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## SDGs for All Newsletter - February 2021 In Retrospect

### UN Issues 'Red Alert' In A Climate Action Report



By Radwan Jakeem

NEW YORK (IDN) — A UN climate action report warns that nations are “nowhere close” to the level of action needed to fight global warming. It urges countries to adopt stronger and more ambitious plans to reach the Paris Agreement goals, and limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, by the end of the century.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)’s Initial NDC Synthesis Report measures the progress of national climate action plans, known as [Nationally Determined Contributions](#) or NDCs, ahead of the 26th session of the [Conference of its Parties \(COP26\)](#) this November in Glasgow.

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### UN Concerned About the Impact of COVID-19 and Human Rights Violations



By Jamshed Baruah

GENEVA (IDN) — Providing a [global update](#) to the [Human Rights Council](#), Michelle Bachelet has said that as the COVID-19 pandemic gathers pace, people worldwide are “being left behind — or pushed even further behind”; they are being excluded from not only development but also opportunities. At the same time, civil society activists are being denied the right to voice opposition to the government.

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## The Great Game of Vaccination Diplomacy Targets Africa

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By Kester Kenn Klomegah\*

MOSCOW (IDN) — Russia is committed to helping eradicate the rapidly increasing coronavirus infections in Africa amounting to approximately 3.8 million with its latest developed Sputnik V vaccine. Such a step will enable Russia to

reassert its geopolitical influence that involves a keen competition with other foreign players on the continent.

An official media release in mid-February said that the Africa Vaccine Acquisition Task Team — set up by the African Union to acquire additional vaccine doses so that Africa can attain a target immunization of 60% — has received an offer of 300 million Sputnik V vaccines from the Russian Federation.

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## Response to COVID-19 Embedded in Global Power and Diplomatic Wrangles

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Viewpoint by Michael Jennings\*

LONDON (IDN) — The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to various new, repurposed or newly popular [terms](#). The newest entry to the pandemic lexicon might be “[vaccine diplomacy](#)”, with some countries using their jabs to strengthen regional ties

and enhance their own power and global status.

In early February, half a million doses of the Chinese Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine arrived in Pakistan, before soon also reaching 13 other countries including Cambodia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe.

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## Still Much to Be Done to Make Immigration More Palatable

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Viewpoint by Jonathan Power\*

LUND, Sweden (IDN) — The Mexicans had a joke about ex-President Donald Trump’s planned wall along its border with the US. “It’s not being built to keep Mexicans out of the US; it’s built to keep Trump out of Mexico!” If this be so, then President Joe Biden can relax. No longer is there the need to

dismantle the wall built by Trump.

The US media reports say that Mexico has to deal with another

migrant “caravan” of fleeing Central Americans pouring into the south of the country, hoping to somehow crash their way into the US.

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## Tanzania President Acknowledges the Menace of COVID-19

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By Lisa Vives, Global Information Network

NEW YORK (IDN) — For months, Tanzanian President John Magufuli stuck to a controversial stand that COVID-19 would only be defeated by prayer.

This Sunday (February 21), the President amended his position. He urged citizens to wear masks — only locally made ones — and take other preventive measures against the virus.

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## An Inclusive Energy System Key to COVID-19 Recovery

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Viewpoint by Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

*Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana is Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).*

BANGKOK (IDN) — The past year is one that few of us will forget. While the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have played out unevenly across Asia and the Pacific, the region has been spared many of the worst effects seen in other parts of the world. The pandemic has reminded us that a reliable and uninterrupted energy supply is critical to managing this crisis.

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## UN's ECOSOC Chief Calls for Backing Up World's Poor Fight COVID-19

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By Ramesh Jaura

BERLIN | NEW YORK (IDN) — UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) President Munir Akram has called for a 'Coalition of the Willing' to promote agreement at the global

level, on a specific set of early actions to provide fiscal space and supplementary liquidity to developing countries suffering the disastrous impact of COVID-19.

In an email interview with IDN. Mr Akram said speedy actions should

include comprehensive debt suspension, debt restructuring for countries in current or potential debt distress, creation of new Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) worth \$500 billion and redistribution of unutilized SDR quotas to developing countries. (P 30) [CHINESE](#) | [JAPANESE TEXT VERSION PDF](#) | [KOREAN](#) | [PORTUGUESE](#) | [TURKISH](#)

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## Global Food Systems Can Only Be Truly Transformed with a People's Summit



Viewpoint by Agnes Kalibata\*

NEW YORK (IDN) – Long before the emergence of COVID-19, it was well-accepted that the world was off-course to achieve most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, including ending hunger. But recovering from the pandemic to

deliver any of the 17 SDGs relies now more than ever on first feeding the world.

Yet as COVID-19 spread, the reported number of hungry people rocketed [upward](#) after three decades of progress, with [worse still likely](#) to come in some regions as farmers contend with an unprecedented number of extreme weather events as well as the impact of the pandemic.

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## Rural Voices to Be Heard at Food Systems Summit



By Kwame Buist

ROME (IDN) – The United Nations is to involve millions of rural people in the [2021 Food Systems Summit](#) as part of an ambitious public engagement process, in which indigenous communities, family farmers, rural

women and youth are among those invited to take a seat at the table during [Independent Dialogues](#) to help transform global food systems.

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## Gender Bias Against Women Career Scientists Upsets UNESCO



By Jaya Ramachandran

PARIS (IDN) — "Even today, in the 21st century, women and girls are being sidelined in science-related fields due to their gender," warns the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#))

Director-General Audrey Azoulay

Director General Audrey Azoulay.

Women need to know that they have a place in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and that they have a right to share in scientific progress, adds the UNESCO chief.

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## Youth Movement Leads for Food Systems Transformation



By Ronald Joshua

ROME (IDN) – A wave of self-organised youth-led groups across the world has joined the growing momentum behind the [2021 UN Food Systems Summit, which will peak in September](#).

The UN Food Systems Summit was announced by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, on World Food Day last October as a part of the Decade of Action for delivery on the SDGs by 2030. The aim of the Summit is to deliver progress on all 17 of the SDGs through a food systems approach, leveraging the interconnectedness of food systems to global challenges such as hunger, climate change, poverty and inequality.

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## World Bank Commits \$12b for Covid-19 Vaccinations in Africa



By Kester Kenn Klomegah\*

MOSCOW (IDN) – The World Bank has expressed readiness to commit US\$12 billion as concessional loans to assist African countries access foreign vaccines.

During a virtual meeting on the Africa COVID-19 Vaccine Financing and Deployment Strategy, the World Bank informed that the emergency vaccine financing projects in Africa, include Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Niger, Mozambique, Tunisia, Eswatini and Cabo Verde.

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