

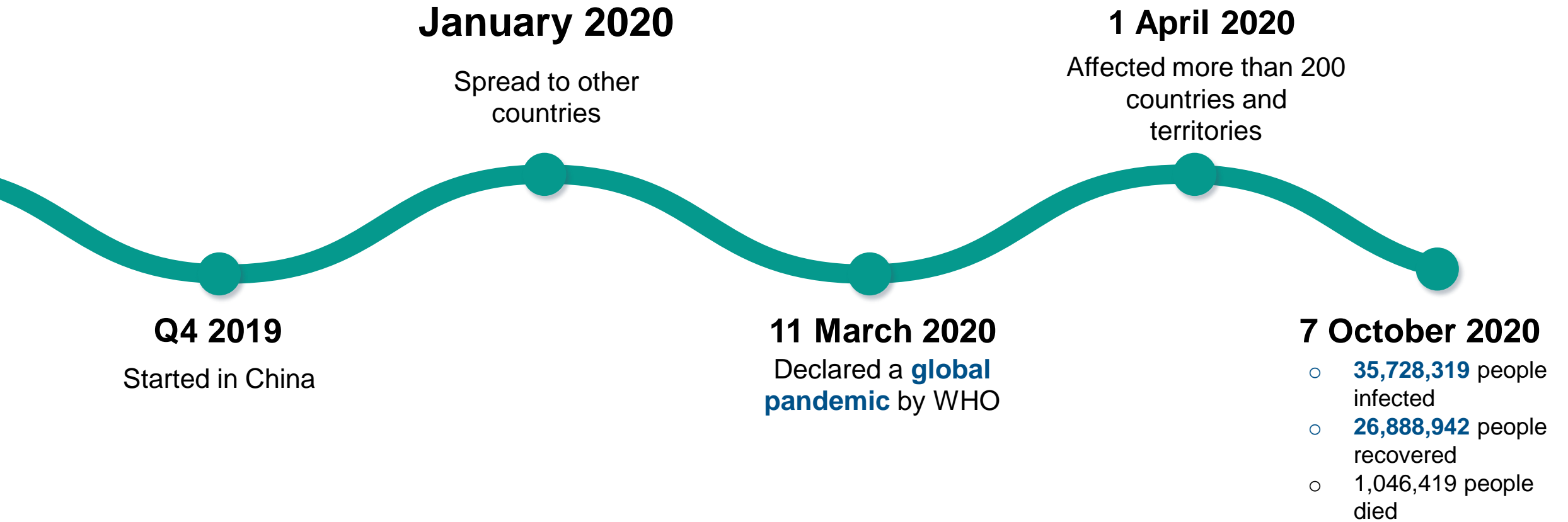
Environmental Linkages of COVID19

Lessons from last 6 months and plans for the future

Muralee Thummarukudy
Operations Manager
UNEP Crisis Management Branch

COVID19

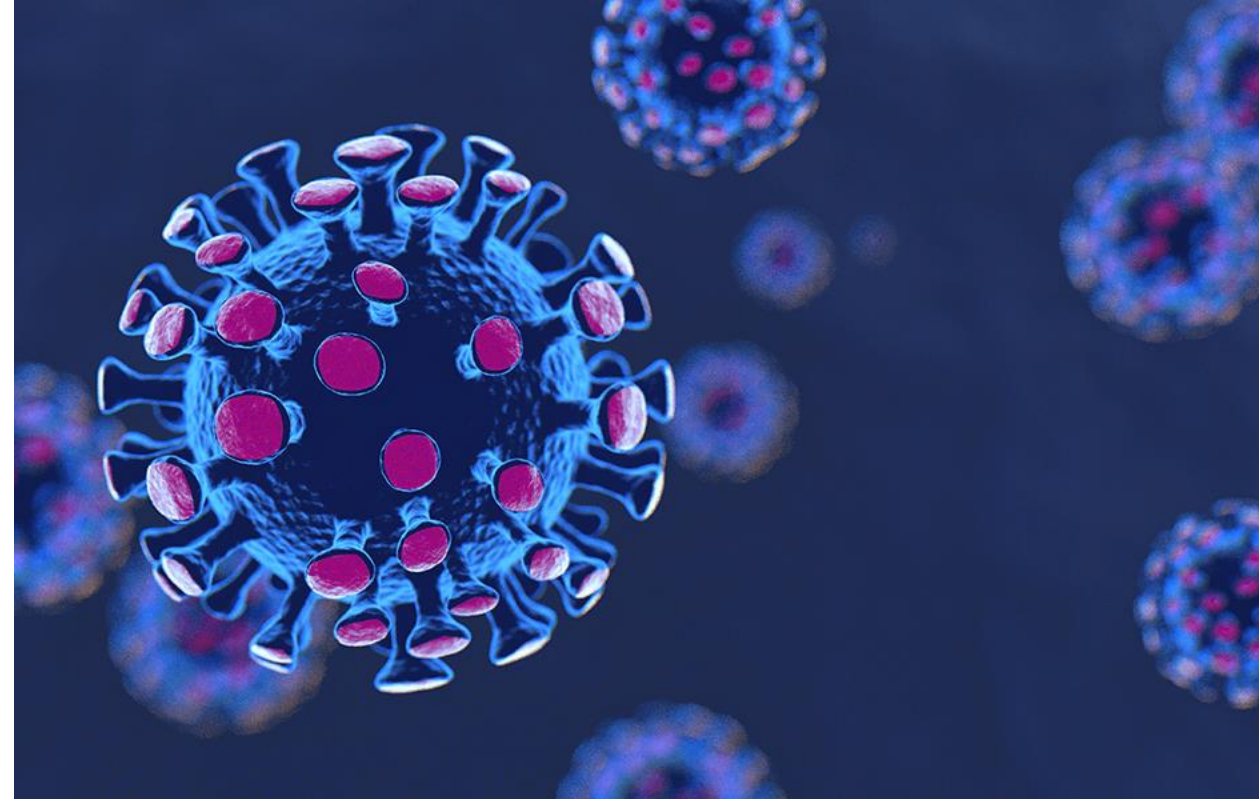
A Global Issue, Like No Other



COVID19

A Crisis like no other

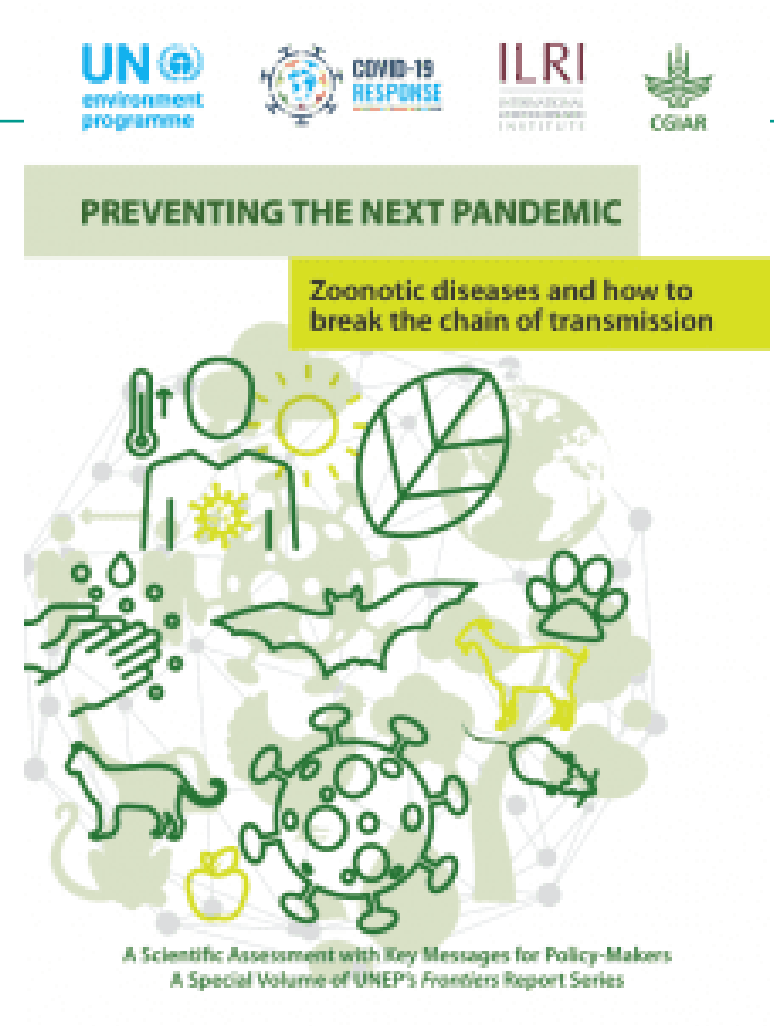
- Global Pandemic
- Global impact on economy
- Global impact on employment
- Global impact on education
- Massive impact on specific sectors
 - Tourism
 - Airline
 - Hotel Industry



COVID19

Environmental Linkages

Habitat Destruction and Zoonotic Diseases



COVID19

Environmental Linkages

- Healthcare and Infectious Waste Management

COVID-19 WASTE MANAGEMENT FACTSHEET

These factsheets follow Resolution 8 on Sound management of chemicals and waste and Resolution 7 on Environmentally sound management of waste of the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly.



1

Introduction to COVID-19 waste management

**NO UNCONTROLLED DUMPING,
NO OPEN BURNING**
Protect the environment and our health

For more information visit unep.org or contact **Kevin Helps** (Head, GEF Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, UNEP) kevin.helps@un.org

"Our response is to support Member States in addressing immediate challenges from the medical emergency, such as strengthening waste management systems."

Inger Andersen, UNEP Director

The problem



In response to COVID-19, hospitals, healthcare facilities and individuals are producing more waste than usual, including **masks, gloves, gowns and other protective equipment** that could be infected with the virus. There is also a large increase in the amount of single use plastics being produced.

When not managed soundly, infected medical waste could be subject to **uncontrolled dumping**, leading to public health risks, and to **open burning or uncontrolled incineration**, leading to the release of toxins in the environment and to secondary transmission of diseases to humans. Other wastes can reach water sources and add to riverine and marine pollution.

These practices do not respect [WHO guidelines on treatment of infectious and sharp waste from health care facilities](#), nor the requirements of the [Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions](#) protecting human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes!

The challenge

Wherever possible, countries should control COVID-19 waste through maximizing the use of available waste management solutions and, at the same time, look to avoid any potential long-term impacts on the environment. To do so, they need to:



1/2

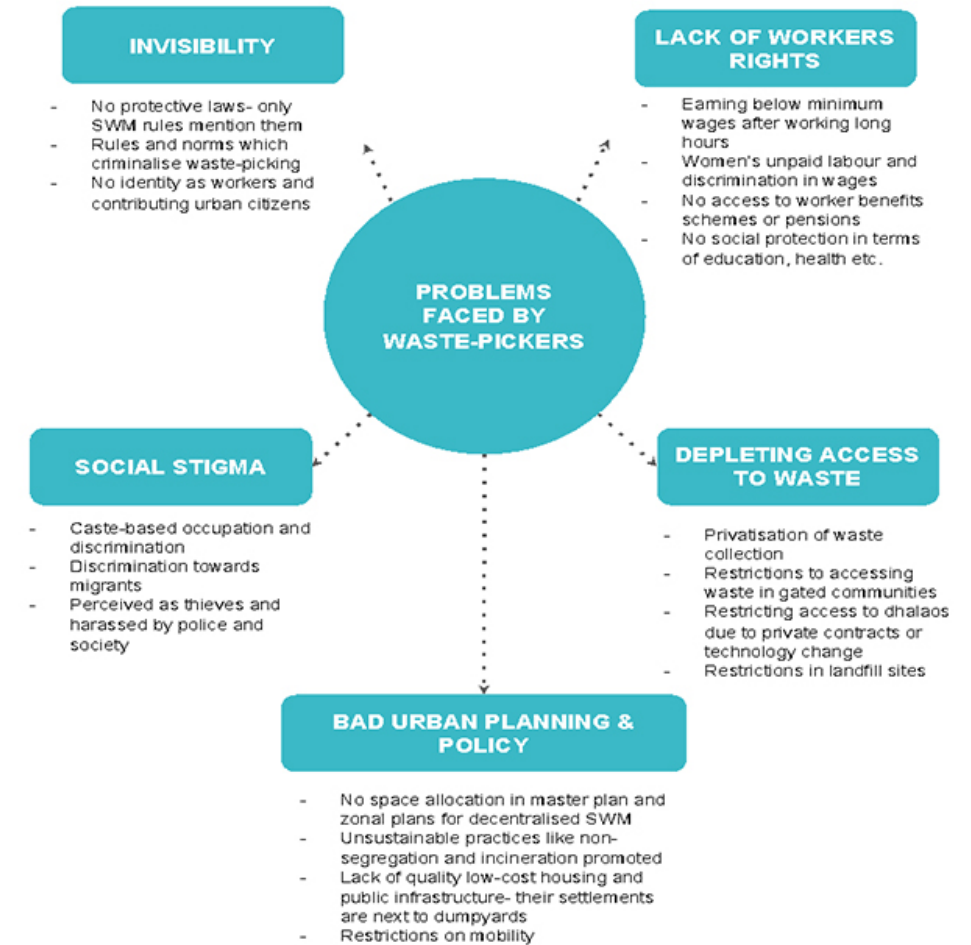
COVID19

Environmental Linkages

- Routine waste management and sanitation services in urban settings

(Picture Reference: Women in Informal Employment, Globalising and Organising)

KEY ISSUES



COVID19

Environmental Linkages

- Management of biosphere reserves and national parks



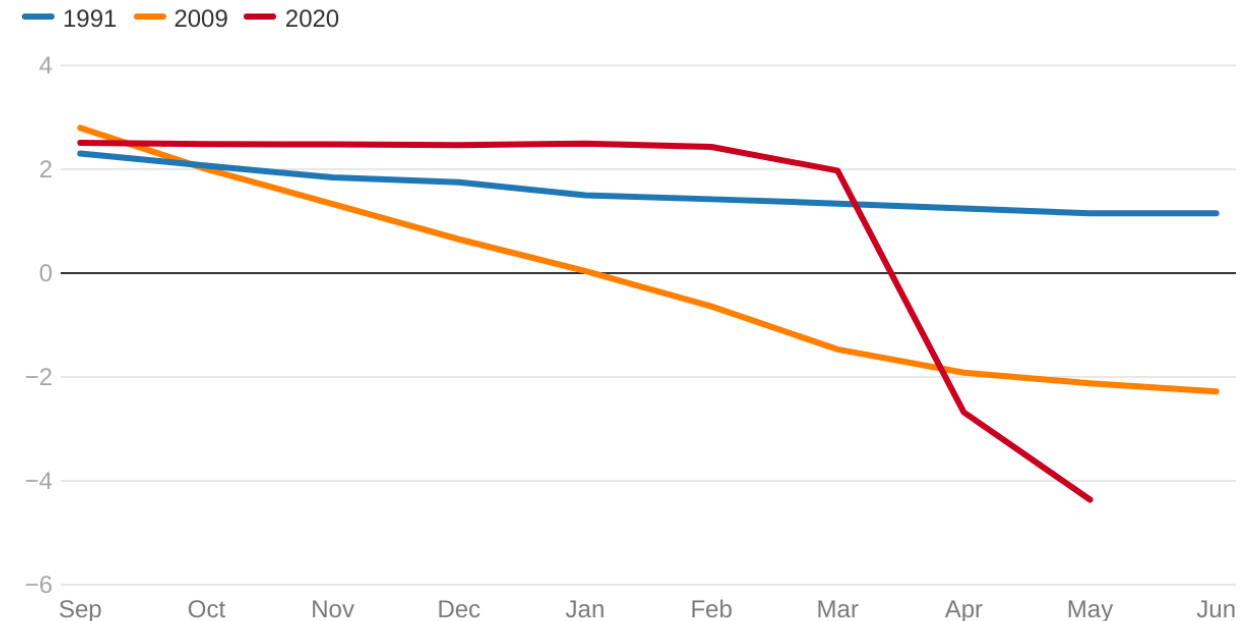
COVID19

Environmental Linkages

- Impacts on environmental standards and sustainable development efforts.

The COVID-19 recession has seen the fastest, steepest downgrades in consensus growth projections among all global recessions since 1990

Consensus forecasts of global GDP (percent)



September to December shows forecasts made in the previous year, while January to June shows data for the current year. Data for 1991 are for advanced economies only due to data availability.

Source: Consensus Economics, World Bank

COVID19

Opportunities

Greening Fiscal Stimulus and Finance Packages to Achieve the SDGs

UNEP FactSheet
May 2020



Greening Fiscal Stimulus and Finance Packages to Achieve the SDGs

"A recovery from the coronavirus crisis must not take us just back to where we were last summer. It is an opportunity to build more sustainable and inclusive economies and societies — a more resilient and prosperous world."

UN Secretary General, António Guterres, April 30, 2020

- "The performance and resilience of our socio-economic systems depend on the health of the natural environment and ecosystems. Once the COVID-19 crisis is over, we cannot return to business-as-usual practices that increase emissions and put pressure on stability and biodiversity."
- While the immediate priority is an emergency response to address the health crisis and its economic fall-out, green financing for relief and recovery stimulus measures is critical to build resilience and support public health efforts. It will also help reduce the probability of future pandemics and broader environmental and climate change risks.
- Preliminary analysis of recently announced stimulus measures by major economies shows a significant lack of consideration for medium and long-term environmental sustainability.
- Not all stimulus packages are created equal or have equal job effects. For example, research estimates that \$10 million invested in the oil and gas in the United States creates just five jobs, compared to 17 jobs per million dollars invested in energy-saving building retrofits, 22 jobs for mass transit, 13 for wind, and 16 for solar¹.



COVID-19 and Green Stimulus and Finance Packages

- The evidence is clear: the "great lockdown" has pushed hundreds of millions from their jobs, decreased economic activity precipitously, and created 'tantalising' inequity and commodity markets. Its impact can be also felt on supply chains and food security around the world.

¹ Green Stimulus refers to investments in the following COVID-19 stimulus initiatives to climate change, biodiversity and other environmental priorities. (UNEP FactSheet, April 2020): <https://www.unep.org/news/story/20200429/covid-19-stimulus-packages-and-environment> (retrieved 2020-04-29)

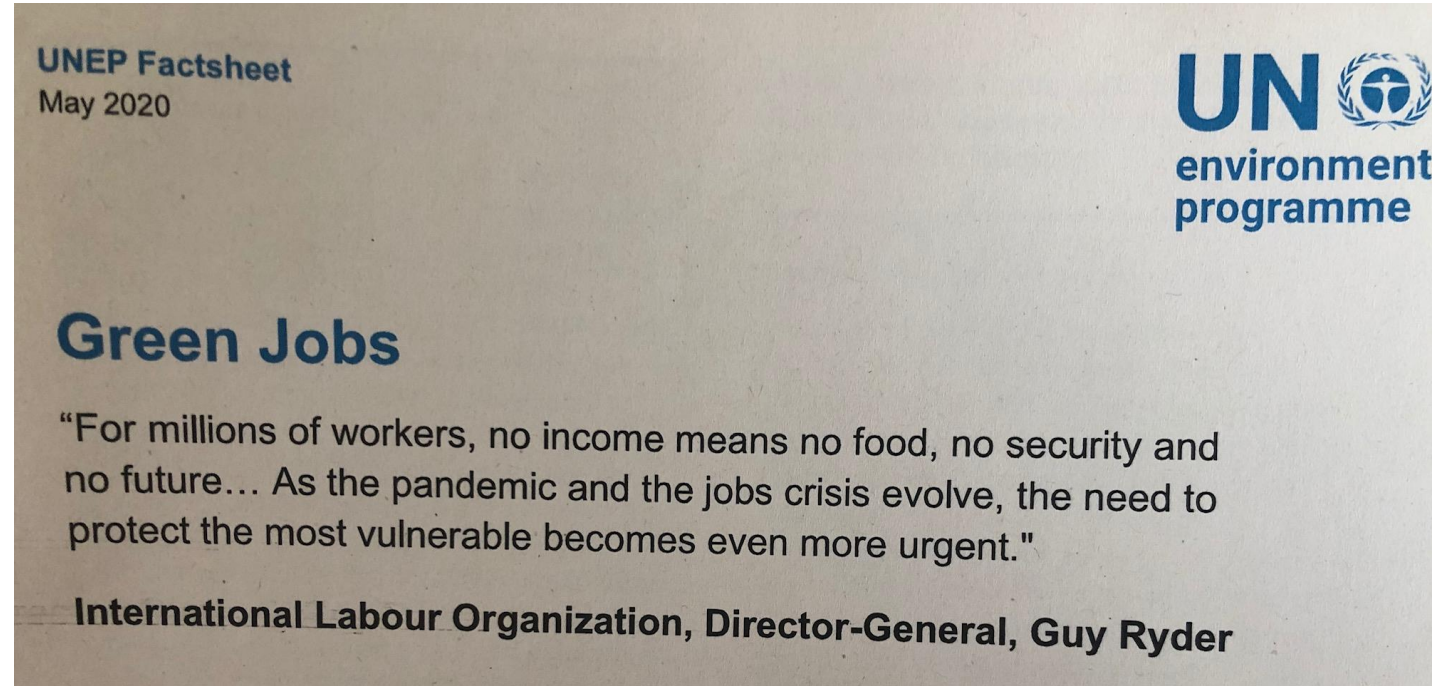
² The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/29/covid-19-stimulus-packages-environment> (retrieved 2020-04-29)

[Source: UNEP.org](#)

COVID19

Opportunities

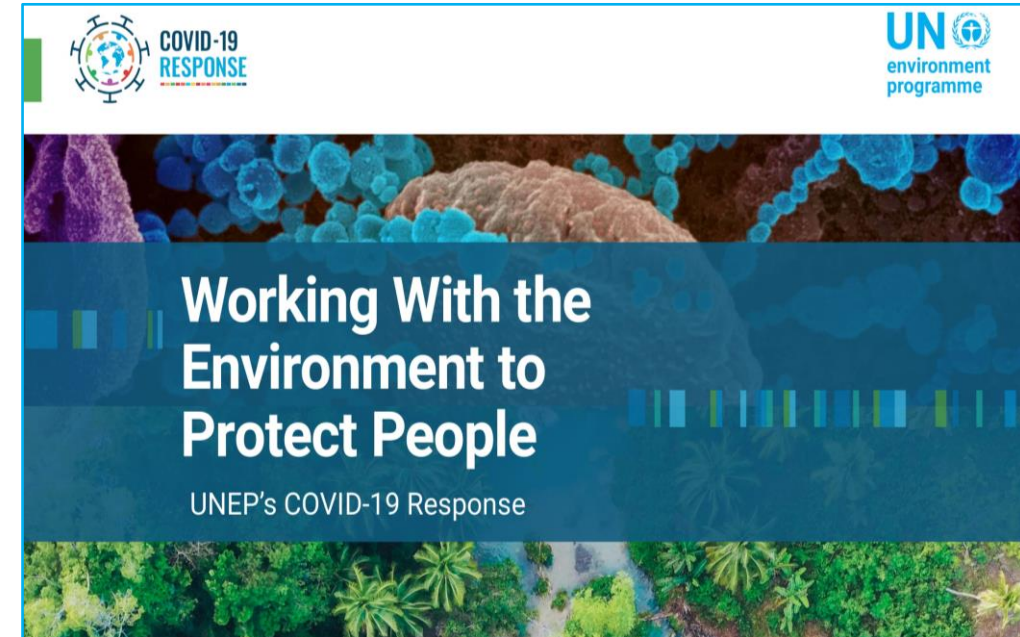
Green Jobs



COVID19

UNEP's Strategy

- **Established a Task force on Preparing a Strategy UNEP's COVID19 Response**
“Working With the Environment to Protect People”
- **Four main blocks:**
 1. The medical & humanitarian emergency phase
 2. A transformational change for nature and people
 3. Investing to build back better
 4. Modernizing global environmental governance



COVID19

Key Actions

- 01** Increase awareness about the environmental linkages
- 02** Provide guidance on best practices
- 03** Provide real-time support to Member States
- 04** Support COVID19 related needs assessments
- 05** Engage in recovery planning

COVID19

Completed so far

Webinars

- Global Webinar on “COVID19 Linked Waste Management”
 - **1300 participants, 125 countries**
- Asia Pacific Webinar on “COVID19 Linked Waste Management”
 - **450 participants, 46 countries**
- Global Webinar “COVID19 and Environmental Emergencies”
 - **1500 participants, 135 countries**

WEBINAR: WASTE MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Photo: Simon Davis / DFID

June 18
15:00 - 16:30 CEST



While COVID-19 is primarily a global health emergency, its impacts have been unprecedented on a wide spectrum of sectors, from the economy to education. The environmental sector is no exception. One of the most pronounced and specific environmental impacts of the COVID-19 crisis is the challenge of healthcare and infectious waste management.

Hospitals handling COVID-19 cases generate waste which are potentially infectious, from materials used in patient care to the personal protective equipment used by the healthcare personnel. Medical facilities with proper waste disposal facilities, need only additional training for the waste handlers. However, in areas without environmentally adequate waste management solutions, locally appropriate solutions will need to be found.

In many countries, tens of thousands of people are involved in waste picking activities and the market for recycled goods has crashed. The COVID-19 situation has impacted livelihoods of waste pickers and increased stigma of their jobs. Therefore, this sector will also need special attention.

The UN Environment Programme and its experts will be delivering a webinar in order to increase awareness and provide guidance on the issue of waste management during the COVID-19 crisis. Participants of the webinar will also have access to additional reference materials and guidance.



Agenda

15:00	Opening Remarks <i>Gary Lewis</i>
15:05	Management of Healthcare Waste During COVID19 <i>Martin Guard</i>
15:25	Impact on the Informal Sector <i>Mike Cowling</i>
15:45	Questions and Answers
16:25	Closing Remarks
16:30	End of Webinar

Register here:

<https://bit.ly/3dVTUeV>



**JOINT
ENVIRONMENT
UNIT**

TOGETHER
FOR A BETTER
RESPONSE

COVID19

Direct support to countries

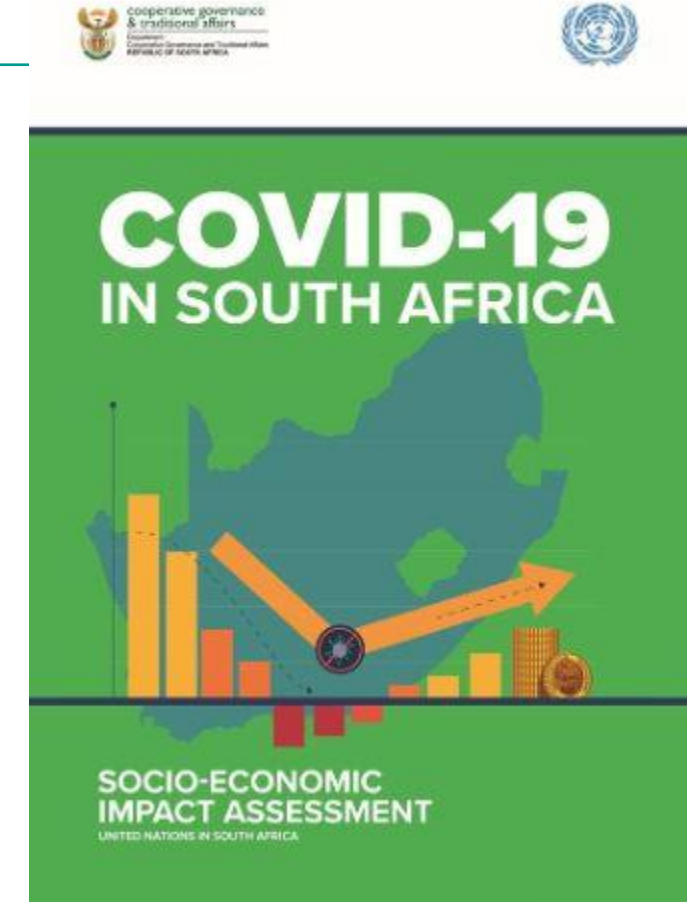
- **Technical Advice**
 - Afghanistan, Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti
- **Corona Linked Assessments**
 - South Africa, Serbia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, India, Haiti, Sudan
- **Recovery Planning**
 - South Africa
- **COVID19 Support to UN Peacekeeping Operations**



COVID19

Planned Actions

- **More Awareness and Capacity Building Efforts**
 - Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East, Country specific, in local languages
- **Corona Linked Assessments**
 - Philippines, Mauritius, Ecuador, Azerbaijan, Cape Verde, El Salvador+
- **Technical Assistance and other support**
 - Afghanistan, India, Haiti, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan+



Thank you



**JOINT
ENVIRONMENT
UNIT**

TOGETHER
FOR A BETTER
RESPONSE

Muralee Thummarukudy
Operations Manager
Muralee.thummarukudy@un.org
