

**Research Report | 30th Annual Session**

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# **Special Conference 1 on Shifting Power Dynamics in a Globalised World**

**Measures to limit the social, economic and  
political impact of the COVID-19 outbreak**



**MODEL UNITED NATIONS**  
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE HAGUE

**Dex op den Camp**

<b>Forum</b>	Special Conference 1
<b>Issue:</b>	Measures to limit the economical, social and political impact of the COVID-19 outbreak
<b>Student Officer:</b>	Dex op den Camp
<b>Position:</b>	Deputy President

## Introduction

In a growingly interconnected world, the threat of a pandemic has become a question of when, not if. In the past year, we have seen this become a reality. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic caused 497,000 casualties (as of 29/6/20), devastating families, robbing children of their parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters. The virus, which started in Wuhan, China, has rapidly trekked across the world, forcing society as we know it to shut down, causing economic collapse, political imbalance and instability, and changes in society with the social injustices being highlighted by the lockdown period caused by the COVID-19 virus. The progression made by the virus, with multiple epicentres across the globe, has proven to be a menace to society by spreading at high rates, meaning governments had to step in and take emergency precautions. These provisional measures included: social distancing, national borders shutting, personal protective equipment is required to be worn in public, on public transport, and in the vicinity of other people.

Most businesses have had to shut down during the lockdown period. This has led to many people being left jobless, incomeless, and in a position of struggle, not only in terms of health but also on a personal economic scale. The lack of businesses operating, with the lack of investment, has meant that the economy reached stalemates, leading to economic collapse throughout the world. Countries, like New Zealand, have fully shut down borders to ensure that there were no more 'foreign-imported' COVID-19 cases. Many health experts and virologists have argued that the world has been ill-prepared to deal with a pandemic or another health crisis of similar proportion. This has been displayed over and over again throughout 2020, therefore we must suggest the measures which can be taken to limit the economical, social, and political impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak.

## Definition of Key Terms



## Circular Flow Model

A circular economy simply means that businesses and firms produce goods or services, and consumers (households) pay money for them (the goods and services), so that firms can make more goods and services. The flow continues like that, circularly.

## COVID-19

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the newly discovered coronavirus. COVID-19's name is composed of the following: 'CO' standing for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease, discovered in the year 2019. The disease causes mild to moderate respiratory illness. However, those with underlying medical conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer are more likely to develop a more serious illness, which will often ultimately result in death.

## Epidemic

The spread of illness contained within a community or region. Examples of epidemics include: Zika (ZIKV), Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

## Flattening the Curve

“Flattening the curve” is a strategy used in order to reduce the chance of hospitals reaching maximum capacity. Rather than spiking COVID-19 cases at any given moment, overrunning the hospital and healthcare system, measures are put into place to ensure that fewer cases happen at once, hence preventing casualties because of a better-rested frontline.

## Lockdown

Many nations have gone into lockdown. Lockdown applies to international borders, but also the closing of stores, the shutdown of many non-essential services such as barbershops and beauty salons. The lockdown has forced most stores to close beside “essential businesses”, which has had a great influence on the economic crashes. In many countries, the lockdown has also meant that individuals had to stay at home, except for “essential” trips, such as going grocery shopping.

## Pandemic

A pandemic is defined as an epidemic that occurs worldwide, or often in many parts of the world, affecting millions of people. The difference between a pandemic and epidemic is the number of people it affects, and its spread across the world.



## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is equipment that a person wears to protect themselves from illness or injury. In this context, PPE includes face masks and gloves for the general public. The masks stop the virus from being inhaled, meaning the chance of it reaching organs is lower.

## Social Distancing

Social distancing is the act of maintaining a certain amount of distance between individuals to limit the spread of the Coronavirus. The distance between individuals is intended to be preserved with anyone who doesn't live in your household. The actual distance differentiates from government to government. It varies from 1.5 meters to 2 meters.

## Symptoms

A symptom is a deflection in how your body usually functions. For COVID-19 symptoms including coughing, and shortness of breath.

## Vaccine

A vaccine is a substance that stimulates the production of antibodies in your body, making you more resistant, and possibly immune to a disease or illness. A vaccine for COVID-19 is yet to be found, and it is stipulated that one will not be found for a considerable amount of time due to the rapidly mutating nature of the virus. Organizations like the WHO and independent companies are researching and attempting to develop vaccines.

## General Overview

### Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on economies around the world

One of the direct consequences of the pandemic lockdown was that all non-essential businesses had to shut down, which has meant that many owners and employees of those businesses were left jobless, meaning that they couldn't earn any money. This meant that, fundamentally and theoretically, the circular flow of a circular economy was completely ruined, as consumers and businesses couldn't get any income. This means that less money is paid to the government in taxes, which ultimately leads to the fact that economies are crashing.

#### *Restarting and rebuilding the economy*

The unemployment rate is the highest it's been since the 2008-09 financial crisis. Overcoming the pandemic as early as possible is integral to the re-opening of



businesses. If COVID-19 cases approach 0, it means that the slow reintegration of 'regular' life can start taking place. Businesses will be able to reopen, which means that more people will be able to start working once again. In New Zealand, they reached 0 COVID-19 cases in early June, which has meant that stores, professional sports, small businesses, and large businesses have opened back up.

Henceforth, businesses have started producing goods and services again, meaning consumers (households) started purchasing again (with money), so businesses and consumers are working in tandem, like they normally would. This means that great amounts of money will be active in the economy again, allowing for this circular economy to slowly start working again.

### *Creating and finding jobs for the recently unemployed*

During the pandemic, many people who typically worked in offices ended up working from home. This could encourage businesses to explore the possibility to increase job vacancies, including people working from home, rather than having to give up office space to some less-essential jobs. Governments, such as the Dutch government, are putting financial packages together which will ensure the fiscal-aid for companies to help cover labor costs throughout the lockdown period, meaning that companies do not collapse, and that employees don't get fired. This financial aid from the government means that during the return to regularity, companies won't have to focus on re-employing people, but rather on growing once again as a business, which will conclusively result in more people being employed.

### **Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on global politics**

Throughout the lockdown period, many have been isolated inside their homes with very little social interaction, this has led to the magnification of social injustices that different people have to deal with on a daily basis. Prime Ministers and Presidents have been put under the spotlight, with the expectation of real leadership, with good communication to honestly and accurately inform the population of the developing situations. There is a certain level of accountability expected, and different leaders deal with situations in various different ways.

### *Competence of world leaders*

The COVID-19 pandemic came very unexpectedly to many. This meant that the leaders of independent nations had to think quickly in order to protect the lives of their population. Countries like New Zealand and Finland took the advice of the WHO and their own epidemiologists and took the necessary steps to limit the amount of cases and deaths in these countries. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand took



extreme measures to ensure that a strict lockdown was in place, with very secured and closed borders, requiring those who leave their homes to wear personal protective equipment. She has been very clear and very stern in her messages to the New Zealand public, promoting transparency and clarity in terms of a strategy, and making it evident that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. On the extreme contrary, President Trump of the USA has struggled displaying any leadership qualities to his people. He has refused to take advice of his experts, by refusing to keep the country in lockdown, refusing to wear PPE, and refusing to stop shaking hands, meaning he is directly a part of the spread and the COVID-19 problem. He has also been opening states back up prematurely, meaning that there is currently a second spike (wave) of COVID-19 cases happening in the USA.

Given it is such an unusual situation obviously means that different leaders will interpret the issues differently, but it's still their responsibility to show leadership, protect their people, and be a positive influence in the community, rather than blame the WHO and other organizations for your own shortcomings. It is further important that politicians shouldn't try to lift their COVID-19 lockdown and protocol because they want to gain political popularity by letting citizens go free rather than protect them in order to win re-election.

### Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on social situations

The lockdown has caused many people to be starved of social interaction, which is going to be a struggle when reintegrating back into regular life as we once knew it. Communities are extremely different compared to how they were before the lockdown, and measures need to be taken to re-adjust people, and make them feel at home. Many people feel lonely, and being locked inside has reduced any and all social interaction they get, which means that many people will feel even lonelier. Furthermore, many of the key workers (essential workers such as hospital, police) have kids, this means that these children often have felt isolated as their parents were at work while they were often home alone. As we aim to return to normality, we also need to understand the significance of work put in by essential workers.

## Major Parties Involved

### China

China has come under a lot of scrutinies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wuhan, situated in Central China, is recognized as the region where the virus first broke out. 83,513 cases have been reported in the nation, with 4,634 deaths. Other nations, such as President



Trump's United States have been critical of China, claiming that they should have dealt with the outbreak quicker, with more precaution. On the 31st of December 2019, China reported a cluster of "pneumonia cases", which turned out to be the first cases of COVID-19.

### Italy

On the 31st of January 2020, the first COVID-19 cases were detected in Rome. Italy was hit greatly by the COVID-19 crisis, acting largely as a gateway to Europe for cases of COVID-19. Italy, being the first European country struck by the virus, was caught inadequately prepared. This hereby led to the continued spread of COVID-19 throughout the dense population of Europe.

### New Zealand

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern took extreme measures to ensure her country saw the least amounts of infections and deaths they possibly could. The immediate shutdown of borders, the implementation of lockdown and social distancing with strict regulations has meant that the country is one of the first countries which had reached 0 active COVID-19 cases. The measures taken have seen only 1.176 COVID-19 infections, with only 22 deaths recorded. New Zealand set a precedent on how to deal with a life-threatening pandemic. As of the end of June, all active cases of COVID-19 are held in government-managed quarantine facilities (most of which are New Zealand citizens returning home from abroad.)

### The United States of America (USA)

President Trump's White House has been relieving lockdown protocol and requirements throughout May and June, despite COVID-19 cases skyrocketing. The American media and the Trump Administration have been trying to paint COVID-19 as a hoax, despite clear evidence that shows 128,000 casualties and 2.59 Million infections as a result of the COVID-19 virus in the USA. As the American Presidential elections approach in early November, there are concerns that President Trump is opening the nation back up to appeal to voters, rather than protect the lives of millions of people. The United States in late June has seen a massive second spike in cases, with no signs of leadership from the White House, which ultimately makes it appear like the COVID-19 cases in the US will continue spiralling out of control. As time goes on, the accuracy of testing may go down in the United States. President Trump has asked his testing facilities, countless times, to reduce the amount of testing to do to reduce the statistics on how many infections there are. President Trump also has announced that he is cutting the United States funding to the WHO, who were accused of mishandling and not taking a harsher stance towards China and reporting their earliest cases.

### World Health Organization (WHO)



The World Health Organization “works worldwide to promote health, keep the world safe, and serve the vulnerable.” They were originally created by the United Nations, unanimously voted in to serve the world to promote health, and keeping the world safe. During the COVID-19 virus, they have been put under the spotlight, being responsible for: helping countries to prepare and respond, providing accurate information, ensuring vital supplies reach frontline health workers, training and mobilizing health workers, and searching for a vaccine. President Trump has announced that the United States will no longer be funding their approximate 20 percent of the entire WHO funding. This is very detrimental to the entire organization, meaning it will either have to find new sponsors or reduce in size. Finding out a way to continue funding the WHO will be integral in continuing to find the issues which the WHO has to solve every year.

## Timeline of Key Events

31/12/2019	Wuhan Municipal Health Commission reports a cluster of pneumonia cases.	These early pneumonia cases eventually were identified as a novel coronavirus. There were no casualties at this point.
5/01/2020	WHO publishes a “first Disease Outbreak News” on the virus.	This is the WHO’s flagship technical publication to the scientific and public health communities. These publications are also often a referral for global news outlets. China had told WHO the conditions of those infected.
10/01/2020	WHO issued a comprehensive package of technical guidance to help detect, test, and manage cases.	The help was based on SARS and MERS and known modes of transmission of respiratory viruses.
13/01/2020	Thailand reports its first case of COVID-19.	This is the first COVID-19 case detected outside of China.
21/01/2020	USA reports its first case of COVID-19	This would later turn out to be the start of something catastrophic in the US.



29/01/2020	First case detected in the United Arab Emirates	The first case detected in the Middle East.
11/02/2020	The outbreak is recognized as COVID-19	The name was chosen to avoid inaccuracy and to not build stigma against an ethnicity, animal, or region.
25/02/2020	The first case of COVID-19 detected in Africa.	Algeria reports their first case, this forced the Regional Director (appointed especially by Director-General of WHO) to force African nations to prepare for the virus.
07/03/2020	100,000 cases detected around the world.	This is usually the mark at which the WHO realizes the extreme severity of the virus. The WHO urged all countries to stop COVID-19 any cost necessary.
11/03/2020	WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic.	The WHO Director-General calls for and urges all countries to take extreme and urgent action to fight the virus.
4/4/2020	1,000,000 cases worldwide detected.	This is a 10 times increase since March.
29/04/2020	30 countries launch C-TAP	The COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) is an initiative to make vaccines, tests, treatments and other health technologies to fight COVID-19 accessible to all. Originally proposed by the President of Costa Rica, all countries involved voluntarily take part in social solidarity.
29/04/2020	President Trump announced the USA is cutting their funding for WHO	The President of The USA announced that his country is no longer going to fund the WHO after calling the organization out for not holding China accountable for spreading the virus. Furthermore, he believes the WHO helped China hide the dangerous spread of the COVID-19 spread.
08/6/2020	New Zealand announces that it is COVID-19 free.	New Zealand's response to the pandemic could be looked at as an exemplary strategy which the world could learn from as it aims to establish more structured pandemic responses.

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Ebola situation in Western Africa, 18/9/2014, (S/RES/2177\*)
- Concerning Ebola in the DRC, 30/10/2018, (S/RES/2439\*)



- Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), 27/3/2020 (A/74/L.52)
- Global health and foreign policy, 26/3/2020, (A/74/768\*±S/2020/238\*)
- COVID-19 response, 19/5/2020, (A73/CONF./1)

\* Means the treaty was relevant before the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

### The use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE, such as face masks and gloves have been promoted as very helpful in reducing the risk of infection. It is even said that wearing a mask reduces the chance of catching the virus by 50%. Our hands are used constantly. Often, without noticing, we touch our faces. By wearing gloves, not only are we able to touch surfaces without directly catching the virus, but we make sure that we don't touch our face with dirty hands, minimizing the chance of catching the virus significantly.

### The effect of social distancing

Many governments have set COVID-19 laws into place which make sure that individuals keep distance from one another. It varies from country to country, with some governments saying 1.5 meters, and others varying for more, or less distance. The point of doing this is to reduce the physical contact between individuals, hence reducing the chance of infection.

### Flattening the Curve

There has been a common notion that many people will catch the virus, but that governments need to just ensure that hospitals don't exceed their capacity. The strategy ensures that less people are infected at any given point, and that their R number stays down.

## Possible Solutions

### Establish a commission on the prevention and control of epidemics and pandemics



Establishing a commission or a subcommission of a UN or WHO committee would allow for a clearer approach to be designed in the face of another future pandemic. We can also delve into specifics of what specific nations should do, like certain countries need to send emergency response units to help prevent an outbreak. This committee would be held at a conference which occurs biannually, whereby they rate countries on preparedness and whether or not they're growing things like the hospital capacity, and emergency equipment ready.

### ***Agreement about re-integrating***

Countries come together in solidarity to join a bill which would make sure that other nations must approve the easing of regulations before they can actually take place. This would ensure that certain countries with certain leaders don't ease on regulations to gain political popularity in light of upcoming elections.

### **Forcing nations to invest a minimum percentage of GDP into the country**

The point of this is to ensure that governments don't try to hold onto their money, and rather invest into things like infrastructure, schools, and hospitals in order to promote development in the country, which would help create jobs. This ensures for new economic as well as social opportunities to those most affected by Covid-19.

### **Create programs which take unemployed people and educate them to become teachers**

In many countries around the world there's a shortage of teachers, especially properly educated teachers. Given the shortage of jobs, we can educate people how to teach, so that the level of education in countries increases. This also would result in the unemployment rate decreasing, as well as the quality and quantity of qualified teachers increases significantly.

### **Governments provide guarantees to companies to enter into new loans**

Banks will still grant loans to companies because the government is agreeing to pay back the loan if the company fails to re-grow and generate the necessary cash to pay back the loan. Perhaps interest rates on loans could be reduced, to incentivize companies to get loans.

### **Governments can buy shares in public companies**

Governments can buy shares in companies to keep them afloat. If governments invest into these companies, it means that they have a higher chance of survival. It also means that other companies will be attracted to move headquarters to the country (because



of the support of the government), which means that jobs will be created in the country, and in the long run the government will earn money back through taxes.

### **Governments can delay tax payments**

Governments can allow individuals and businesses to delay their tax payments by a set amount of time. This means that companies will be able to focus on investing money into the company to cover labor costs, and to ensure that people won't be fired. It further means that there might be excess money, which can be reinvested back into the company.

### **Governments can subsidize social events (for the consumer)**

Governments can subsidize social events such as concerts and sporting events once the COVID-19 outbreak has passed. What this will do is eliminate the social trauma and social apprehensiveness which many individuals will face. If more people come together, it means that less and less people will be fearful of gathering in groups of people again.

#### ***Making local communities come together***

Many people relied on their neighborhoods as a big source of social interaction. Local governments like municipalities and city mayors need to create small social events in different neighborhoods which will get people out of their houses and back interacting with the communities. Social media pages can be created for communities where they can post updates, post positive messages, and establish a form of communication between each other.

### **Create a platform which supplies clear information**

Governments can create platforms on social media that allow for the easy access to relevant information. What this will do is eliminate the social trauma and social apprehensiveness which many individuals will face. Return to the established safety and health protocols and preventive measures to mitigate against misinformation and undue alarm about the transmission and extent of the outbreak among and between individuals and communities

### **International cooperation in encouraging increased trade**

The governments need to get together to re-negotiate and reset the trade rules which are in place. This not only will promote trade, but it will simply clarify whether or not trade is permitted. Some tariffs and some boundaries need to be lifted in order to allow economies to recover faster. Analysis needs to take place of which trade routes and which goods need to be traded, in order to make sure that the limited trade is used to full efficiency and capacity.

### **Introduce methods which hold governments accountable**



Certain governments have not taken responsibility nor shown any leadership skills. A cornerstone of a good democracy is the government and elected officials taking responsibility for their actions. Introducing methods or requirements a leader is meant to achieve could see accountability and responsibility be increased. These methods could include creating a committee which rates and ranks a leader's response to times of crisis. This committee could be annual, or it could only be instilled in times of crisis. Further, understanding that a free press is a cornerstone of democracy, the media could be given more access to inside developments meaning there is more transparency and trust with the public.

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