

The global economic burden of COVID-19: every day further from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

La carga económica global de la COVID-19: cada día más lejos de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible

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To the editor:

Like wars and sociopolitical changes, communicable diseases have changed the world's economy and politics throughout history. In 2020, the world is facing COVID-19, the disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), a virus that has caused massive losses and social and economic panic all over the world¹. Labeled as a black swan event, and compared to World War II economic scenario, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the world's health systems with a domino effect on every aspect of human life as we know it². The impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities will not only occur in terms of infection and mortality from the virus, but also in terms of the health consequences due to the responses to the policies undertaken in most countries³.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing efforts implemented to curb its spread have disrupted global and local economies and food systems. Food insecurity closely follows national and household economic conditions, with parallel trends towards unemployment, poverty, and food prices. COVID-19 threatens access to food because of its effects on its

costs and on infrastructure, including changes in the distribution of food assistance, access to public transport and shortages of certain products. In terms of utilization, market reports indicate widespread changes in food purchasing behaviors⁴. The sudden and generalized impact of the pandemic and the measures adopted to stop activities in order to contain it have caused a drastic contraction of global economy. According to the World Bank projections, the economy will grow by 4% in 2021 after a contraction of 4.3% last year, the fourth deepest global recession in the last 150 years, only surpassed by those related to both world wars and the Great Depression. This year's recovery assumes that control measures will reduce infection rates, and that the vaccination process will be accelerated in order for the coverage to be widespread around the world by the end of next year. Production in emerging markets and developing economies is expected to grow by 5% this year, but this after economic impacts that undo at least 10 years of per capita income growth in more than one quarter of the countries in this group⁵.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a universal call to action in order to put an end to poverty,

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protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of people around the world. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved 17 goals as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets out a plan to achieve the goals in 15 years. The 2030 Agenda is a historic opportunity for bringing about a more inclusive, fair, and sustainable world. However, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis entails a turning point to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, due to its devastating consequences at the political, economic, and socio-cultural level in the third decade the 21st century. The optimism and hopes generated by the development of the 2030 Agenda have given way, in the context of the global pandemic, to a growing concern about a possible slowdown in the attainment of its goals or even a serious setback of the achievements already accomplished.

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Ethical disclosures

Protection of human and animal subjects. The authors declare that no experiments have been performed on humans or animals for this research.

Confidentiality of data. The authors declare that no patient data appear in this article.

Right to privacy and informed consent. The authors declare that no patient data appear in this article.

Conflicts of interest

Dr. Enrique Cervantes Pérez serves currently as Scientific Medical Trainer at Laboratorios Janssen Cilag.

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