the multiplication of new urban and real estate fronts (as a contemporary form of the for-

mer pioneer's fronts) has leveraged indisputable economic benefits but also very low levels of redistribution in the absence of effective regulation, and a poor, unsustainable urban forms.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence, 75% of the cities in the world have become more unequal, meaning that over 2 billion urban dwellers have seen their access to resources, income, public goods growingly restricted, or unfairly distributed. Urbanization has too often prospered in the absence of effective regulation and when governments have not been able to control the use of resources, starting from land, the very notion of shared prosperity and welfare state has been eroded.

While seeking to restore prosperity, empirical evidence shows that with few exceptions, prosperous cities are usually to be found in prosperous regions. This might be a relevant scale to ensure that wealth production and growth are not being captured by narrowing social groups and to scale up development and environment priorities. To foster an economy of well-being, 'health should be in all policies', reviving the Helsinki Statement of 2014<sup>7</sup> and the G20 Health Initiative of 2017<sup>8</sup>. This starts by restoring and developing new welfare capacities across the local/regional political space, articulating larger territories with sustainable neighborhoods and cities.

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3. The Value of Sustainable Urbanization, UN Habitat World Cities Report 2020, <https://unhabitat.org/World%20Cities%20Report%202020>

4. The Metropolitan Century, Understanding Urbanization and its Consequences, R. Ahrendt (dir), OECD, 2015 <https://www.oecd.org/fr/gov/the-metropolitan-century-9789264228733-en.htm>

5. Why pandemics, such as Covid-19, require a metropolitan response, Shlomo Angel and Ajejandro M. Blei, the Marron Institute of Urban Management of New York University, Oct. 2020

6. In Mexico, 8 out of 10 housing units are being produced outside any urban plan.

7. The 8th Global Conference on Health Promotion 'Health in All Policies' was held in Helsinki, Finland from 10-14 June 2013. The meeting builds upon a rich heritage of ideas, actions and evidence originally inspired by the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care (1978) and the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986). These identified intersectoral action and healthy public policy as central elements for the promotion of health, the achievement of health equity, and the realization of health as a human right. Subsequent WHO global health promotion conferences cemented key principles for health promotion action. These principles have been reinforced in the 2011 Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of







“The changing configuration of human settlements has challenged institutions (and research) in the past decade. Now is the time to respond and implement new welfare solutions.”

– Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Paris, and  
Eduardo LÓPEZ MORENO, Nairobi



Image Source: In the outskirts of Sao Paulo along the highway 116.  
Image by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.





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## Cross border data management and regional value chains: A tentative agenda for recovery through smart urbanization in the ASEAN context

### Better Data Collection, Management, and Utilization

Recalibrating national spending in order to achieve higher equality, is one part of the post Covid-19 crisis equation. The other one is improving governance to maximize public spending and investments efficiency.

With all its cataclysm, the ongoing crisis also brought several “blessings in disguise”, one of which is better data collection and management. In Indonesia, before the pandemic, there has been no substantial improvement in terms data availability. During the pandemic, such data has become critically important for the government to channel social assistance and meet the subsistence needs of affected social groups and households. The progress recently made data collection should could serve as a benchmark for better, more efficient policy implementation and budget allocation in the future, provided they are deepened and sustained.

In practice, poor real time and accurate data to support the program implementation have hindered the complete delivery of stimulus programs, in part because of a deficit of coordination between central and local governments. We view three ways to resolve the issue in particular 1) providing real time and accurate data which can be used for a better targeting and planning 2) improving the system by escalating the role of potential contributors, i.e. developing self-report systems, using big data for tracking economic recovery, engaging private sector and community stakeholders to contribute to data updating; and last but not least 3) by making investment in monitoring and evaluation program (LPEM FEB UI, 2020). A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanism can promote fast modification or adaptation of program delivery and at the same, could help in creating job opportunity for the medium skilled workers.

At a regional level, the data governance may help each ASEAN member to monitor the condition and improvement of their sister countries. Cross-border data management within ASEAN such as data for trade may provide suitable tools for arranging economic recovery strategies. Furthermore, cross-border data governance will also increase the transparency and accountabilities for organization's decision. On this term, ASEAN may use the availability of cross-border data to increase cooperation and integration effort between the countries through certain policies. For example, the data may be used to build a firm economic and business framework to enhance the integration in supply chains through the global value chains (GVCs). In terms of trade, this will benefit ASEAN countries since almost countries have a higher trade volume Intra-ASEAN than with other trading partners. In addition, since the trade integration within ASEAN is relatively intense, better data monitor could provide a potential disruption mapping of which cities or areas within ASEAN, in the case of one manufacturer in ASEAN cities is being disrupted. Furthermore, a better data integration and monitoring intra-ASEAN would provide a better recovery tracker of Covid-19 pandemic.

Data management is not a new issue for ASEAN countries as they have built a framework and mechanism for cross-border data governance based on several guidelines presented by OECD, APEC, EU-GDPR, and Standards for Personal Data Protection for Ibero-American States. However, the progress of the framework varies across the

ASEAN region, considering the technological adoption and resources. A recent report from the United Nations (2020) on The Sustainable Development Goals also mentioned that the data gaps still exist in terms of geographical coverage, timeliness, and also level of disaggregation. As the Covid-19 pandemic is affecting most countries, the availability of data has become more important especially in order to produce day-to-day decisions that will affect the well-being of many agents.

As a solid form of institutions, ASEAN may dive deeper to solve the issue and enforcing the cross-data governance through certain mechanisms. Aside from the existing data framework mentioned earlier, ASEAN can also facilitate a distinct forum for resource and knowledge sharing in terms of data management. Any constraints regarding the data management should be reviewed in order to increase the availability across the region. Better data governance both in country scope and region scope will help each of economies to be well-prepared for another sudden shock that may come after. However, several legal issues such as privacy law should not be neglected as standardized and trustworthy data exchange environment is essential. The mechanism proposed above is expected to support each of ASEAN member to overcome negative impacts caused by the pandemic through the establishment of strong and trustworthy data governance.



## Strengthening Regional Value Chain through Smart Cities Integration Across Regions

To integrate cities across ASEAN region into a comprehensive and solid value chain, the development of cities towards a more sustainable urbanization models is crucial. One way to achieve change is by pursuing the agenda of smart cities. Judging from the existing trend, most cities in Indonesia are experiencing rapid development which is resulting in inadequate infrastructure problems. The new developments taking place in the suburbs are called suburbanization and depend on the activities of the city center. Suburbanization has resulted in more densely populated suburbs, where the population and vehicles are experiencing rapid growth without being matched by improvements in transport infrastructure. As a result, travel from the suburbs to the city center has increased, as well as housing demand. Local governments struggle to provide public transportation services and develop new networks. One way to control urban sprawl is to prioritize smarter growth models, especially through sustainable mobility systems, starting by increasing mass rapid transit. Singapore provides one of the most reliable public transportation systems in Southeast Asia through an extensive network of MRT, LRT, and buses that are comfortable, modern, safe, clean, easy to use, reliable, punctual, and well-integrated and is should serve as a benchmark.

Like killing two birds with one stone, developing a sustain-

able transportation system need to be pursued by the development of smart city investments to alleviate the pressure of rising urban population and optimize resources.

On a regional level, a more suitable development planning is also needed to push the agenda of regional integration towards a more sustainable and benefits-all coordination. One potential step to integrate ASEAN Countries is to enhance the connectivity between specific cities or province of countries across the ASEAN region such that it creates a regional value chain. The regional value chain, built by the chain of certain cities/provinces across ASEAN, aims to empower each part of the value chains by complementing each other's' advantage in terms of labor skills, input provisions, and supporting facilities. Several factors needs to takes place to ensure the creation of regional value chain not only comes to a realization but also creates a mutual benefit among parties. Firstly, institutional coordination of a multi-government context, in which the central and subnational level able to accommodate and implement the agenda. Involvement at early phase of subnational level government by the central government, to reflect ownership on a roadmap referring to province or cities that could be developed to fits a certain regional value chain. Secondly, prioritizing cities with a relatively similar stage of development. In addition, national government could provide support in terms of capacity building, technical and financial support to build the required expertise and know-how of subnational institutions.

The development and coordination of data collection and of a common smart city –including smarter infrastructure systems and mobility services- agenda across the ASEAN region could provide a robust leverage to drive the economy out of the crisis in an inclusive and sustainable way.

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“The development of a common agenda for smart infrastructure systems and mobility services across the ASEAN could leverage the economy out of the crisis in an inclusive and sustainable way.”

– Riatu MARIATUL QIBTHIYAH and Teuku RIEFKY, University of Indonesia, Jakarta

Image Source: A worker in the outskirts of Shanghai, China. A student at the ICCN Congress in North Molucas, Indonesia. Images by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.





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## Towards the infrastructure of a new sustainable economy. Twenty-four months to build and implement a paradigm shift

We slipped from 'A World at Risk' to 'A World in Disorder' in just a few months, but the current reversal of fortune looks has more profound roots.<sup>1</sup> That pre-existing pandemic risks warnings have been not been heard is just one of the underlying problems. That nations and international institution have not sufficiently included urbanization as a dimension of multilateralism is another one. The pandemic now directly questions the ability of the G20 to reinvent itself beyond the coordination of rescue packages, among growing consensus that without a new definition of prosperity and economic growth, it will be impossible to effectively combat pandemics, climate change and global poverty. The United-Nations are questioned likewise, all the more as it has previously endorsed a New Urban Agenda that has proved of little relevance in anticipating the pandemic and managing its socio-economic consequences. However, there are indications that reshaping prosperity and welfare might be at our hands.

Convergence among several engagement groups of the G20 is rising to call for coordinated and transformative action. In 2020, the T20 has called for smart decentralization to improve community participation by reconfiguring urban policy. The Urban 20 for safeguarding the planet through national-local collaboration and empowering people to deliver a more equitable and inclusive future. The tryptic of people, planet, prosperity which has shaped the priorities of the



G20 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia presidency has become part of the Italian G20 priorities, with an emphasis on inclusiveness, women empowerment, innovation and knowledge.

Conducting structural reforms is necessary to address the COVID-19 pandemic impacts and to address interconnected deeper crisis factors, in particular:

- highly unequal access to development opportunities provided by physical and digital infrastructure, especially in emerging and lower income countries;
- systemic underinvestment in social infrastructure in a context of rising digitalization and continuous urbanization;
- worsening environmental inequities and risks of widening investment gaps to reach the global environmental and development goals.

Changes will need political steering and doctrinal changes in socioeconomics. For instance, macro-economic models should focus less on 'selfish individuals' and more on the mobilization of people's 'prosocial motives'.<sup>2</sup> This makes the Recoupling Agenda initiated by the G20 German presidency in 2017 and the Quality Infrastructure Investment (QII) principles introduced by the G20 Japan in 2019 even more timely. To build and implement a paradigm shift in institutions and practice, both agendas should 1) be further interconnected, 2) include cities in their granularity and scope, 3) be combined to favor a third-way for entrepreneurship

and free-market, differing from laissez-faire and centralized planning, out of a wealth of diverse urban experiences, enriching the portfolio of global solutions to the crisis.

As social solidarity and personal agency are fundamental sources of human wellbeing, including new measures of well-being into the reporting of national statistics is a priority. The theoretical foundations of the SAGE (Solidarity, Agency, Gain, Environment) framework can be strengthened to assess the socio-economic performances of community resilience, not just countries. Examples from participatory slum upgrading programs resulting in significantly fewer cases of COVID-19 than in other informal communities are good indications.<sup>3</sup> The higher the solidarity within and between groups and individuals, the higher the trust and compliance with socially constraining containment policies, reviving the accuracy of a well-being economy. Among international institutions, the OECD has developed sets of empirical research tools linked with the COVID-19, analysing the impacts of crisis across levels of governments and prioritizing a territorial perspective and the support to micro, small and medium size enterprises. It has used the fresh data provided by the World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment. Now, the institution is creating a new center on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunities (WISE) to 'devise policy solutions to the global challenges of inequalities, environmental depletion and climate change'. This goes with an emerging global taxonomy of subnational investment

and debt issues, providing a way to structure future growth along an enduring recoupling narrative. The leverage provided by the G20 can now help build on initiatives such as the Social Progress Index<sup>4</sup> and 'elevate social development to the same priority level as economic prosperity and public health and safety',<sup>5</sup> supplementing standard statistics with more precise, disaggregated data on agency and solidarity, documenting not only average situations but looking at their actual (territorial) distribution.

Using investments to stimulate a green, resilient and inclusive recovery has been a rising thematic in global COVID-19 related literature since the spring 2020, with analysis pointing out to a number of key sectors yielding 'substantial economic dividends, creating millions of jobs, with a great potential to deliver quick, durable and inclusive, health and environmental outcomes' in cities.<sup>6</sup> As we get a sense of the possible components of a 'new sustainable economy' as called for by the Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) in preparation of the T20 2021, there are other indications in the global infrastructure conversation of how international finance institutions and multilateral development banks could help tackle local gridlocks. The renewal of infrastructure spill-over effects doctrines focusing on local economy support triggered by the T20 Japan in 2019, is one of the ways to connect local and global, public and private assets.

Lessons learned through climate finance articulating global financial engineering with local and urban perspectives, illustrated by the launch of the City Climate Gap Fund in October 2020 and the work of the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance, could serve as a benchmark in the COVID-19 context. Following this direction, a Special Working Group set up under the Urban 20 Riyadh presidency and co-chaired by the city of Rome and Buenos Aires, has recommended the creation of a Global Urban Resilience Fund, intended to support cities in addressing and mitigating the impacts of future shocks on urban services and key social functions. Although traditional sources of funding such as transfer of national resources and local taxes remains key, cities can facilitate connections across public and private spheres and provide incentives as well as sustainable procurement programs. While cities will not manage to cut through (hyper)complexity just on their own, they are the key places where linkages are experienced to support long-term transformations. Cities can also be place for more effective pandemic and other natural risks preparedness. Similarly, detailed investigation of the preparation of the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework conducted by the Urban 20 has allowed to identify several mechanisms to value the role of cities.<sup>7</sup> In 2021, the engagement of a new series of Global Solutions Dialogues on Circular Economy for the period 2021-2023 and that include an urban dimension could strengthen the delivery of the newly launched Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency.<sup>8</sup>



Since the beginning of 2020, the unfolding of the COVID-19 pandemic has sometimes resonated as a compilation of bad news, spurring distrust and a sense that citizens were losing grasp on decision-making processes, risks that have been illustrated throughout INTERSECTING. Instead, cities could act as promoters, facilitators and enablers connecting the pieces of a reform jigsaw within the G20, devising a new range of multilateral solutions protecting the rights of citizens and the foundations of local democracy, in support of prosperity and well-being. The Urban 20 could be the anchor for the deployment of a cross sectoral G20 Urban Platform under the G20 presidency of Italy, and beyond in 2022-23. Based upon cooperation and partnership, a G20 Urban Platform would be a catalyst for a new growth narrative. It would help mobilize macro-economic instruments and international financial institutions' leverage to consolidate cities and communities' social infrastructure in support of the effective delivery of the global development and environmental goals.

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5. T20 Statement on Social Development Measurement, September 2020, T20 Saudi Arabia, Marc Fleurbaey et al., [https://t20saudiaria.org.sa/en/news/Pages/Social\\_Development\\_Statement.aspx](https://t20saudiaria.org.sa/en/news/Pages/Social_Development_Statement.aspx)
6. Green construction and retrofits, renewable energy, active transport, nature-based solutions, R&D for clean technologies, clean mobility, waste and resources and circular economy are regularly listed as key sectors. See Gulati et al., 2020, Hepburn, Stern, Stiglitz et al., 2020.
7. 'The U20 can be instrumental in elevating the voice of cities and highlighting their contributions in the participatory process on the Roadmap to the UN CBD's 15th COP and in the preparation of the Post 2020 GBF, in particular through the 24th meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 24), the Subsidiary Body on Implementation meeting (SBI-3) and the Inter-Sessional Open-Ended Work Group (OEWG3) Meeting.' We 'Endorse the call for a dedicated, stepped-up Decision on local and subnational governments and adopt such a decision at COP 15 to renew Decision X/22: The Plan of Action for Subnational Governments, Cities, and other Local Authorities (2011-2020).' In Towards Transformative Change. Urban Contributions to Achieving the Global Biodiversity Agendas, ICLEI, WWF, TNC, Lee Kuan Yew Center, Montreal, Amman, Urban 20, September 2020, <https://www.urban20riyadh.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/UrbanContributionsToAchievingGlobalAgendas.pdf>
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"A G20 Urban Platform could be a catalyst for a new growth narrative, mobilizing macro-economic instruments and international (financial) institutions' leverage to consolidate cities and communities' social infrastructure in support of the global development and environmental goals."

– Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative, Paris



Image Source: 10 years before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the Shanghai Expo. Here, the third preparation summit in 2008 during the construction phase, marked the beginning of a decade of accelerated global transformations. Images by Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, all rights reserved ©.



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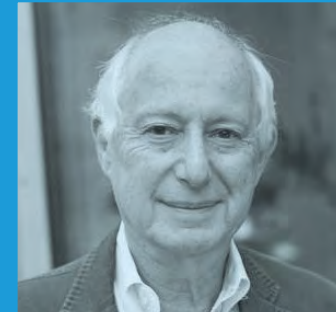
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“Experts are used to converting people on the ground into numbers to feed them into their economic equations. Now, they must listen to the people in the many voices which the people speak.”

– Arun MAIRA, Help Age International, India



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## Large-scale protest demonstrations against COVID-19 restrictions in Berlin.

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. August 29, 2020. "Querdenken" against Corona restrictions at Friedrichstrasse in Berlin, Germany.  
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“From 1929 to 1932, the Great Depression was not only economic. It triggered regime changes in countries all over the globe. In colonial Africa, the authority of traditional chiefs came apart with the arrival of colonial administration, before revealing new arenas of conflict and creating new political opportunities.”

– From Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, William Heinemann ed., London, 1958

Image Source: Plenary round table at the first edition of the Global Solutions Summit in Berlin, during the G20 Germany in 2017. Photo: Tobias Koch for the GSI.

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