

Policy Brief 2 – Strengthening the International Response to Complex Global Shocks – An Emergency Platform

ABOUT: Building on the proposals presented in Our Common Agenda report, the Secretary-General (SG) is publishing a [series](#) of Policy Briefs over 2023 to serve as inputs into the preparations for the Summit of the Future (SOTF). The Policy Brief on an [Emergency Platform](#) is the second one in that series.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Emergency Platform would not be a new permanent or standing body or institution but a set of protocols. It would be triggered automatically in crises of sufficient scale and magnitude, regardless of the type or nature of the crisis involved. Once activated, it would bring together leaders from Member States (MS), the UN system, key country groupings, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, subject-specific industries or research bodies, and other experts. This would allow the convening role of the UN to be maximized in the face of crises with global reach.

Definition of a Global Shock – A complex global shock can be broadly understood as an event with severely disruptive consequences for a significant proportion of the global population that leads to secondary impacts across multiple sectors (for example, COVID-19). Not every crisis or shock should be classified as complex or global. Local, national or regional shocks that do not have global consequences would not necessarily be included. Complex global shocks could include,

- ❖ Large-scale climatic or environmental events that cause major socioeconomic disruptions and/or environmental degradation
- ❖ Future pandemics with cascading secondary impacts
- ❖ High-impact events involving a biological agent (deliberate or accidental)
- ❖ Events leading to disruptions to global flows of goods, people or finance
- ❖ Large-scale destructive and/or disruptive activity in cyberspace/disruptions to global digital connectivity
- ❖ A major event in outer space that causes severe disruptions to one or several critical systems on Earth
- ❖ Unforeseen risks (“black swan” events)

Current Deficiencies – We lack the necessary forums at the global level to tackle multidimensional threats with a multidimensional response. Our global response is too often hampered by the absence of incentives for multilateral entities to contribute to collective results, and accountability mechanisms and mandates that do not encourage collaboration and joined-up efforts. We are often too slow to convene the right actors at the right level, and we lack the means to collaborate and coordinate across sectors and communicate clearly on what needs to be done.

PROPOSAL: The SG and the UN system be given standing authority by the General Assembly (GA) to convene and operationalize automatically an EP in the event of a future complex global shock of sufficient scale, severity and reach.

Key Principles of the Emergency Platform:

- ✚ Flexibility and Agility
- ✚ Solidarity and Equity
- ✚ Strengthened Coordination
- ✚ Interdisciplinary and Multisectoral
- ✚ Inclusive and Multi-stakeholder
- ✚ Ability to secure commitments and hold actors to account
- ✚ Leverage existing operational and coordination response mechanisms

Decision to Convene – The SG would decide when to convene an Emergency Platform. In advance of the decision, the SG would consult with – the President of the GA; the President of the Security Council (as appropriate); relevant national authorities and/or regional organizations; relevant UN entities, specialized agencies, IFIs and other multilateral institutions and agencies that have been mandated by MS to respond to sector-specific crises.

The factors that would be considered as part of the decision to convene an Emergency Platform could include – severity of a crisis; reach of a crisis; complexity of a crisis; and existing coordination and operational response mechanism.

High-Level Objectives:

- High-level political leadership
- Ensure equity and solidarity in the international response
- Coherent multilateral response
- Inclusive and networked multilateralism
- Advocacy and strategic communications
- Secure commitments and hold key actors to account for supporting the global response

Time Frame – An Emergency Platform should initially be convened for a finite period to respond to a specific shock. At the end of that period, the SG could extend the work of an Emergency Platform if required, but it would not become a standing body or entity.

Organizational Matters – Once a decision has been taken to convene and operationalize an Emergency Platform, multilateral entities with technical expertise relevant to the nature of the complex global shock would be requested to provide staff secondments to support the work of the Emergency Platform. Seconded staff would constitute a task team responsible for operationalizing the Emergency Platform and would provide all necessary forms of support for the duration of an Emergency Platform.

Upon activation of an Emergency Platform, initial operating costs would be met from existing resources. Thereafter, UN entities and other relevant actors would be asked to provide support for the day-to-day running of the Emergency Platform, including through the secondment of technical experts. In addition, there could be a requirement to mobilize financial resources for specific response activities, subject to relevant factors including the type of shock, the appropriateness of existing sector-specific financing tools and the scale of the crisis. Upon convening and operationalizing an Emergency Platform, the SG would provide regular reporting to the GA on the activities of the Emergency Platform.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MS:

- ❖ Recognize that a strengthened international response to complex global shocks must be flexible in order to respond to different types of global shocks, promote equity and solidarity, ensure coherence of the multilateral system, be multisectoral and interdisciplinary and allow for the participation of relevant multi-stakeholder actors, and must align with existing coordination and response mechanisms;
- ❖ Decide that the SG has a standing authority to automatically convene and operationalize an Emergency Platform in the event of complex global shocks of significant scale, severity and reach;
- ❖ Decide that the Emergency Platform would not be a standing body or institution but a set of protocols that could be activated in the event of a complex global crisis;
- ❖ Decide that the SG will convene the Emergency Platform in response to a complex global shock in consultation with the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council, if appropriate, the relevant national authorities and regional organizations and the relevant UN entities, specialized agencies, IFIs and other multilateral institutions that are mandated to respond in the event of sector-specific crises;
- ❖ Decide that, in the event of a complex global shock, the SG is requested to convene an Emergency Platform with the objective of –

- i. Providing high-level political leadership by convening relevant actors to respond to complex global shocks;
- ii. Ensuring an international response on the basis of solidarity and equity;
- iii. Leading the multilateral system's response to a complex global shock to ensure a coherent and coordinated response;
- iv. Leading a multi-stakeholder forum that can bring together all relevant actors that can contribute to the response;
- v. Leading high-level advocacy and strategic communications in response to the complex global shock, including by ensuring timely, accurate data, analysis and policy recommendations;
- vi. Securing clear commitments from key actors to support directly and immediately the global response to a complex shock;
- vii. Ensuring accountability for the delivery on commitments and pledges from all participating actors.

- ❖ Recall Chapter IX of the Charter of the United Nations, and request that all multilateral participants in an Emergency Platform – including IFIs, UN specialized agencies and UN agencies, funds and programmes – should cooperate with and report to the SG when undertaking activities that contribute to a whole-of-system response to a complex global shock, with the aim of strengthening multilateral coordination, while recognizing that multilateral entities that participate in an Emergency Platform remain fully accountable to their respective governing bodies for delivering on their individual mandates;
- ❖ Agree that, once activated, an Emergency Platform should be convened for a finite period determined by the type of shock and that, at the end of that period, the SG may extend the Emergency Platform for such time as necessary;
- ❖ Request that, once an Emergency Platform has been convened, the SG provides regular reporting to the GA on its activities;

RESOURCE – [Policy Brief on an Emergency Platform](#)

Figure: Emergency Platform Process Flow and Response

