

# Innovations

## Covid-19 pandemic and recovery policy measures in Latin America and the Caribbean

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates Covid-19 as well as recovery strategies in the Caribbean and Latin America. COVID-19 arrived in Latin American, Caribbean and many other countries in March, 2020 allowing for some emergency preparedness in countries with underdeveloped health systems and socioeconomic disparities. Despite the inadequate tracing and tracking, the countries quickly adopted the COVID-19's stringent standards and gradually increased the capacity of their health-care systems. The study described in this paper was exploratory in nature. COVID-19 has been linked to a number of cases and deaths in Caribbean and Latin American countries. The analysis of more deaths also reveals that the impact on deaths is far greater than the official numbers provided for some countries to date. National and international health policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have prioritized health system readiness and resilience in order to provide equitable access to healthcare and treatment. The study concludes that these countries' pre-pandemic conditions (high informal employment and social inequalities) have undermined the effectiveness of their pandemic responses, despite strict containment and mitigation measures and the expansion of health-care capacity. The study recommends among other things that Latin America and Caribbean should continue to work toward universal access to high-quality services, improve governance and cross-national coordination of epidemic responses, and expand public health capabilities such as surveillance and health information infrastructure.*

**Keywords:** 1.COVID-19, 2.Recovery policy measures, 3.Public health, 4.Improve governance

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### **Introduction**

COVID-19 has caused a massive health, social, and economic shock in Latin America and Caribbean, as well as a massive human toll. To support this claim, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2021a) claims that the COVID-19 pandemic is a public health and socioeconomic challenge for all countries. By November 2020, Latin America and Caribbean have 12 million infected people (29 percent of all reported cases) and 340,000 deaths (34% of total global deaths), a very serious situation given that the region

accounts for 8.4% of the world's population (United Nations, 2020). Furthermore, recent projections of the crisis's impact on employment and income levels are concerning. According to ECLAC data, regional GDP contract 9.1% in 2020, increasing poverty to 37.3 percent, with 15.5 percent living in extreme poverty (ECLAC, 2021c). According to UNICEF and Save the Children (2020), in this scenario of GDP contraction, monetary poverty could affect one out of every two children and adolescents (48.5 percent) in the region if no mitigation measures to protect incomes are implemented.

In response to the arrival of COVID-19 on the continent, Latin American and Caribbean governments imposed movement restrictions and increased health-care capacity. Despite strict and early implementation of measures, pre-pandemic factors such as a high level of economic informality, inability to scale up testing, and a lack of an early contact tracing strategy hampered the public health response in the five countries. These broader factors hampered response effectiveness and the ability to stop the spread of COVID-19, resulting in significant, negative health outcomes (United Nations, 2019). After implementing a comprehensive tracing and tracking strategy, tightening movement restrictions in areas with a high incidence of COVID-19, and improving economic support, Chile has recently seen a steady decrease in positive cases. Nonetheless, until mid-August, these countries were ranked first through fifth in the region in terms of COVID-19 deaths. Furthermore, the five countries have experienced negative economic consequences such as high unemployment and a significant reduction in economic activity. The COVID-19 results are associated with population health. Patients' age, comorbidities, and obesity have all been linked to the severity and likelihood of poor clinical outcomes. The elderly, as well as those suffering from cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or obesity, are particularly vulnerable (CIVICUS, 2020).

To combat the first wave of COVID-19, Latin America and Caribbean instituted strict measures like lockdowns (national or focalized) and curfews. The programs had a limited impact because of the health systems' preexisting fragility, which is characterized by underinvestment in healthcare resources, geographical disparities, poor information systems, and insufficient communication and coordination. During the first 100 days of the outbreak, healthcare systems were overburdened; some regions reported ICU bed occupancy rates of 100 percent. According to Nora and Trasberg (2021a), the growth of a large informal sector reduced people's ability to adhere to containment and mitigation measures, reducing their effectiveness even further. Income-support programs were implemented in Latin American and Caribbean countries, but they were either too conservative or implemented too late to achieve significant levels of compliance. A comprehensive plan for early detection, isolation, surveillance, and tracking of patients and close contacts across the five countries was also lacking.

Despite the devastating health and economic consequences for Latin American and Caribbean countries, the pandemic has resulted in positive changes and innovations that policymakers and health leaders should capitalize on. Some examples include health ministry's centralizing information about private and public health resources, using Tele-health to bridge the availability gap in specialist care between remote and urban areas, providing a basic level of primary care, online training for healthcare workers, scaling up laboratory testing capacity, multi-sector collaboration and making "healthcare everybody's business, and encouraging domestic industry to manufacture medical equipment (Martinez-Valle, 2021). The region's decades-long development model exacerbates the shock. The pandemic exposed the model's frailty, exacerbated its many inequalities, and turned chronic issues into an acute crisis that required immediate attention. In addition to short-term emergency measures, the response to COVID-19 should include a completely new set of health, economic, social, and industrial policies. In accordance with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recovery from the pandemic should aim to rebuild better, which means rebuilding with equality, redefining the development model to one anchored in human rights, and taking the environmental dimension into account (ECLAC, 2021b). As a result of the preceding, this study investigates Covid-19 and recovery policy measures in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Review of Related Literature

To combat the general economic slowdown and mitigate the negative effects of the crisis, all countries have implemented economic stimulus measures. These measures are intended to assist businesses and individuals in obtaining credit and making necessary payments, such as taxes or utilities, during the crisis. A number of governments have implemented focused measures to assist vulnerable SMEs, including particular financing lines, low- or no-interest loans, salary payments through public funds, delay of certain tax obligations, social security contributions, and loan payments. Additionally, nations have made efforts to lessen the costs and administrative hassles related to individual taxes, utility bills, credit card bills, loan repayments, and mortgage payments (Nora & Trasberg, 2021). Although it varies widely between nations, fiscal support has been rather significant in several, including Brazil, Chile, and Peru. The value of these measures is not known, however, due to the uncertainty surrounding their ultimate execution, the potential for extending the duration or scope of these interim acts or announcing further policy actions in the upcoming months (OECD, 2020). The announced actions were between 0.5 and 12 percent of GDP in magnitude (Elgin, Basbug & Yalaman, 2020). Because specific measures differ significantly across countries, and there are significant information gaps regarding effective implementation.

The pandemic could provide an opportunity for collective reflection on restructuring the development model and resetting the future in three directions: (1) building an inclusive, just, and gender-responsive regional welfare system; (2) transforming production patterns by strengthening domestic technological capabilities, particularly in the digital and green energy sectors, and encouraging a zero-carbon growth path; and (3) environmental protection. This restructuring is a critical step toward achieving the SDGs because it will enable sustainability and employment (good jobs for all) to progress in tandem, in a mutually reinforcing process (STATISTA, 2020). Crisis response and reconstruction policies must be based on equality and democracy. Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as their institutions, must play a critical role in response and recovery, which requires a high level of legitimacy and political support, as well as active participation from civil society, women's organizations, and human rights defenders. A new social compact that protects fundamental rights, upholds the rule of law, and ensures universal welfare and economic resilience as social conflicts worsen is required for better construction. National policy responses have focused on protecting households (particularly the most vulnerable), preserving production capacity and employment, and averting a liquidity crisis. The fiscal effort has already surpassed the magnitude of the stimulus implemented during the 2008 global financial crisis (ECLAC, 2021b).

Stronger national public care systems that, in collaboration with private initiatives in this sector, promote unpaid care work redistribution within families, facilitating women's labor-force participation, and creating new job opportunities; fiscal systems should be strengthened through more progressive tax structures, new methods of taxing the digital economy, and improving and broadening the set of environmental corrective taxes, such as carbon taxes and public health taxes. Financial institutions could consider promoting financial stability through measures such as foreign-exchange interventions, capital controls as needed, easing pressure on dollar demand through international central bank cooperation, such as swap arrangements (which were successful in maintaining dollar liquidity during the global financial crisis), and increasing reserves with SDRs (SDRs). Liquidity can also be provided by public banks, including national and multilateral development banks (Nora, Pabon, Neidhöfer, & Tommasi, 2021). Consider ways to assist MSMEs in avoiding bankruptcy. This category could include direct liquidity injections, cash transfers, credit access, or cost-cutting measures. Guarantees from the government, direct interventions, capitalization, nationalization, R&D investment, and tax breaks are all options.

According to The United Nations Women America (2020), all countries have put in place economic support measures to help both businesses and individuals, with a particular emphasis on the most vulnerable. Governments immediately halted evictions of nonpaying renters, as well as a freeze on mortgage loan rates and payment plans. Costa Rica and Panama suspended a number of taxes, including mortgages, loans, and credit cards, for a limited time. Colombia passed a "clean state" law that gives debtors a year to make up missed payments. Student loan repayment terms have also been relaxed. However, the presence of SMEs and individuals operating in the informal sector makes even the most targeted interventions difficult to reach those in greatest need because there are so many

self-employed people. Many governments in Latin America and the Caribbean have implemented additional social income support measures to ensure that those with low incomes and/or the inability to work from home can comply with containment restrictions. These measures frequently include temporary increases in existing cash transfers and in-kind programmatic initiatives, as well as new transfers to reach vulnerable individuals who are not currently served by existing programs (Nora et al., 2021).

Brazil, for example, announced an extension of the emergency aid payment to unemployed and informal workers, as well as beneficiaries of the Bolsa Familia welfare program, until the end of the year. Furthermore, the Dominican Republic has expanded the scope of its social welfare program, Tarjeta de Solidaridad, to include families who are not on the government's radar. In Ecuador, a similar scheme was expanded to reach 2 million people (OECD, 2020). Many Latin American countries, including Chile and El Salvador, have also implemented large-scale food distribution programs to assist low-income citizens. Brazil's emergency income program includes social assistance for unauthorized workers. This prompted the development of the emergency family income project and the COVID-19 bonus in Chile, which aided low-income families by augmenting earnings, even those who rely on unofficial income. Homes in Peru that were previously ineligible for payments were provided vouchers aimed at independent contractors and unorganized workers. In Mexico, for instance, retirees might speed the growth of pension assets. Chileans can now withdraw a portion of their pensions (Bentez, Velasco, Sequeira, Henriquez, Menezes, & Paolucci, 2020). Argentina, for example, set up emergency funds and programs to help businesses and workers in the most affected industries, such as tourism, entertainment, culture, health, and sports. The governments of Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru helped individuals maintain their jobs by offering extra pay up to the minimum wage, paying a portion of some workers' salaries, and giving self-employed persons in Chile and Argentina benefits including zero-interest loans. People who had lost their employment or were struggling with unpredictable income were able to apply online for temporary bonuses in Colombia, Costa Rica, and Peru. Costa Rica established the online financial aid portal Plan Proteger so that its citizens may apply for the monthly bonus. Workers who were completely laid off received unemployment benefits in Uruguay as well. Non-contingent cash transfers were implemented in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay, with a focus on female-headed households (Nora & Trasberg, 2021a). The "Quedate en casa" program in the Dominican Republic and the enhancement of transfer programs like the Social Card in Uruguay and Costa Rica, as well as the COVID-19 bonus in Chile, were made to help vulnerable households, especially those with women and children (Elgin et al., 2020).

Governments in LAC have taken initiatives to lessen the additional strain placed on women during lockdown after identifying interactions between the care sector and COVID-19. Argentina and Bolivia have both implemented special leave policies for expectant mothers and individuals who require care. Networks of childcare providers continued to offer assistance in Uruguay and Costa Rica. Public efforts to encourage more equal home chore sharing and co-responsibility of care have been launched in the media and on social media. The hashtags "AtHomeWeShareChores" in Ecuador, "QuarantineWithRights" in Argentina, and the "HeForShe" campaign in Mexico have all helped to promote a nongendered stereotypical division of work at home. Several nations established steps to prevent and decry violence against women in response to escalating domestic violence statistics (OECD, 2020). Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay moved quickly to put a stop to the rise in gender-related domestic violence during the social distancing period. Uruguay launched a social media awareness campaign, an emergency phone number, and a protocol developed in collaboration with the Health Ministry for personnel to detect potential cases of domestic violence. Others created special shelters for women who have been victims of domestic violence. Colombia, Mexico, and Peru increased funding for safe houses and specialized shelters for women who have been subjected to gender-based and domestic violence (ECLAC, 2020b). In Chile, pharmacies use the code word "Facemask 19" to identify women seeking help. The Chilean Ministry of Women and Gender Equality has also implemented significant preventive and containment measures, including women's continuing operations centers and fully operational shelters, reporting campaigns, and online prevention courses. ContigoMujer (with you woman), PasaElDato (pass it on), and "En esta comunidad no entra la violencia" are just a few examples of public awareness campaigns addressing violence against women (OECD, 2020).

### **Actions towards Access to Vaccine**

Most nations responded promptly to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit Latin America and the Caribbean in late February 2020 in order to contain the epidemic and deal with its economic and social repercussions. The high levels of informality in the area, the absence of social support, and the inadequate health infrastructure made the situation worse even though the quick containment response initially decreased the infection rate. In many circumstances, it has been challenging to maintain social distance due to the near to 60% informal employment rate (OECD, 2020). In a region where 140 million people needed to work to survive, many people were compelled to break the lockdown every day. Despite government attempts, the World Health Organization (WHO) designated Latin America as the COVID-19 pandemic's epicenter in May 2020. With more than 6.5 million illnesses and over 350 000 deaths, Latin America accounted for more than 40% of COVID-19 deaths globally. Curfews, quarantines, and other restrictions have been in place since March 2020, but the majority of LAC countries' confirmed COVID-19 mortality didn't start declining until late August (United Nations, 2020). In addition to the health risks, COVID-19 has significantly impacted the socioeconomic situation in a region that is already facing structural problems. A number of businesses, especially tourism, were significantly impacted by restrictions on supply and demand, which resulted in decreased household income and private consumption. Additionally, the crisis has resulted in a severe slump in Latin American markets and currencies due to falling commodity prices. The IMF anticipated a 1.6 percent increase in the region's GDP in 2020 prior to the pandemic. The region is anticipated to decrease by 8.4% to 9.1% due to a number of issues, resulting in the worst recession in a century, significantly worse than in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Since then, global and domestic situations have gotten worse (OECD, 2020).

Several local projects to create the COVID-19 vaccine have also been put in place, even though the bulk of the region's nations have joined the World Health Organization's COVAX Facility in the hopes of obtaining timely and equitable access to it whenever it becomes ready. In August 2020, Abxience, the British pharmaceutical corporation AstraZeneca, and Oxford University inked a contract with Argentina and Mexico (STATISTA, 2020). In the first half of 2021, it is planned to produce 150 to 250 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine for distribution across Latin America. Similar agreements were made by Brazil with four different pharmaceutical companies to produce a COVID-19 vaccine, and the factory's funding was entirely private. Clinical trials for many American, Russian, and Chinese vaccinations are currently being conducted, among others, in Chile, Colombia, Cuba, and Peru in order to develop an effective vaccine. With the objective of being produced in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, vaccines will be made in those countries in the upcoming months. In phase 3, vaccines will be evaluated (only in a few nations, including Brazil).

Unfortunately, LAC countries lack innovation and R&D. Brazil appears to have more treatment trials, but still far fewer than other countries (Nora & Trasberg, 2021b).

### **Immediate Emergency Action**

Latin American governments, like those around the world, have been forced to make quick decisions and take drastic measures to protect vulnerable communities, manage disease spread, and limit the economic, social, and governance consequences of the crisis. Previous crises have demonstrated that emergencies, as well as the rapid responses and policy measures that ensue, create opportunities for integrity violations, most notably policy capture and undue influence in policy-making, fraud and corruption, or political use in the delivery of assistance programs, as well as the potential violation of citizens' rights. This has the potential to seriously undermine the effectiveness of government action. As previously stated, evidence of such risks is already emerging in the current Latin American crisis (The UN Women America, 2020). Transparent and accountable governments, on the other hand, are gaining the trust of citizens. Several Latin American countries, including Argentina, Mexico, Chile, and Peru, have enabled online trials to ensure the continuity of justice services, with Chile securing live web streaming to ensure transparency in legal proceedings. Colombia has used telecommunications to keep family conciliation and arbitration centers open. Countries can take advantage of the opportunity to broaden policymaking, seek common

ground, and foster greater social cohesion in order to make the difficult decisions and reforms needed to overcome the crisis. The second quarter of 2020 provides an opportunity for governments to revise their strategies, especially given the likelihood that the virus will continue to circulate in the medium term and that a second wave will most likely hit the continent by mid-2021 (Nora et al., 2021).

From a governance standpoint, now is the time to prepare for a possible second wave. Strengthening integrity and combating corruption will be critical as financial and technical aid is delivered quickly to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, and integrity violations can seriously undermine broader economic recovery efforts (OECD, 2020). Countries must ensure that open government data (OGD) is used to combat the pandemic. In countries such as the Dominican Republic, the publication of emergency procurement and expenditure in open formats (open data) has aimed to increase monitoring and accountability of the government's response to the virus. This is critical not only for crisis management, but also for balancing the speed with which budgets are allocated and regulatory requirements for public procurements are met with the need for increased transparency and integrity (ECLAC, 2021a). In this regard, LAC countries could benefit from ex-post evaluations of procurement and regulatory approvals to ensure transparency, as well as the development of mechanisms that allow for adjustments as needed. To adapt to the new post-COVID19 world, governments are transforming their policies and public services.

Policy coherence is more important than ever before. Indeed, the current economic downturn has highlighted the potential benefits of digital transformation in government. Governments should prioritize enabling tools such as service design standards, financial management mechanisms, data infrastructure, and digital identity to ensure the continuity of public service delivery (OECD, 2020). LAC countries should seize this opportunity to create participatory mechanisms and a virtuous feedback loop in order to better respond to citizens' needs, increase citizen compliance with response measures, and foster more widespread stakeholder participation. Citizens should be viewed as important partners who can help governments build a successful recovery, not just as recipients of benefits or taxpayers (ECLAC, 2021c). To that end, citizen, business, trade union, academic, and civil society platforms should be established to design, implement, and monitor the recovery response.

### **Policy Recommendations for Latin America and the Caribbean Economic Recovery**

Capital spending should be increased in tandem with industrial policies to avoid crowding out private sector investment. Public debt-to-GDP ratios should be reduced through GDP growth rather than cuts in government spending, as well as by combating tax evasion and avoidance and coordinating regional and global fiscal and financial information exchange mechanisms. Extending public investment in health infrastructure in accordance with the goal of universal health care outlined in the 2019 Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage (Martinez-Valle, 2021) could hasten economic recovery and redirect investments to low-carbon sectors. This could also help with repurposing idle industrial capacity. Sustainable infrastructure investments, access to clean water, and environmental services that increase employment (such as reforestation and ecosystem restoration) can all help to achieve these objectives.

The historically low oil prices present an opportunity to phase out fossil fuel subsidies while also addressing the impact on the poor. Consider investing in local infrastructure and services, as well as increasing the coverage and quality of non-motorized transportation infrastructure and mass-transit systems, such as urban mobility electrification. Policies in the industrial and technological sectors, including zero-carbon sectors, can play critical roles in the new development model (CIVICUS, 2020). The importance of such policies for resilience and growth has grown in recent years, particularly in digital technologies. Cooperation among national governments, universities, and other science and technology actors, as well as R&D investments, can be bolstered to develop domestic capabilities and ensure that everyone has the right to benefit from science and its applications. Women and young people should be encouraged to take an active role in policies that address gender bias barriers in the most technologically advanced and emerging industries, such as technology, medical supplies, and pharmaceuticals (Nora & Trasberg, 2021b).

The pandemic has brought to light a number of structural flaws in Latin American economies. Rising public debt limits fiscal space, emphasizing the critical need for structural reforms to improve fiscal sustainability and public spending efficiency. Governments are encouraged to promote competition while lowering regulatory burdens. Long-term sustainable growth can only be supported by productivity gains, which will require governments to encourage competition and reduce regulatory burdens, as well as improve the business environment and encourage investment. Improve training and mentoring programs to help SMEs gain access to and manage the financial consequences of the crisis, go digital and find new markets, promote access to the formal labor market, and improve labor force skills and abilities (United Nations, 2021). Throughout the crisis, digital transformation has been critical in sustaining certain economic activities. Simultaneously, it has raised awareness about the negative consequences of the digital divide, such as limited access to distance education. As a result, it is critical to improve workers' digital economy skills while also investing in education and business development. Increase infrastructure and connectivity coverage. In a global context of increased production regionalization, regional integration could play a critical role in crisis-recovery strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean. To move regional integration forward, economic recovery packages must include infrastructure and logistics (STATISIA, 2020).

### **Recommendations for Health-Care Policy Promotion in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Construction and maintenance of facilities that support social services, such as medical centers, educational centers, dependency centers, abused women centers, markets and collection centers for basic necessities, water and sanitation infrastructure, community housing, and improving public transportation networks. The pandemic of COVID-19 has highlighted the critical importance of care in sustaining life as well as societal and economic functioning. However, the crisis has exacerbated the inequitable distribution of caring responsibilities, which continue to fall primarily on households, through unpaid work performed by women, and on people working in the care sector in precarious, low-paying jobs (United Nations, 2019). Building integrated care systems is an important component of socioeconomic recovery for a number of reasons, including investment in social care infrastructure and the development of a service economy, which boosts local economies through direct job creation and higher family incomes, generating returns to the economy and society as a whole. The presence of a strong infrastructure and high-quality care services allows for a reduction in the burden of unpaid care work performed at home, primarily by women, freeing up time and creating favorable conditions for their integration into the labor market, allowing them to use their full capacities and promoting economic autonomy; Care policies contribute to the professionalization and certification of those who work in the sector for a living, thereby increasing economic autonomy. They can thus become a driving force in the creation of decent jobs, particularly for women, in the context of global employment decline. In contexts where high levels of informality and massive job losses threaten the sustainability of these systems, regulation and formalization of the sector contribute to the generation of tax revenues and the strengthening of social security systems. Because adequate childhood development from birth contributes to reducing inequalities, investing in quality early childhood care has a positive impact on educational and employment paths, as well as the productivity of the future workforce. Care for the elderly and people with disabilities in need reduce hospitalizations and optimizes health investment, which is especially important given the region's aging populations (United Nations, 2020).

### **Recommendations for Medium- and Long-Term Health-Care Policy Implementations**

Create strong care systems that are designed and implemented with gender in mind. Domestic and care work performed by women, as demonstrated in this document, not only enables the formal health system to function, but also serves as the system's economic and social backbone. Thus, systemic solutions that ensure an individual's care needs are met throughout their life - from childhood to old age - are required. These solutions must not be based primarily on unpaid domestic work performed by women, but rather collective solutions based on solidarity and co-responsibility among various social actors (OECD, 2020). These systems, which aim to improve coverage and quality, can be built on top of existing health, education, and social (poor care) services. Invest in infrastructure that benefits the healthcare industry, as well as in time-saving technology and transportation systems. As part of

infrastructure plans, prioritize investment in facilities that support the care sector, such as healthcare centers, education centers, dependent care centers, care centers for women victims of violence, markets and collection centers for basic necessities, water and sanitation infrastructure, community housing, and public transportation network improvements (United Nations, 2020). Water, sanitation, electricity, food mills, and fuel-efficient stoves, for example, all have an immediate impact on women's time and workload. Investment in these areas, including the development, transfer, and dissemination of appropriate technologies in the countries where they are implemented, is critical to reducing time and income poverty among women, promoting their health and well-being, and improving poorer communities' preparedness for future crises.

Transform labor markets to reconcile paid work and unpaid care, while encouraging social co-responsibility among families, the state, the market, and the community. Labor-market gender inequalities, including wage disparities between men and women, create economic disincentives for more equitable household distribution of unpaid care and domestic work. Legislation that prohibits wage discrimination against women and promotes gender wage transparency by requiring employers to review and disclose their remuneration practices can help reduce inequalities (Elgin et al., 2020). Employees in paid care roles, particularly female paid domestic workers, are frequently at the bottom of the income pyramid and, in some cases, are not covered by minimum wage legislation. Furthermore, employment policies that encourage and make it easier for employees with family responsibilities to balance paid and unpaid care work are required. This can be accomplished by providing both men and women with parental leave, leave to care for sick dependents, and flexible work schedules and day off distribution.

Include the care variable in macroeconomic policy planning, design, and implementation. Macroeconomic policies that recognize the economic contributions and input of care work (including unpaid care and domestic work) and analyze the dynamic links with other sectors of the economy are critical for ensuring economic recovery efforts' long-term viability. This can be accomplished by incorporating care economy variables into macroeconomic planning instruments such as general equilibrium models and the social accounting matrix via satellite accounts (CIVICUS, 2020). Fiscal stimulus packages should include infrastructure and care services for children, the elderly, and the sick, in addition to investments in care and health. Several studies have already demonstrated that these investments have significant multiplier effects. By investing in Free Universal Childcare in South Africa, Turkey, and Uruguay, as well as a cost-benefit analysis of short-term employment effects and fiscal revenue, gender equality, child development, and job creation, the United Nations for Women has made promises a reality (The UN Women America, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

Despite strict containment and mitigation measures, as well as increased health-care capacity, these countries' pre-pandemic conditions (high informal employment and social inequalities) have undermined the effectiveness of pandemic responses. Economic aid was discovered to be too cautious for some countries and too late for the majority of them. In addition, the virus's inability to be contained has been exacerbated by a lack of a comprehensive testing and tracking strategy. Extreme shocks have hit the region, exposing and exacerbating flaws in the region's social protection and health-care systems. As a result of the previous development path, these flaws have disproportionately impacted vulnerable groups such as informal sector workers, domestic workers, one-parent families, indigenous peoples, afrodescendants, and people with disabilities. Within these groups, women face an even greater disadvantage. While countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have taken significant steps to mitigate the effects of the crisis, more needs to be done. Aside from surviving the crisis, policy responses to stimulate economic recovery would contribute to the establishment of a new human-rights-based development model.

The expanding role of government, combined with the painful lessons of the crisis, should reenergize efforts to promote inclusive and sustainable development. This more ambitious goal is encapsulated by the "building back better" approach, which also calls for Latin America and the Caribbean to rebuild with equality. The development

model will be revamped in order to outline a strategy for achieving the SDGs outlined in the 2030 Agenda. Countries should strive to maintain their progress toward universal coverage of high-quality services, improve governance and cross-border outbreak response coordination, and strengthen public health capabilities such as health information infrastructure and surveillance systems. Governments should increase their focus on Primary Health Care (PHC), the backbone of strong health systems, given its proximity to the community and potential role in addressing the majority of the population's health needs, to mitigate the impact of epidemics and pandemics. Overall, more and better health-care spending is required, with a focus on reducing harmful and inefficient private spending, such as high out-of-pocket costs. Furthermore, regional and international cooperation is required to advance public goods such as vaccine research and development, diagnostics, treatments for priority and re-emerging diseases, and health statistics and information. Latin America, in particular, requires a new social compact. This agreement must aim to reduce inequity and increase access to pillars of well-being such as health, education, housing, environmental services, transportation, and so on. It necessitates capable states endowed with the means to provide adequate quantities and quality of public goods, which may necessitate difficult tax reforms. However, participation from the private sector and civil society is also required. Equitable reconstruction requires a community effort. The international community should be included as well. This is because Latin America contains 40% of the world's biodiversity, 30% of its freshwater resources, and 25% of its forests, but only about 8% of the world's population.

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