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SDGs for All - April 2020 In Retrospect

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Articles in this monthly newsletter
can also be found on our news website [IDN-InDepthNews](#).

World Conference Calls for Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and Reversing Climate Change



By Santo D. Banerjee

NEW YORK (IDN) — In a dramatic warning from 13 Nobel Prize winners about the existential dangers of nuclear weapons and climate crisis, the [Bulletin of Atomic Scientists](#) on January 23 set the hands of its

iconic 'Doomsday Clock' to 100 seconds to midnight,

On April 25, during the Covid-19 crisis, over one thousand activists across the peace, climate, and social movements gathered online to take part in the first-ever virtual [World Conference: Abolish Nuclear Weapons | Resist and Reverse Climate Change | For Social and Economic Justice](#).

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UN Chief and German Chancellor Call for Rebuilding 'Our World for the Better'



By Ramesh Jaura

BERLIN (IDN) – German chancellor Angela Merkel and UN Secretary-General António Guterres have accentuated that any coronavirus recovery programme should have a clear focus on climate targets and rebuilding "our world for the better". They were addressing a two-day video conference in Berlin co-organised by

Germany and Britain, the latter as the presidency of UN Climate Conference (COP 26).

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Kenyans Are Innovative in Finding Ways to Fight COVID-19



By Justus Wanzala

BUSIA, Kenya (IDN) – It is a hot afternoon at a bus station at Mungatsi market centre, Nambale Sub-County, in Busia County, Western Kenya. Many people, many travellers, are queuing to wash their hands. Each person is maintaining a distance from the other as they wash their hands and board public service vehicles heading to

their various destinations. (P04) [ITALIAN](#) | [JAPANESE TEXT VERSION PDF](#) | [SWAHILI](#) | [TURKISH](#)

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Women Leaders Rise in Solidarity to Save Lives and Protect Livelihoods



By UN Women

"Rise for All" calls on all leaders to meet the human crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and fully fund the UN Response and Recovery Trust Fund

NEW YORK (IDN) – Supporting the UN Secretary-General's call for solidarity and urgent action in response to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, an initial group of prominent women have joined a global advocacy effort to save lives and protect livelihoods, urging leaders in all countries, across all sectors, to address the human crisis of the pandemic.

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COVID-19: Strengthen WHO for Systemic Change of Health Systems



Viewpoint by Dr P. I. Gomes

The writer is former-Secretary-General of the African, Caribbean & Pacific Group of States (now known as Organisation of Africa, Caribbean & Pacific States - OACPS)

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad (IDN) – As the curve flattens in the trajectory of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in some countries, or the peak is claimed to have reached in others, allowing limited economic activities as in Wuhan, China or shopping for household necessities in Germany, widespread commentary and debate focus on economic, social, commercial and political impacts of the pandemic.

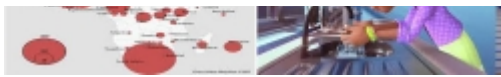
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The Impact of COVID-19 Stalks Africa – Animated Video Tells Children About It



By Lisa Vives, Global Information Network

NEW YORK (IDN) – While Africa, like the



NEW YORK (IDN) – While Africa, like the international community on the whole, is engaged in a tough fight against the coronavirus, a World Health Organization (WHO) expert has called into question frightening estimates of those affected by COVID-19. At the same time, Ghana in a surprise move has ordered a partial lift of the lockdown. The pandemic virus is luring Rwanda into massive 'loans' under the garb of debt reduction. (P03)
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New Initiative to Fight COVID-19 with Information Technology



By J Nastranis

NEW YORK (IDN) – With support from UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations specialized agency for information ((ITU) are set to work with telecommunication companies to text people directly on their mobile phones with vital health messaging to help protect them

from COVID-19.

These text messages, as part of the joint 'WHO-ITU Be initiative', will reach billions of people who are not in a position to connect to the internet for information, said a joint statement on April 20.

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Redefining Cooperation, Development and Prosperity



Reflections on the International Day of Multilateralism

Viewpoint by Dumiso Gatsha

The writer is a human rights defender, feminist and part-time PhD (Law) candidate.

GABARONE, Botswana (IDN) – 75 years of cooperation, mutual engagement and improving lives. Heralding the decade of action, 2020 has brought many challenges and opportunities for **relooking** how the systems we live in can be improved for the better. April 24 marks a day for us to deeply reflect, within our homes or essential service work; on what truly matters in humanity.

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Good Health and Unimpeded Global Trade Go Hand in Hand



Viewpoint by Roberto Azevêdo and Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

*Following is the text of a **joint statement** by WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on April 20.*

GENEVA (IDN) – COVID-19 has rapidly progressed to become a global pandemic, causing unprecedented, far-reaching impact on the health, social and economic well-being of communities around the world.

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COVID-19 : An Unprecedented Crisis and Also an Exceptional Opportunity



Viewpoint by Dr Palitha Kohona

The writer is former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, and former Foreign Secretary.

Henry Kissinger, in one of his infrequent statements said, "When the COVID-19 pandemic is over, many countries' institutions will be perceived as having failed. Whether this judgment is objectively fair is irrelevant. The reality is the world will never be the same after the coronavirus. To argue now about the past only makes it harder to do what has to be done". Countries must adjust and adapt and also move with the times. Responding proactively to the challenge of COVID-19 is key.

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UN Institute Expects COVID-19 Fallout to Push Half a Billion People into Poverty



By J Nastranis

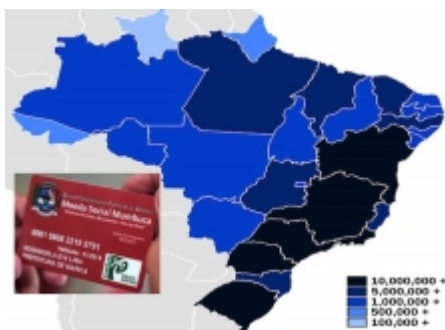
NEW YORK (IDN) – New research published by the [UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research \(UNU-WIDER\)](#) warns that the economic fallout from the global pandemic could increase global poverty by as much as half a billion people, or 8% of the total human population. This would be the first time that poverty has

increased globally in thirty years, since 1990.

The authors of the UNU-WIDER study – [Andy Sumner](#) and Eduardo Ortiz-Juarez of [King's College London](#) and Chris Hoy from [Australian National University](#) – find that a setback of this size would reverse a decade of global progress on poverty reduction.

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COVID-19: Brazil Implements Basic Income Policy Following Massive Civil Society Campaign



By Pedro Telles

The writer is 2018-19 Atlantic Fellow for Social and Economic Equity at the International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics.

SÃO PAULO (IDN) – Tens of millions of Brazilians have begun receiving basic income payments aimed at addressing the economic impact of COVID-19, following Congress' approval of a bill prompted by a country-wide grassroots campaign that began just three weeks ago. (P02) [JAPANESE TEXT VERSION PDF](#) | [PORTUGUESE](#) | [SPANISH](#)

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UN Migration Ramps Up Coronavirus Response Worldwide



By Jaya Ramachandran with IOM Press Release

GENEVA (IDN) – In the face of the number of rising new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has expanded the scope of

its Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) to include far-reaching interventions that aim to mitigate the dire health and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. [A revised appeal](#) was launched on April 15 for \$499 million to support vital preparedness, response and recovery activities in over 140 countries.

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UN Health Agency Reviewing Impact of U.S. Funding Withdrawal



By J Nastranis

NEW YORK (IDN) – While upholding the importance of international solidarity in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, a "dangerous enemy" to all humanity, the head of the [World Health Organization](#)

(WHO) has regretted "the decision of the President of the United States to order a halt in funding" to the UN health agency.

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International Fund Approves Grant for African Countries in 'Debt Distress'



By Lisa Vives, Global Information Network

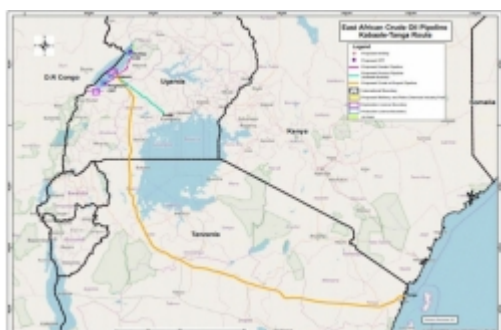
NEW YORK (IDN) – Funds for 19 strapped African countries have been approved by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in light of the impact of COVID-19 on economies and livelihoods.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on April 13 the funds will be applied to the most vulnerable members to cover their

debt obligations.

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African Climate Groups Deplore Development Bank for Funding High-Risk Pipeline



By Lisa Vives, Global Information Network

NEW YORK (IDN) – A climate justice movement of over 100 major organizations in Africa and abroad has joined hands to press the [African Development Bank \(AfDB\)](#) to drop its support of an "exceptionally high-risk project" that threatens the livelihoods of millions of people in East Africa.

In a [letter](#) to the Bank President ATDB president AKINWUMI Adesina, leaders of environmental and social groups from Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, and South Africa, among others, warned that the [East African Crude Oil Pipeline \(EACOP\)](#) posed global climate risks and environmental damage including harm to freshwater supplies and biodiversity in the region.

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Sustainable Water Governance Is Critical for Achieving Peace in Horn of Africa



By [Anniek Barnhoorn](#), [Florian Krampe](#), [Luc van de Goor](#), [Elizabeth Smith](#) & [Dan Smith](#)*

STOCKHOLM (IDN) – As the global climate changes, climate-related security risks are making the existing political, social, and economic challenges even more complicated. The 230 million people who live in the Horn of Africa are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change

such as droughts and floods. Political fragility and transnational complexities make water governance a matter of regional high-level politics as well as geopolitical tensions. In short, sustainable water governance is critical for achieving resilient peace.

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COVID-19: UN Joins Kenya in \$267.5 million Flash Appeal



By [Devendra Kamarajan](#)

NAIROBI (IDN) – The Government of Kenya, the United Nations and humanitarian partners have launched a Flash Appeal requesting \$267.5 million to respond to the most immediate and critical needs of 10.1 million people.

Cabinet Secretary for National Treasury and Planning, Ukur Yatani Kanacho, said: "When times are challenging you get to know your friends better. I would like to commend the Kenya United Nations Country Team and humanitarian partners for being real friends and fighting with us shoulder to shoulder as we fight this deadly pandemic."

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COVID-19: A Global Buddhist Network Contributing to Overcoming the Pandemic



Viewpoint by [Soka Gakkai](#) President Minoru Harada

Following is the text of a press release conveying President Harada's Message in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. [Read in [Spanish](#), [Traditional Chinese](#), and [Simplified Chinese](#).]

TOKYO (IDN) – Japan, where until recently we hoped that we would contain the spread of COVID-19, has now entered into a state of emergency, facing a surge in the number of confirmed cases and redoubling its efforts to save precious lives.

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COVID-19 Could Lead to Better Protection of Biodiversity and Wild Animals



By Kalinga Seneviratne

SYDNEY (IDN) – A positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic could be a better understanding of protecting biodiversity and a global ban on the trade in wild animals for food. The belief that COVID-19 began at a "wet market" in Wuhan in China, where wild animals were being sold for human consumption, has led to the Chinese

government banning the trade in wild animals and a growing international campaign for this to be made into an enforceable international law. (P01)

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Violence Against Women Is the Growing Shadow Pandemic



Viewpoint by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

Following is the statement by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of [UN Women](#) on 6 April 2020.

NEW YORK (IDN) – With 90 countries in lockdown, four billion people are now sheltering at home from the global

contagion of COVID-19. It's a protective measure, but it brings another deadly danger. [We see a shadow pandemic growing, of violence against women.](#)

As more countries report infection and lockdown, more domestic violence helplines and shelters across the world are reporting rising calls for help.

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A Resilient and Sustainable Future Needs Asia-Pacific Response to COVID-19 and Climate Emergency



Viewpoint by Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

The writer is Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

BANGKOK (IDN) – The unprecedented public health emergency triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and its multi-faceted

impact on people's lives around the world is taking a heavy toll on Asia and the Pacific.

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COVID-19 Crisis: The Group of 77 Call for Strengthening South-South and North-South Cooperation

[Applause for UN Chief's Leadership](#)



Applause for UN Chief's Leadership While Missing Out His 'Global Ceasefire' Plea

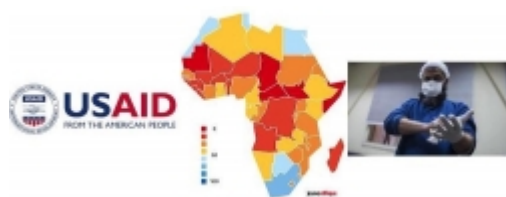
By J Nastranis

NEW YORK (IDN) – Short of referring to the clarion call by UN Secretary-General

António Guterres on March 23 for "an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world", in support of the bigger battle against the devastating pandemic, the [Group of 77 \(G77\)](#) has in a statement congratulated him for his "strong leadership in this time of crisis" and welcomed the launch of the [COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund](#) "to strengthen health systems and assist vulnerable populations across the globe".

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COVID-19: USA, France and China Crave African Support to Overcome the Pandemic



By Lisa Vives, Global Information Network

NEW YORK (IDN) – The U.S. and France are treading unexpected paths to besiege COVID-19 with African assistance. Striking a different note, the Nigerians have strong

reservations about a team of Chinese specialists invited to support them in combating the pandemic in the West African country.

While the desperate USAID relief agency has been seeking personal protective equipment (PPE) from poor countries to safeguard much needed supplies in the U.S., and a French doctor wants to test drugs on Africans. But the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) is bashing the government for inviting an 18-man team of Chinese specialists in helping to combat the COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria.

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IAEA Supporting Countries in the Fight against COVID-19



By Reinhard Jacobsen

VIENNA (IDN) – Responding to requests for support from around 90 Member States in controlling an increasing number of infections worldwide, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is dispatching a first batch of equipment to more than 40 countries to enable them to

use a nuclear-derived technique to rapidly detect the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Also known as the UN nuclear watchdog, the IAEA said that several countries have shown strong support for this emergency assistance and announced major funding contributions for the IAEA's efforts in helping to tackle the pandemic.

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COVID-19: Sinophobia Threatening to Endanger Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention



Viewpoint by Kalinga Seneviratne*



SYDNEY (IDN) – With the spread of COVID-19 to Europe and the US a bout of Sinophobia seems to have infected the western media. On March 29, Australia's 60-minute program – that is well known for sensational reporting – broadcast a program

that portrayed China as the villain of the COVID-19 pandemonium and just stopped short of calling for war against China.

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The Bigger Picture Is Hiding Behind a Virus



Viewpoint by Jonathan Cook*,
Countercurrents.Org

NAZARETH, Israel (IDN) – Things often look the way they do because someone claiming authority tells us they look that way. If that sounds too cynical, pause for a moment and reflect on what seemed most important to you just a year ago, or even a few weeks ago.

Then, you may have been thinking that Russian interference in western politics was a vitally important issue and something that we needed to invest much of our emotional and political energy in countering.

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Military Intervention Alone Will Fail to Resolve the Sahel Crisis



Viewpoint by Jan Egeland and Jean-François Riffaud

Jan Egeland is Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. Jean-François Riffaud is Chief Executive Officer of Action Against Hunger-France.

OSLO (IDN) — President Emmanuel Macron invited the five G5 West African leaders to the French city of Pau in January 2020 to shore up support for international engagement in restive Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. All agreed that more European security support was needed to counter violent extremism in the Central Sahel.

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A Nobel Peace Laureate Calls for Slashing Military Spending and Investing in Healthcare



By Jutta Wolf

BERLIN (IDN) – The world's oldest peace NGO, the 1910 Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Peace Bureau (IPB), is calling for a "dramatic reduction" of military spending in favour of healthcare and

meeting social needs. A [petition](#) launched on March 27 and signed by all interested will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly on the first day of the next session opening on September 15, 2020.

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