

**UN Habitat Report on Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more just, green
and healthy future**

Discussion Paper Webinar 4

Conducive Policy, Legal and Governance Responses to COVID-19

December 9, 2020
15:00 – 17:00 EAT

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

COVID-19
CAMPAIGN



Cities and pandemics: governance

What approaches and measures, and key considerations, what's new?

Which of the current approaches measures of tackling the pandemic are new?

Almost all approaches and measures have been tried before, some of the hundreds and thousands years ago:

Isolation of those infected - 221–206 B.C., China

Institutions, regulations, and procedures explicitly associated with promoting health and fighting disease at the communal level – 13th c., Europe

Quarantine – 14th c., Europe

Lockdown – 15th c., Europe

Contact tracing – Florence, ca. 1630

Laboratory tests to diagnose infectious disease – 19th c., Europe

Smallpox eradicated by contact tracing + isolation of infected individuals and immunizing surrounding community and contacts at-risk.

Social consciousness of communicable diseases – 19th c.

Fiscal measures: SARS in Asia Pacific 2003 > fiscal measures to support economic activity and to fund containment and treatment policies



Central questions addressed in this chapter

- ❑ How are governance, institutions and systems responding and managing the Covid19 crisis?
- ❑ What types of policies had been enacted and implemented in a nexus of state, market and society?
- ❑ What had worked and why?
- ❑ How to measure success?

Responsibilities and coordination mechanisms

- ❑ Prior to COVID-19 crises, what was the situation of distributing responsibilities among national and subnational governments and what mechanisms of coordination existed among the levels of governance as regards the measures and indicators?
- ❑ How was this distribution of responsibilities and coordination mechanisms affected in responses to the crisis?
- ❑ What is the likely medium- and long-term effect to distribution of responsibilities and coordination mechanism from A. in result of the response in B?

Preparedness to pandemic

National health security is fundamentally weak around the world. No country is fully prepared for epidemics or pandemics, and every country has important gaps to address.

The Report on Global Health Security Index of 2019, published in October 2019

The World Knows an Apocalyptic Pandemic Is Coming - But nobody is interested in doing anything about it.

Foreign Policy Magazine on

A World at Risk, Annual report on global preparedness for health emergencies
September 2019

Approaches and means

to contain the spread of the disease:

limit the freedoms of movement, assembly, conducting business > has consequences on economy, inevitably decreasing business opportunities, primarily for some sectors of services.

precluded by additional measures:

keep physical distance,

wear protective masks and gloves,

disinfect hands and surfaces.

No clear scientific consensus whether any of these measures have been effective to restrict transmission of the virus:

what has worked universally are lockdowns, extensive testing, and tracing of past contacts.

Measuring

What severity of restrictive measures is justifiable?

requires measuring

- (i) the degree by which COVID-19 affects a community,
- (ii) the severity of restrictions introduced by the authorities, and
- (iii) the effect of those restrictions on economies.

reactive development of prevention and response measures over time

Correlations assessed provisionally

classification of health systems in the countries

types of governance systems in the countries

preparedness to pandemic - *Global Health Security (GHS) Index*

impact on health and deaths - *Excess Mortality, Our World in Data*

stringency of restrictions imposed - *OxCGRT Stringency index*

economic decline – *second quarter of 2020, Our World in Data*

no widely applicable correlations found.

what is widely believed to have worked are lockdowns, extensive testing, and contact tracing, but we have not assessed that.

global forecast of economic downturn has been more severe than the fact - *IMF World Economic Outlook and OECD economic outlook*

Main takeaways of OECD policy notes

- Territorial diversity of severity > required different and multifaceted governance responses;
- Vulnerable groups concentration > special attention and targeted measures;
- All levels of governance have a role in response > roles differ in different circumstances < vertical coordination and cross-jurisdictional collaboration essential to effectiveness;
- Effective response: ad-hoc coordination measures + adaption of existing arrangements + temporary governance structures + increased flexibility to mandate of subnational authorities;
- Preparedness and resilience of governance + participation of subnational levels > important role in effectiveness of response < depends on administrative, fiscal and technical capacity at subnational level;
- Accessible and well managed data + efficient communication across the levels and territories > essential to policy development, monitoring of effectiveness + adjusting the response.

Introduction

- ❑ The Discussion Paper covers the policy, legal and governance responses to COVID-19 in the **Cities and Pandemics Report**.
- ❑ By looking at facts and illustrative cases (close to 200 **measures** collected) from **83 countries** worldwide, it aims to illustrate:
 - ❑ the **types of measures** enacted and implemented and their **effectiveness**
 - ❑ the **distribution of roles and responsibilities** across different levels of government and the **multi-level governance and cooperation** dimension
 - ❑ **trends** and **success factors** identified





Analysis of the COVID-19 responses: policy, legal and governance measures

Overall picture

Policies, legislative measures and actions designed and implemented by cities:

- I. with other levels of governments
- II. with other local governments
- III. without support, coordination or in conflict with other tiers of government.

Policies, legislative measures and actions defined by other tiers of government and implemented by cities

Governance mechanisms used by cities to manage and respond to the crisis

- I. Pre-existing governance mechanisms
- II. New governance mechanisms

Policy and legal measures designed and implemented by cities

- ❑ **with other levels of governments** (e.g., health policies, economic/financial/fiscal policies, social support policies)
- ❑ **with other local governments** (e.g., mobility measures, food assistance, continuity of basic services)
- ❑ **without cooperation** (e.g., immediate responses, support to local business, plans for long-term recovery, social protection schemes) or even **in conflict** with other tiers of government (particularly on epidemic management)



Policy and legal measures implemented by cities but designed by other tiers (national or subnational) of government

- ❑ to contain the spread of the virus (e.g., social distancing, lockdowns)
- ❑ economic and social support measures (e.g., economic relief packages, provision of food, water, sanitary products)
- ❑ forward-looking strategies



Governance mechanisms used by cities to manage and respond to the COVID-19 crisis

❑ Pre-existing governance mechanisms

- a) *fully institutionalized bodies for multi-level governance;*
- b) *local administrative structures and networks;*
- c) *governance practices, instruments and infrastructure.*

❑ New governance mechanisms

- a) *as special taskforces or other support bodies;*
- b) *as digital services and tools;*
- c) *to increase the involvement of non-state actors;*
- d) *to enhance trust in institutions, transparency and community engagement, as well as to increase oversight and accountability;*
- e) *to enhance flexibility in regulatory frameworks and administrative procedures*



Key findings and lessons (1)

1. **Re-balancing of powers** among levels of government to address the crisis.
2. The importance of **territorial and spatial governance approaches**, pursuing **multi-level governance systems** that do not fail in taking into account the various local situations.
3. Central role of an **effective, responsive and capable public sector**.

Key findings and lessons (2)

4. The importance of **learning from the current health crisis** to build strong institutions and governance mechanisms to deal with future crisis.
5. The importance of **coordination** across different actors and sectors (e.g., task forces with municipal associations, academia, professionals) for good governance responses.
6. **Multi-level governance** is key for maximising results (e.g., inter-jurisdictional cooperation mechanisms among levels of government, inter-sectoral programmes).

Key findings and lessons (3)

7. **Trust in institutions, transparency and community engagement** are essential elements to foster population's compliance with the measures adopted to address the pandemic and, thus, to manage the crisis.
8. The COVID-19 pandemic has **accelerated the digital transformation** in local governance.
9. Urgent need to change governments and local actors **middle- and long-term development visions.**



**Reactions and presentations from
the Expert Panel**

**Open floor for comments and
inputs**

**Summary of the discussion and
closing remarks**