Subregional Overview of COVID-19 Impact

North-East Asia Multistakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development Goals

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North-East Asia’s SDG Progress and Preparedness for COVID-19
Remarkable progress on SDGs 1 to 4 and 6 to 9

Slow progress on equality (SDGs 5 and 10), environment (SDGs 11 to 15) and partnership (SDGs 16 & 17)

Decade of Action for accelerating the implementation of the SDGs is more urgent and necessary in view of the COVID-19 pandemic

Note: Russian Federation is included in the analysis.
Source: Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway.
### Level of Preparedness in North-East Asia to COVID-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low to High</th>
<th>Health System</th>
<th>Access to Basic Services</th>
<th>Connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>Hospital beds</td>
<td>Government health expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRK</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Recent figures suggest higher mobile phone subscription in DPRK, with 56% and 48% of men and women aged 15 to 49 subscribed to mobile phone respectively.

Source: UNDP.
Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the SDGs

Highlight on three areas

(i) Health crisis
(ii) Plunge in economic activities
(iii) Loss of jobs and livelihoods
Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 on North-East Asia
Health Crisis

Confirmed cases
Global: >45 million
North-East Asia: >1.8 million

Deaths
Global: >1.1 million
North-East Asia: >34,000

Note: Data as of 31 October 2020.
Source: WHO.
Challenges Faced by Vulnerable Populations

- **Women**: Greater exposure to virus and less access to health services due to gender discrimination

- **Older persons and persons with disabilities**: Vulnerable to virus, with higher risk of serious illness and death from the COVID-19 disease

- **Migrants and refugees**: Compromised access to health and other basic services due to legal, language, or other barriers

- **Children**: Less able to access standard care given the overwhelmed healthcare system and school closures

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**Number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19**

Note: Data as of 31 October 2020.
Source: WHO.
Plunge in Economic Activities

REAL GDP GROWTH IN 2020 (Q1&2)

Significant impact on transport, trade, manufacturing and services industry (disruptions of supply chain)

Opportunities in rapid adoption of digital technology
Loss of Jobs and Livelihoods

- **Young people**: Larger proportion of part-time jobs and higher unemployment rate, along with disruptions of education and training caused by COVID-19

- **Women**: Overrepresented in the service sectors that have been severely affected by the pandemic, combined with increased burden of unpaid care work

- **Older persons and persons with disabilities**: More likely to lose their job and face greater difficulties re-entering the labour market after the crisis

- **Workers in MSMEs and the informal sector as well as migrants and refugees**: Greater risks of job and income loss, with little financial cushion and support by labour law / social protection

- **Emerging challenge**: Polarization of jobs and increase in wage inequality amid rapid digitization and automation
North-East Asia’s Responses to COVID-19
Key Healthcare Measures

- Strengthening and optimizing health system capacity
- Ensuring adequate and equal access to diagnostics and treatment as well as medical supplies
- Leveraging technology to combat COVID-19 (e.g., contact tracing, telehealth, diagnosis and screening of patients, vaccine development)

Source: ESCAP based on information available up to 31 August from IMF Policy Responses to COVID-19 and various national sources and news.
Reigniting Growth

Monetary and fiscal stimulus

• Interest rate cut
• Bond purchase
• Loan expansion
• Exemption of taxes/ delay of tax deadline
• Cash payments
• Targeted supports to the hard-hit sectors
• Investment on digital and green recovery

Source: UNESCAP based on information available up to 31 August from IMF Policy Responses to COVID-19 and various national sources and news.
Enhancing Social Protection

• Direct cash transfers
• Expansion of unemployment benefits
• Job retention scheme
• Deferral on tax payments, utility waver, and rental subsidies
• Additional social assistance
• Vocational re-skilling training programmes
• Targeted supports to the vulnerable groups
Policy Trajectories and Priority Areas

1. Healthcare services and containment measures

2. Relief measures to support the economy and the people

3. Investment in economic recovery and sustainable development

COVID-19 related measures as a percentage of GDP

Note: Figures as of 19 October 2020.
Source: ADB.
Subregional Strategies to Build Back Better
Collective SDG Actions to Build Back Better

Scaling up health emergency preparedness and response

Supporting safe and resilient transport and trade connectivity

Promoting inclusive digital transformation

Spurring sustainable and green recovery
Thank You

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