



Concept Note

How the Covid-19 Crisis Challenges Resilience and Functionality of Multi-level Governance Systems in Asia

The outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis has significant (and still escalating) impacts on social and economic development in Asia. A recent report by the UN’s Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP)¹ has highlighted the economic implications of quarantines, travel restrictions, lockdown of cities and suspension of production activities which greatly reduce demand in service sectors (such as tourism, retail, hospitality, and civil aviation), decrease demand for commodities (such as oil), disrupt international supply chains, and jeopardize economic activities and employment opportunities in the manufacturing industry. ADB’s Asian Development Outlook Supplement of June 2020 predicted that developing Asia will barely grow in 2020 due to effects of the Covid-19 pandemic; the expected 0.1% growth rate would be the region’s slowest growth rate in six decades. A V-shaped recovery seems unlikely; “sovereign and financial crises cannot be ruled out, and social unrest is possible.”² Similarly, OECD expects gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2020 to decline by 2.9% on average in emerging Asia (ASEAN, China and India).³

Beside the macro-economic implications of Covid-19, there are socio-economic and potentially political implications which are more difficult to capture and to extrapolate. The crisis has shown the precarious situation of workers in the informal sector, as illustrated by the fate of migrant workers in India, but also elsewhere. Covid-19 has put tremendous pressure on public finances as governments struggle to provide relief to individuals, and subsidies and financial support to the private sector. Responding to the crisis has also been a test for the resilience and functionality of existing arrangements in multi-level governance systems, be it the clarity of mandates of each level (national – provincial/state – local), the distribution of revenue sources, the effectiveness of existing coordination and information sharing systems, or the functionality of oversight arrangements to ensure compliance by sub-national authorities with national-level instructions and policies.

In this context, ADB, the Secretariat of the *Development Partners’ Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance* (DeLoG), the *Local Governance Initiative and Network* (LOGIN) Asia, and GIZ (German Development Cooperation), represented by the *Capacity Development Support to Governance Programme* (Nepal) and the *Transformation of Administration* (TRANSFORMASI) Programme

¹ UN-ESCAP (2020). The Impact and Policy Responses for COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok.

² Asian Development Bank (2020). Asian Development Outlook Supplement. Manila. p.4

³ OECD (2020). Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2020 – Update: Meeting the Challenges of COVID-19. Paris.

(Indonesia), will jointly conduct two webinars exploring the implications of the Covid-19 crisis to multi-level governance systems in the region.

Webinar 1:

Policies and Strategies Post Covid-19: How to strengthen Multi-level Systems in Asia

Date: Wednesday, 2 September 2020, 2 pm CEST (= 8 pm Manila time, 8 am EDT/New York)

The first webinar will look at policy and strategy challenges for Asia's multi-level systems. Key questions include:

- How can political, fiscal and administrative features of multi-level systems be improved to cope with the medium-term implications of Covid-19?
- What are appropriate support strategies by regional and international organisations?
- How can we improve the exchange and mutual learnings between DMC on lessons learnt from the crisis?
- What will be implications for realising the 2030 Agenda in the region, and for the efforts to localize SDGs?
- How can developed economies (i.e. OECD countries) support emerging economies in efforts to recover?

Panellists of this first webinar will include

- **Bruno Carrasco**, Chief of Governance Thematic Group Thematic Advisory Service Cluster, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, Asian Development Bank
- **Dorothee Allain-Dupré**, Head, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- **Dr. Gabe Ferrazzi, University of Gulph (Canada):** Multilevel Governance in Combating COVID-19: Emerging Lessons

Moderation: Christian Luy, Coordinator, DeLoG Secretariat

Please click [here](#) to register for the webinar.

Webinar 2:

Coping with the Crisis: Multi-level Systems in Action

Date: Thursday, 10 September 2020, 2 pm CEST (= 8 pm Manila time, 8 am EDT/New York)

The second webinar will look at practical experiences of different countries in the region in responding to the covid-19 situation. Key questions will include

- When responding to the Covid-19 crisis, were the legal mandates of each level sufficiently clear? What was the role of local governments in crisis response/management? Did each level know what it was supposed to do? Is there a need for a more thorough functional assignment analysis in this field?
- What has been (and still is) the actual role of the different levels of government and administration (national – intermediate – local) in responding to the crisis? Why are institutional responses and setups on the local level so important for the COVID-19 crisis response?
- How effective and efficient were existing mechanisms and processes of coordination and communication between levels of government and administration?

- To what extent did the governments use digital tools for data gathering and sharing, for sharing information & and raising awareness raising, for tracking Covid-19 cases and infection chains?

Panellists of this second webinar will include

- **Dr. Dhawal Shumshere Rana**, Mayor of Nepalgunj, Nepal
- **Lee Jae-joon, Mayor**, Goyang City, Korea
- **Sarada Muraleedharan (Ms) (IAS)**, Principal Secretary, Local Self-Government Department, Kerala (India)
- **Ahmed Javed Qazi**, Secretary Local Government and Community Development, Punjab (Pakistan) (tbc)
- **Prof. Dr. Diah Natalisah, MBA**, Deputy for Public Service Delivery, Ministry for Administrative Reform, Indonesia

Moderation: Bruno Carrasco, Chief of Governance Thematic Group/Thematic Advisory Service Cluster, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, Asian Development Bank

Please click [here](#) to register for the webinar.

Target audience and dissemination channels

Target audience of the webinars include senior officials of DMC governments, ADB and OECD staff, representatives of DeLoG member organisations, development practitioners, and representatives of local government associations. The webinars will be announced using the existing information channels of DELOG, LOGIN, GIZ and ADB (website, newsletters, social media). Information will also be shared with relevant regional networks, such as ASPAC-UCLG, and the CLGF.