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Challenges and Innovative Approaches to Effective Governance for Building Back Better

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November 16, 2021

I. Introduction

- The impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of SDGs has been disastrous on almost all SDGs, particularly on health:
 - Health impact=> by noon, Nov. 15, 2021
 - 5.1 million died (maybe much more due to undercounting)
 - 253 million people are infected by the virus (enormous undercounting)
 - Mental health problems increased significantly across the globe;
- Now, as the world is trying to move out of the pandemic, it is the time to think about how to accelerate the implementation of SDGs, so as to make up the time we lost:
 - *What are the challenges and innovative approaches for ensuring effective public governance to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs?*
 - *What are the emerging trends and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic on how to leverage public governance for ensuring resilience and building back better?*

II. Challenges and innovative approaches to ensure effective public governance to accelerate the implementation of the SDG

□ Challenges:

- SDGs are ambitious and complex
 - Complexity—the substantive issues involved are very complex, such as climate change, economic development, health and etc.;
 - Diversity—the development stages and priorities of countries are extremely diverse, how to ensure “no one is left behind”?
 - Connectivity—co-benefits and contradictions among different goals; coordination among different parts of the society; international spill-over effects;
- The capacity of public sector is limited
 - Financing, e.g. development aid; green financing

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- Government capacity
 - For example, analytical capacity
 - Policy coordination within and across national borders
 - Coordination among different regions within a country
 - Coordination among different countries for cross-boundary issues
 - Coordination at global level.
 - Policy environment is uncertain
 - How to communicate the SDG to the public?
 - Not individual goals, but in its totality
 - How to mobilize the general public?
 - Linkage between daily behavior with SDG
 - How to persuade people to make current investment for the future gains, to make individual sacrifices for the greater goods?
 - Green-house emissions
 - Eco-system protection
 - Measurement issue for SDGs
 - 17 goals=>169 targets=>231 indicators

Innovative approaches for public governance

- ❑ Conduct strategic planning for SDG implementation
 - ❑ Identify national and local priorities
 - ❑ Setup action plans based on sound analysis
- ❑ Combine top political will with local entrepreneurship
 - ❑ Consistent top-level political will and policy direction
 - ❑ Flexible implementation approaches at the local level.
- ❑ Public Communication on SDGs
 - ❑ Build social consensus on SDGs
- ❑ Reform the government for SDGs (SDG 16)
 - ❑ Clean and competent government is a necessary condition
 - ❑ Digital transformation can bridge the gap in capacity

III. Emerging trends and lessons learned from COVID-19 (based on the work by Lancet Commission on COVID-19)

□ Lessons learned

- Our multilateral system was not prepared to deal with a major public-health crisis such as the COVID-19;
 - WHO did not have the clear mandate and authority, nor have the resources, required to fulfill its role.
- Most of the domestic responses of national governments were dangerously insufficient;
- NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) displayed remarkable resourcefulness and adaptability in filling gaps in global pandemic response.
- Scientific collaboration, including collaboration with the business sector – has been one of the bright spots of the worldwide pandemic response.
- In the age of social media, the “infodemic” is a serious threat to public health.

Recommendations

- Improve global governance system for pandemic responses and crisis management :
 - Provide the UN system with the resources it needs to act effectively in response to public-health crises.
 - Empower WHO to swiftly identify and counter incipient pandemics and address global-health issues.
 - Establishing an institutional mechanism such as a UN Global Resilience Council to deal with non-military security threats
- Strengthen regional health organizations to adequately fulfill their role as facilitators between global and national systems.

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- Build on effective local pandemic-preparedness measures and infectious-disease interventions, reinforcing investment in localized, bottom-up approaches – while balancing the need for effective central regulatory oversight.
 - Improve international regulatory mechanisms to expedite the evaluation and approval of safe and effective diagnostics, drugs, and vaccines.
 - Enhance scientific collaboration and reform the intellectual-property regime governing access to vaccines and other technologies central to the prevention and elimination of pandemic threats.

Thanks !



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