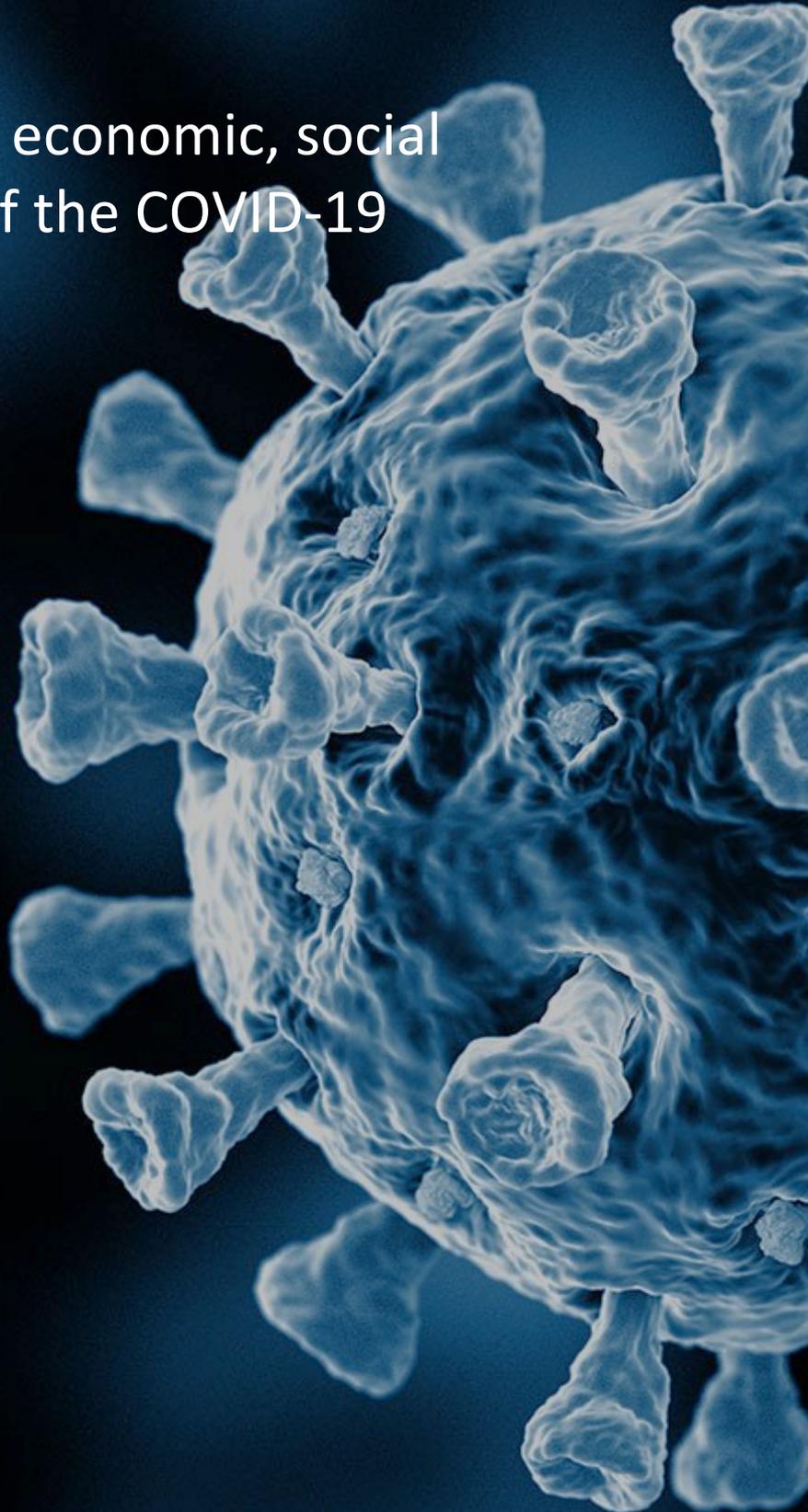


Special Conference 1

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



Forum	Special Conference 1
Issue:	Measures to limit the economic, social and political impact of the COVID-19 outbreak
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Introduction

In a growingly interconnected world, the threat of a pandemic has become a question of when, not if. In the past two years, we have seen this become a reality. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has reached 205 million cases worldwide, forcing the world into lockdown. Despite various preventative measures, this virus has still caused a total of 4.32 million casualties (as of 12/8/21), devastating families around the world. The virus, which originated in Wuhan, China, has trekked across the world, causing economic collapse, political imbalance and instability, societal uncertainty, and an increase in hate crimes. Since its origin, the Covid-19 virus has mutated into variants- the most notable being the more severe Delta variant discovered in India- which have largely aided the rapid spread of the virus. However, through emergency conditions, several companies have been able to develop a vaccine to combat Covid-19 and its variants- the most notable being Pfizer and Moderna. Through national vaccination programs, a total of 4.58 billion vaccine doses have been delivered, with 1.25 billion people or 16% of the global population being fully vaccinated (as of 12/8/21). That being said, despite the increase in vaccination, Covid-19 cases around the world remain ever-prevalent. The progression made by the virus and its variants has proven to be a menace to society by spreading at high rates, having established multiple epicenters across the globe. In an attempt to combat this, governments are obligated to enforce flexible precautions, everchanging due to the unpredictable nature of the virus. These provisional measures were highly diverse, ranging from 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. However, with distrust of governments and big-time media corporations at an all-time high, not all of these preventative measures were effectively followed- forcing governments to either impose stricter restrictions or deal with the devastating consequences of Covid-19.

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.

However, the socio-political effects of the rapidly declining economy are arguably worse. Humanitarian crises around the globe have only worsened such as that caused by hyperinflation in Venezuela. Global mental health due to the isolating nature of lockdown has been deteriorating. Additionally, there has been a rise in anti-Asian hate crimes due to the origin of the virus. 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. Unfortunately, this has been the case repeatedly throughout 2020 and 2021. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we suggest and implement effective measures to limit the economic, 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. As the flow continues circularly, it is imperative that none of these elements are overtly disrupted, as that would bring the entire economy to a halt.

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.

Variant

A variant is defined as an alternate version of its original form, although bearing much of the same qualities. As of now, there are four official variants of Covid-19 recognized by the WHO, named after the Greek alphabet. The first is the Alpha variant discovered in the United Kingdom, which spreads much faster and causes effected individuals to get even more sick. The second Beta variant originating from South Africa, shares many of the same qualities, as does the Gamma variant from Japan/Brazil, however monoclonal antibody treatments are less effective against these variants. Finally, the Delta variant discovered in India is considered highly contagious, spreading a lot quicker than any other version of Covid-19. However, as is the case with all the aforementioned variants, authorized vaccines work well against infection.

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

Lockdown is defined as a policy of restriction, in this case confining people to their homes. There are several stages of lockdown which vary per country and state of emergency, but usually include the shutdown of businesses, travel, and travels. Lockdown applies to international borders, but also the closing of stores, the shutdown of many non-essential services such as barbershops and beauty salons. 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. Four vaccines have been developed by independents and approved by the WHO: BioNtech & Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, Oxford AstraZeneca. Currently, the United States and Europe are predicted to reach vaccine coverage by late 2021. However, despite the availability of vaccines in MEDC countries, there has been a lot of speculation regarding the side-effects of the rapidly developed vaccines—causing some individuals to refrain from being vaccinated. Most notably, the Oxford AstraZeneca was condemned by the European Union for having . Additionally, with the rise of government distrust and the anti-vax movement has further discouraged people from these countries. Contrarily, LEDC countries are only expected to reach vaccine coverage by late 2023, almost 4 years since the beginning of the pandemic. This has brought forth a debate on vaccine nationalism, as well as the question of donating 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, there were COVID-19 cases in early June 2020, 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 contrary, the United States' former president, Donald Trump, started the pandemic by claiming that the virus was a "hoax"; consistently neglecting factual evidence. He initially refused to put the country in lockdown, refusing to wear PPE, and refusing to stop shaking hands- causing many of his supporters to follow his example. He also opened up states prematurely, thus inciting the devastating second spike (wave) of COVID-19 cases in the USA. Given it is such an unusual situation obviously means that different leaders will interpret the issues differently. That being said, it is still their number one



responsibility to set an example as a leader and protect their people, rather than using the pandemic as an opportunity to push their own political agenda.

Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on social situations

The lockdown has caused many people to be starved of social interaction, the effect of which can be seen as the world starts reintegrating back into social situations that have not been possible since prior to the pandemic. Due to the societal shift incited by the economic and political changes, measures need to be taken by governments and communities alike to ensure that the reintegration process is as simple and safe as possible.

Major Parties Involved

China

China has come under a lot of scrutiny during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wuhan, situated in Central China, is recognized as the region where the virus first broke out. 94,161 cases have been reported in the nation, with 4,636 deaths (as of 12/8/2021). 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. China has also been uncooperative in the recent investigation by the UN to see if the Covid-19 strand originated in a coronavirus lab situated in Wuhan. 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

New Zealand, as an isolated country, has largely been considered a pandemic success story. 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 2,913 COVID-19 infections, with only 26 deaths recorded (as of 12/08/21). New Zealand set a precedent on how to deal with a life-threatening pandemic.

Japan

Japan was set to host the 2020 Olympic Games in the nation's capital, Tokyo in June of that year, however due to the insurgence of global cases, it had to be postponed until 2021. However, at the postponed games, fans were not allowed- consequently causing Tokyo to lose even more money. Already over-budget for the construction of the Olympic Village, the losses caused by the postponement and lack of audience are estimated to be \$20 billion. Currently, there have been 1.07 million cases in Japan, with 15,336 deaths.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom was the one of first Western countries to start mass-vaccination programs, giving the Pfizer vaccine an emergency approval in December of 2020. London has been an epicenter of the virus, having gone in multiple lockdowns throughout the pandemic. In the UK, there have been a total of 6.15 million cases (as of 12/08/21), but numbers have started to go down through the mass immunity ensured by the vaccine.



United States of America (USA)

Former President Trump's White House was relieving lockdown protocol and requirements throughout May and June, despite COVID-19 cases skyrocketing. While in office, Trump also announced that he was 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. However, this was undone by President Joe Biden, who was elected in November 2020. Unlike his predecessor, President Biden has been set on enforcing precautionary measures including but not limited to: stimulus checks, a 100 day mask mandate, increasing testing facilities and vaccination programs. The total number of cases in the USA is 36.3 million with 619 thousand deaths (as of 12/08/21),.

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 approving vaccines. Currently, the WHO has approved the following vaccines: . As an international, UN organization, it is considered the primary source of information regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

Timeline of Key Events



31/12/2019	Wuhan Health Commission reports a cluster of pneumonia cases.	Municipal Commission of	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.
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.
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.
28/9/2020	Global deaths reach 1 million.		In only 10 months, the devastating effect of the virus has become apparent. However, experts say that this is an underestimate, as there is no way to actually discern how many have perished.



11/10/2020	1 million cases are reached in three days.	This is a record seen through the resurgence of COVID-19 in Europe, the United States, Brazil, and India.
2/12/2020	The United Kingdom approves Pfizer vaccine.	In a state of emergency, the Pfizer vaccine gets approved. After approval, the UK's vaccination program is implemented shortly after this- being the first Western country to do so.
18/12/2021	The USA approves the Moderna vaccine.	Through this approval, millions more are given the accessibility to the vaccine.
14/1/2021	The WHO launches an investigation	The WHO investigators land in China in order to learn more about the origins of the virus. Later, it is deduced that it is "very likely" to have been spread through an animal.
17/04/2021	The global tally of Covid-19 deaths reaches 3 million.	Again, experts say that this is an underestimate, as there is no way to actually discern how many have perished.

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)
- International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19, 20/4/2020, (A/RES/74/274)
- 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 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.

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.

Encouraging interaction within the local community

Many people rely on their neighborhood environment as a noteworthy 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. These events can be free or subsidized by the local government in order to promote attendance. 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 and government leaders can create official platforms on social media that allow for the easy access to relevant information. What this will do is eliminate the misinformation and disinformation that individuals face, as well as make relevant information easily accessible. If this is already in place, governments can create separate accounts specifically for tourists, so that they are aware of the country's Covid-19 protocols upon visitation.

International cooperation in encouraging increased trade

International governments should assemble to re-negotiate and reset the trade rules which are in place in order to promote economic activity. This not only will promote trade, but it will simply clarify whether or not trade is permitted. It is imperative that tariffs and boundaries are to be lifted as soon as it is deemed safe by the WHO, 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

A cornerstone of a democracy is that government and elected officials should take accountability for their actions, which has not always been the case in this pandemic. Introducing more government transparency could increase accountability of these officials, as well as engaging in productive communication with their citizens through social media. Further understanding that a free press is also cornerstone of democracy, the media could be given more access to inside developments. International pressure through economic sanctions could also be used in dire situations when leaders demonstrate themselves to be incompetent.

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