

We are pleased to publish the final issue in 2020 of the *World Journal of Science, Technology and Sustainable Development (WJSTSD)*. This final issue in 2020 is published at a very difficult time for the entire globe. Although global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic started in December 2019 in China but since then nearly the whole world has been in lockdown.

At present, more so than ever before, the international community is confronted with many challenges on its path to compact the coronavirus pandemic in the 21st century. Globalization brings us into contact with one another, but it also strengthens profound divisions in terms of our capacity to deal with this pandemic and at the same time achieve sustainable economic development. And although this global pandemic started on December 2019 it is “only” last week we have received positive news about the successful results from leading research hubs across the world for a possible vaccine for the coronavirus before the end of the year.

However, despite this great news about the vaccine, our search to explore the impact of coronavirus pandemic on the global efforts to achieve the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD) will continue. More specifically, this issue and the forthcoming issues in 2021 aims to discuss and explore various approaches and different ways planned by governments which can contribute to enhance and support the implementation of Agenda 2030 after the coronavirus pandemic across the world.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has turned the entire world into ghost new world disrupting everything in our daily life and shutting the entire countries and cities across the globe. COVID-19 is considered by many people as the first biological world war ever experienced in modern times with immeasurable impact on our normal life. However, despite the devastating impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the entire world, at present more than ever before in human history, there is an urgent need for wake-up call for all countries across the world to find a path to SD. And although still early but many people and international organisations already predicting that the coronavirus pandemic will have more severe impact than all previous outbreaks including severe acute respiratory syndrome and other deadly health epidemics.

United Nations Agenda 2030

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. The conference will critically address the question of how countries can achieve the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda during the COVID-19 pandemic and to provoke forward thinking on developing new methods and approaches to suit the challenges and opportunities of this new era of global lockdown. These new approaches call for actions to create different appropriate ways of doing things and of doing new things that will be essential to solve our future problems and help in the implementation of the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. Systematic search for opportunities is important for helping to ameliorate the many problems facing countries. We must therefore produce, consume and organise ourselves differently.

Remote learning

Due to the global lockdown, everyone realised and appreciated the urgent necessity to look at different ways of learning. In the UK and all over the world, universities had been using distant learning in some form for the past 10 months as a means of keeping students engaged with their studies.



The key question to be critically addressed is “*how countries can effectively implement various policies and strategies for online learning and teaching*”. We also need to provoke forward thinking on developing new methods and approaches to suit the challenges and opportunities of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in the new era of digital revolution. These new approaches will call for actions to implement different appropriate ways of teaching and learning and of doing new things that will be essential to remote learning and help in the implementation of a comprehensive online learning platforms particularly in developing countries (DCs). All countries particularly those DCs must therefore consider teaching and learning differently from the old face-to-face classic approach on campus. We also need to recognise and encourage the role of the private sector together with the public sector in implementing online learning.

From the DCs perspectives, although the impact of COVID-19 pandemic is affecting countries across the world, but DCs are facing more additional challenges and difficulties. *First*, teaching and learning content is not readily available in most DCs and therefore several governments have started various initiatives to ensure that e-content is available. *Secondly*, given their limited experience with online learning, most DCs are not very familiar with the appropriate and most effective teaching and learning methods or platforms to be used online. *Third*, the online infrastructure availability in most DCs is a big issue facing their countries to ensure an uninterrupted Wi-Fi supply as well as the availability of electricity particularly in Africa. Fourth, most of the e-learning platforms and application in DCs are not very advance and mostly are Beta platforms and/or applications. *Finally*, the capacity building and training for staff members in most DCs is a very critical issue facing teachers and students when using an online learning technologies and applications.

Role of youth and women

The entire concept of SD is about the future and the future is all about the children and youth! Youth population is growing rapidly in all regions of the world and World Association for Sustainable Development (WASD) is very keen to understand the children and youth perspectives and expectations for their future. Women across the world have an untapped potential as a primary mover of greater development within their countries and regions. Their role is very crucial for compacting COVID-19 and in dealing with its serious socio-economic impacts on individuals and communities, but challenges remain.

WASD has been very successful in encouraging the engagement of children, youth and women from across the world in its various activities to compact COVID-19. In doing so, WASD managed to make the voice of all children, youth and women heard and consequently enabling the decision-makers to consider those views and ideas in their big decisions regarding COVID-19 pandemic. WASD strongly believe that children, youth and women should be the cornerstone of any strategy by all governments and policymakers. We must listen to our children, youth and women and more importantly how we can help them with their future employment plans and aspirations.

Role of the diaspora

The collaboration between the diaspora and those working within the country of origin offers several opportunities and contributes to compact COVID-19. Building constructive relationships between the diasporas and countries of origin require that diasporas be treated not as a mere resource, but as partners in the countries of origin efforts to compact COVID-19. It has long been argued that diasporas will be most interested in contributing to SD efforts when they have a sense of belonging in relation to their country of origin. Therefore, it is very important to establish trust between diasporas and governments in the country of origin. In doing so, governments need to invest in identifying their diasporas

abroad and in understanding their skills and interests. Many sustainability problems can only be tackled by connecting the diaspora with those working within the country of origin such as dealing with the deadly consequences of COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, building capacity in country of origin is necessary for compacting COVID-19 and it is critical to turn the diaspora into a positive tool for SD as well as serving as role models for the youth in the country of origin.

Conclusions, recommendations and the way forward

The deadly consequences of coronavirus pandemic, will of no doubt send shocking warnings for all governments to realise, accept and accomplish their natural and ascribed duties to continue their progress to achieve the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda.

All governments must confront new realities rapidly manifesting themselves in the large number of people losing their lives due to COVID-19. Business as usual will not suffice and therefore governments need to be expansively refocussed in order to overcome the many steps back as a result of the coronavirus. More importantly, all governments need to undertake robust national and international fast-track policies and strategies to achieve the 2030 Agenda. It is now clearly recognised that innovation and knowledge, as well as being a central driver of economic growth, are also recognised as very important tools to help achieve SD.

For all countries across the world particularly DCs to succeed in the post-COVID-19 era, all youth and women must be equipped with all necessary skills and capabilities to manage and adapt to future challenges.

Meanwhile, with less than 10 years left for all countries to achieve the UN 17 SDGs, many social scientists argue that COVID-19 pandemic is enforcing many governments to take very difficult choices and to make massive behavioural change by adopting various innovative and creative solutions to problems. These massive behavioural changes could help individuals and countries to achieve the 17 SDGs.

We strongly believe, we have invested a lot in technology; it is time now to invest in the people who will use this technology. We should work together, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender and political aspects, towards developing and educating those who use the technology to get optimum use of it.

We would like to congratulate the authors for their valuable contributions and it is hoped that the ensemble of papers presented in this issue will help to stimulate debate amongst scholars, researchers and policymakers that will ultimately lead to a more integrated and multidisciplinary approach to policy design. We are especially grateful to all reviewers for graciously offering their invaluable comments, suggestions and criticisms which greatly enhanced the quality of this issue of *WJSTSD*.

Finally, we hope you find this issue of the journal to be interesting and thought provoking and look forward to receiving your valuable submission and comments so we can continue to serve your needs to the very best of our ability.

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