

COVID-19: Impact on institutions

Examples of responses to enhance transparency, participation and accountability

Expert meeting for addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 Virus on global governance
June 24th, 2020

David Le Blanc, UN DESA

DESA Policy Brief #74

- Brief examines the impact of COVID-19 on national institutions
- focuses on a few dimensions of institutions highlighted in SDG 16

16.5 Substantially reduce **corruption** and bribery in all their forms

16.6 Develop effective, **accountable** and **transparent** institutions at all levels

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, **participatory** and **representative** decision-making at all levels

16.10 Ensure public **access to information...**

Resilient institutions in times of crisis: transparency, accountability and participation at the national level key to effective response to COVID-19

National institutions are strongly impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19). The pandemic has disrupted to varying extents the regular functioning of state institutions, such as parliaments and justice systems, and affected key government functions and processes, undermining the effectiveness of government action. The need to respond quickly and with drastic measures has also created additional risks for institutional processes and organisations. Beyond individual institutions, the pandemic has increasingly affected whole institutional systems and the way public institutions interact with people.

This brief discusses the challenges of the COVID-19 emergency along key dimensions of national institutions highlighted in Sustainable Development Goal 16 (transparency, access to information, accountability and anti-corruption, participation and engagement). It also explores how government institutions and civil society have innovatively responded to ensure that transparent, accountable, responsive and equitable mechanisms continue to govern the functioning of government processes and organizations, thus increasing the resilience of institutions to shocks such as the coronavirus pandemic.

THE CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC HAS IMPACTED KEY DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

The coronavirus pandemic has affected national institutions through different channels. In response to the epidemic, temporary changes in rules and processes have been implemented by governments in order to protect people at risk and ensure the delivery of critical functions while the crisis lasts. Such changes impact the relationships between people and the government in multiple ways.

The pandemic has created major disruptions to the functioning of governments as a whole and of specific public functions, including policy making, the provision of basic services, law enforcement and the functioning of the justice system.

Summary

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic presents a risk to key dimensions of national institutions highlighted in Sustainable Development Goal 16 (in terms of limiting transparency and access to information, eroding safeguards to accountability including integrity violations, fraud and corruption, and restricting participation and engagement). However, these institutional dimensions are also critical to providing a resilient response to the crisis. In many countries, governments, accountability institutions and civil society are innovating to mitigate institutional disruptions while ensuring an effective response to the pandemic. In the aftermath of the crisis, drawing lessons in terms of the resilience of national institutions will be a key undertaking in order to ensure effective and accountable government.

The imperative to limit contagion affects the capacity of the state to deliver its functions. Restrictions and social distancing measures can challenge the working methods and processes of institutions such as parliaments or courts, where face-to-face meetings are required, creating obstacles for the regular conduct of business and therefore, potentially undermining legislative oversight and law-making, limiting judicial enforcement or affecting citizens' access to justice, among other consequences. Specific institutions of government (such as the police or the education system) may be directed to adapt their procedures in response to the crisis. Restrictions taken in response to COVID-19 can also negatively affect the possibilities for public institutions to engage with civil society.

Emergency responses as well as measures to limit the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, such as stimulus packages, can also increase risks to accountability and integrity, including through greater opportunities for fraud and corruption.

Finally, in the context of the epidemic, some governments have effected broader, structural changes in the

Main takeaways

- The spread of the virus and government responses have impacted key dimensions of national institutional systems
 - transparency
 - accountability
 - participation and engagement
 - anti-corruption
- In many countries, governments, accountability institutions and civil society are innovating to mitigate negative impacts on institutions while ensuring an effective response to the pandemic
- Key role of Internet in all this
- Crisis has shown high relevance of SDG 16 principles for institutions to analyzing what is happening and providing a resilient response to the crisis

Similar concerns and responses around the world

IS IT TRUE?

I heard that helicopters will spray cities with disinfectant at night to clean them. Is this true?

No. The viral message on social media that the government will be spraying pesticides from

INFORMACIÓN LEGAL

SOBRE >>> CIRCULACIÓN EN BARRIOS POPULARES

INFORMACIÓN LEGAL

PARA >>> PERSONAS DISCAPACITADAS

The 10 biggest public-sector coronavirus contracts awarded without tender

Edenred with Department for Education
Voucher scheme for children on free school meals **£234m**

Procesos de Contratación Pública en la CGR

para atender la emergencia sanitaria COVID-19

Actualizado al 31 de marzo 2020

11 Total de gestiones

9 Gestiones autorizadas

2 Gestiones rechazadas

Bilan des travaux de la commission des dons en nature au cours de la semaine du 20 au 26 avril 2020

بالوقاية
نحميو رواحنا

La commission des dons du Ministère de la Santé a le plaisir de vous présenter au travers du tableau suivant les résultats de ses travaux au cours de la semaine du 20 au 26 avril 2020 et remercie à cette occasion tous les donateurs, qu'ils soient des particuliers, des entreprises ou des associations, et leur promet de bien gérer leurs dons et de les orienter vers les structures de santé publique selon leur désir et selon les exigences de la stratégie de lutte contre le Coronavirus

Par ailleurs et afin de renforcer l'esprit de transparence et de confiance, tous les donateurs peuvent quand ils le souhaitent suivre le cheminement de leurs dons auprès de la commission.

Regio unde

Gran

Rese

Tropi

Luna

Administración	No. de gestión	Fecha	Objeto Resumen	Estado	Monto en mill. de colones
1. Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP)	2020001656-1	Mar 25, 2020	Alimentos	Autorizada	10K
2. Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social (CCSS)	2020001578-2	Mar 18, 2020	Equipo médico	Autorizada	5.4K
3. Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social (CCSS)	2020001578-2	Mar 17, 2020	Equipo médico	Autorizada	2.4K
4. Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social (CCSS)	2020001578-3	Mar 28, 2020	Equipo médico	Autorizada	1.2K

Examples of institutional innovations along SDG 16 principles

	Risk / negative impact	Innovations observed
Transparency	Lack of transparency on the spread of the virus, on government response	Single government portal for COVID-19 information, with localized data, policies, services, etc., also at city level Campaigns to combat misinformation about the virus
Participation	Parliaments cannot function	Legislatures have amended their plenary procedures to allow virtual discussions Exchange of experiences through IPU, regional organizations
Engagement	Engagement made more difficult by confinement	Participatory response strategies, including collective development of digital tools and solutions (e.g., through crowdsourcing, hackathons) Use of social media to connect with people Citizen-led community responses to inform the public on the risks and provide essential services such as food and care
Anti-corruption	Corruption risks associated with emergency procurement, recovery packages	SAls have created dedicated programs to monitor and platforms to publish expenditures on emergency programs Guidelines for emergency procurement

Thank you

https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/document_gem/undesapolicy-brief/