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# Using COVID-19 Response Measures to Build Resilience in Systems



Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy

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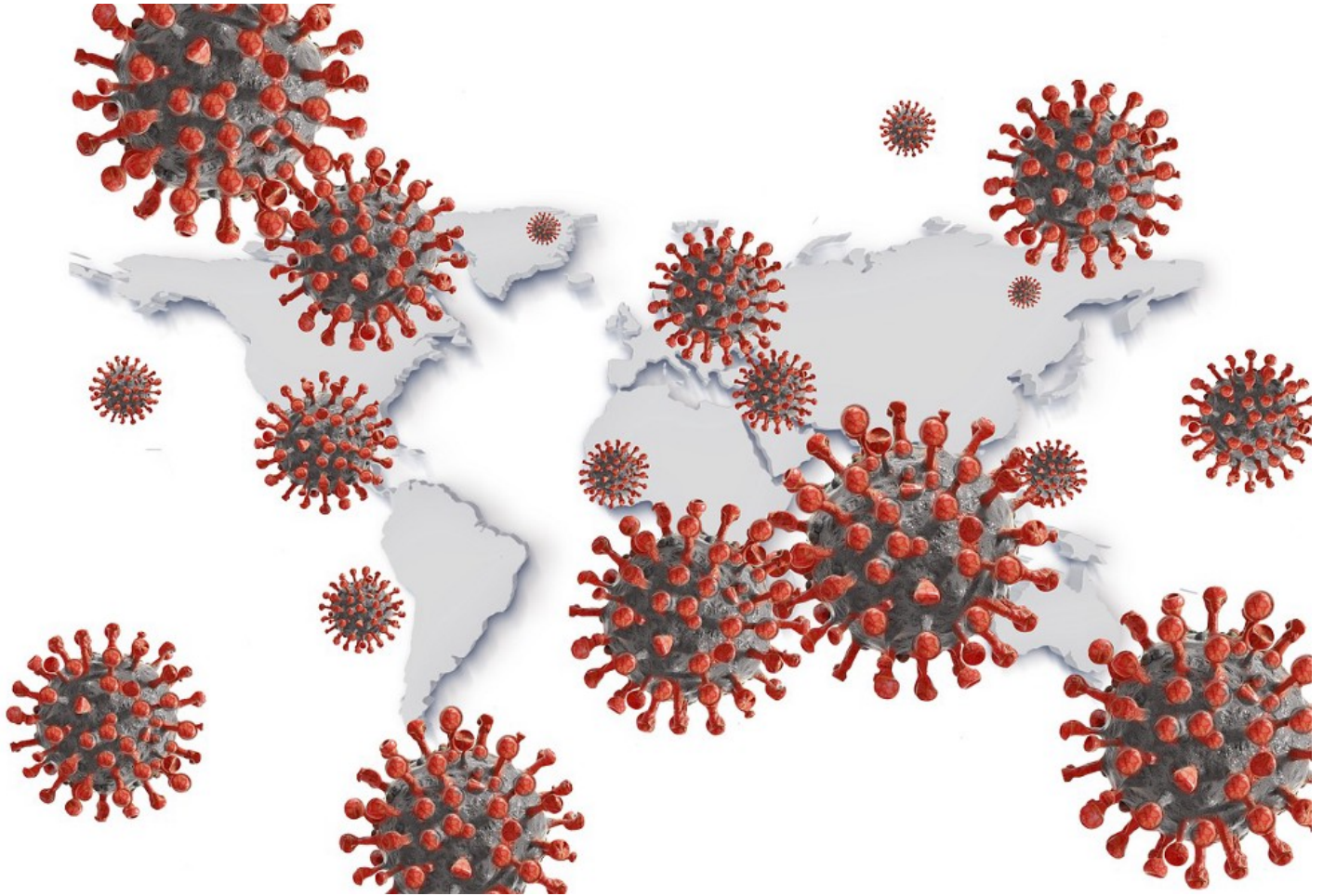
In the fight against COVID-19, India announced INR 1.70 lakh crore (0.8 per cent of GDP) stimulus package. The package covers food, cooking gas, and direct cash transfers to low-income households. It includes insurance cover for health workers and wage support to low-wage workers. Later on, in May 2020, the government announced INR 20 lakh crore (10 per cent of GDP) to revitalise the economy. This package is inclusive of the INR 1.7 lakh crore to make India self-reliant.

Stimulus packages, at best, can serve as short-term measures to cope with COVID-19. But, long-term measures have to consider protecting the vulnerable groups. The focus should be on building resilience in communities to deal with any future crises.

A paper published in *Nature Climate Change* by Peters et al. (2011) stated that the 2008 global financial crisis was followed by a 6% rise in emissions. The increase was due to fossil fuel combustion and cement production in 2010, after a 1.4% reduction in 2009. The current pandemic has also led to a crash of economies, but a sharp rebound in emissions seems likely.

**Global concerns need systemic changes**

The pandemic has shown that international coordination and action are vital. It is evident that government policies, businesses, and communities can react and change. This experience is an opportunity to reframe our ideal of economic growth.



The COVID-19 pandemic crisis is an opportunity for long-term measures to build resilience in systems and can pave the way for solving the long-stalled climate change crisis. Image Source: Pixabay

The response to COVID-19 has shown that global challenges need systemic changes. These changes are being adopted by governments, production systems, and individuals (behavioural changes). The COVID-19, like the climate crisis, is a global challenge, requiring systemic changes. Both the crises are similar in that they:

- Have a global impact requiring international coordination and local response
- Deal with existential challenges

- Impact the poor and most vulnerable
- Highlight the gap in infrastructure and administrative capacities
- Need political will
- Rely on digital infrastructure
- Advocate adoption of circular economy principles
- Provide an opportunity to shift towards a green economy.

### **Green policies and principles for building resilience**

This pandemic highlighted the need to focus on ecosystems in economic growth. It is an opportunity for mainstreaming preservation, protection, and restoration of ecosystems. Long-term economic strategies can include biodiversity conservation, asset strengthening, and green infrastructure. Such strategies ensure food security, healthy people, and a healthy planet. This would be possible if long-term measures adhere to certain broad principles.

Long-term measures in response to COVID-19 could have the following key principles:

***Broad and comprehensive:*** Comprehensive measures for urban and rural areas to ensure inclusive development.

***Targeted towards vulnerable communities:*** Redress past disparities in investment, focussing on vulnerable groups.

***Increased wages and improved job quality:*** Aim to boost the wages and benefits to workers.

***Equitable and transparent:*** Involve communities in project planning and design to ensure transparency.

**Forward-looking:** Move beyond job creation; economic production to build resilient systems.

This crisis is an opportunity for long-term measures to build resilience in systems. This new approach will pave the path for solving the long-stalled climate change crisis. This can also advance the common goals of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

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