

Policy Brief:
**COVID-19 in an
Urban World**

The remarkable growth of cities in recent decades has presented the most pressing challenges. It has also presented

With an estimated 90 percent of all reported COVID-19 cases,¹ urban areas have become the epicentre of the pandemic. The size of their populations is a significant factor in this.

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**Addressing COVID-19 in an increasingly urban-
ized world requires a focus on how urbanization
shapes impacts, responses and longer-term
recovery.**

and economic hazards and shocks, while safe-
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- **Ensure communication campaigns reach all urban communities:**

- **Support local governments in avoiding disruptions of essential public services:**
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- Sustainable economic development strategies:

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- It is important that **social protection schemes also serve the most marginalised**, regardless

- **Build future-ready cities:**

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tors with potential for high ecological trans-

collection and management, decentralised

- **Urban compactness could be a goal while de-densification could be resisted:**

I. Tackling inequalities and development deficits

A. IMPACTS

COVID-19 is widening existing spatial, social, and economic inequalities in cities, making the virus more harmful in a self-perpetuating negative spiral.

²⁵ It has become clear that

and works, gender, age, pre-existing health

facilities, transportation and clean water.

Limited access to urban healthcare and basic services is undermining COVID-19 responses.

lack access to water and sanitation facilities,

one billion people

settlements, often lacking reliable and



Equitable access to health services helps to protect lives.

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II. Strengthening the capacities of local actors, particularly local governments

A. IMPACTS

COVID-19 has highlighted the critical role of local governments as front-line responders in crisis response, recovery and rebuilding. This is

of contacts, establishing additional health, and

The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially reduced local and subnational governments' revenues and constrained budgets, as

Local government capacity to deliver essential services and infrastructure are critically constrained.

pending plastic bag bans or other restrictions

problematic for workers who cannot work

The pandemic has also resulted in innovative local government solutions for COVID-19 response and provision of services.

information and awareness campaigns, and

51 _____

52 _____

53 _____

54 _____



Increase in waste



B. SOLUTIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

National governments could promote more

Local governments' continued provision of essential public services should be a priority in cities.

**INNOVATIVE POLICIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC SERVICES**

83%

dedicated _____

III. Pursuing a resilient, inclusive and green economic recovery

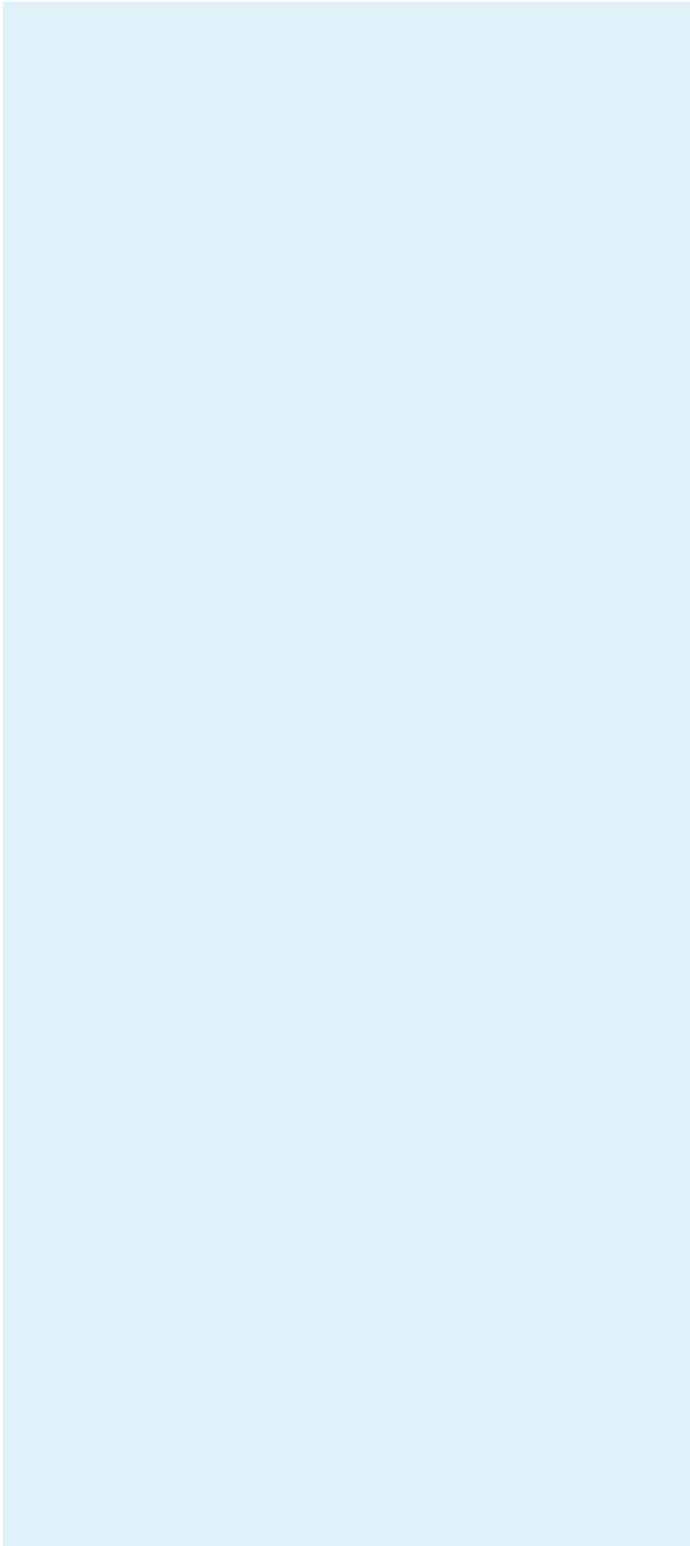
A. IMPACTS

COVID-19 has interrupted global value chains (GVCs), devastated the hospitality, travel and tourism industries, and disrupted the global economy, likely causing the deepest recession since the Second World War.

prises in the world.⁶⁴

eaten less.





Reforming social protection programmes

extended social registries to expand social assistance to parts of the informal

programmes to which informal workers

Source:

from the national social assistance scheme

80

COVID-19 recovery and rebuilding in cities could prioritise green, gender-responsive and sustainable pathways. -

towards a lower-carbon, more resilient path-

sectors with potential for ecological transition

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Conclusion: The future of cities

is capable of rapid transformation and adaptation. **Avoiding a return to the pre-pandemic status quo and instead transforming cities globally for future resilience, inclusion, green and economic sustainability has never been more urgent.**

An inclusive urban future is necessary for resilience. The pandemic has exacerbated existing

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ommendations can be adapted to local con-
strengths and challenges of different cities and
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