

A global recession – perhaps of record dimensions – is a near certainty.

The International Labour Organization has just reported that workers around the world could lose as much as 3.4 trillion U.S. dollars in income by the end of this year.

This is, above all, a human crisis that calls for solidarity.

Our human family is stressed and the social fabric is being torn. People are suffering, sick and scared.

Current responses at the country level will not address the global scale and complexity of the crisis.

This is a moment that demands coordinated, decisive, and innovative policy action from the world's leading economies. We must recognize that the poorest countries and most vulnerable – especially women – will be the hardest hit.

It has been proven that the virus can be contained.
It must be contained.

If we let the virus spread like wildfire – especially in the most vulnerable regions of the world – it would kill millions of people.

And we need to immediately move away from a situation where each country is undertaking its own health strategies to one that ensures, in full transparency, a coordinated global response, including helping countries that are less prepared to tackle the crisis.

Governments must give the strongest support to

And we must refrain from the temptation of resorting to protectionism. This is the time to dismantle trade barriers and re-establish supply chains.

Looking at the broader picture, disruptions to society are having a profound impact.

We must address the effects of this crisis on women. The world's women are disproportionately carrying the burden at home and in the wider economy.

Children are also paying a heavy price. More than 800 million children are out of school right now — many of whom rely on school to provide their only meal. We must ensure that all children have access to food and equal access to learning — bridging the digital divide and reducing the costs of connectivity.

As people's lives are disrupted, isolated and upturned, we must prevent this pandemic from turning into a crisis of mental health. And young people will be most at risk.

The world needs to keep going with core support to programmes for the most vulnerable, including through UN-coordinated humanitarian and refugee response plans. Humanitarian needs must not be sacrificed.

THIRD, AND FINALLY, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO "RECOVER BETTER".

The 2008 financial crisis demonstrated clearly that countries with robust social protection systems suffered the least and recovered most quickly from its impact.

We must ensure that lessons are learned and that this crisis provides a watershed moment for health emergency preparedness and for investment in critical 21st century public services and the effective delivery of global public goods.

We have a framework for action — the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We must keep our promises for people and planet.

The United Nations — and our global network of country offices — will support all governments to ensure that the global economy and the people we serve emerge stronger from this crisis.

That is the logic of the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.

More than ever before, we need solidarity, hope and the political will to see this crisis through together.

Thank you,

**UN Secretary-General
António Guterres**
