

Introduction:

The World Bank Group has policies in place to ensure that human rights principles are embedded in operations that the WBG supports. Guided by these policies, the WBG organizations continue to pursue their commitments and practices during the implementation of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic; this response is reaching people in over 111 countries. Please find below a summary of the commitments and practices as well as examples that illustrate how we are implementing projects in key areas such as to alleviate the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

1. The World Bank Group and Human Rights:

Creating the conditions necessary for the realization of human rights is a central and irreducible goal of development. The World Bank Group has been working for more than half a century to end extreme poverty and help boost opportunities and living conditions for people in the developing world.

For decades, the World Bank Group has expressed that human rights and development are intertwined.

- The World Bank Group works every day to help ensure that the world's poorest and most vulnerable people have access to drinking water, to sanitation, to health services, and to food. **Human rights principles** essential for sustainable development such as **nondiscrimination, meaningful consultation, effective public participation, accountability, transparency and good governance, are consistently applied in our work to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity.**
- **These principles are embedded in the World Bank [Environmental and Social Framework](#), the purpose of which is to protect people and the environment in World Bank-financed investment projects.**
- With the support of the **Nordic Trust Fund (now the [Human Rights, Inclusion and Empowerment Umbrella Trust Fund](#))**, the Bank continually works to develop a more informed view on how human rights relate to the Bank's core mission of promoting economic growth, poverty reduction and inclusion.
- For over 20 years, **Bank policy on [Indigenous Peoples](#) has referred to their dignity and human rights.**
- IFC / MIGA recognize the responsibility of the private sector to respect human rights. IFC's / MIGA's Sustainability Frameworks integrate human rights considerations, applicable to business, into our respective environmental and social standards, due diligence and supervision processes.

Human rights obligations belong to our member states.

- World Bank financing and activities can provide essential support for our members to realize their obligations and help to create the conditions necessary for the realization of human rights.
- Unlike other agencies which have explicit human rights mandates, our role within the United Nations system does not assign to us a human rights mandate, and **we recognize and respect the distinct and complementary roles played by organizations that do have these mandates and increasingly work with these organizations as partners in development.**

2. The World Bank's Commitment Against Reprisals:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/world-bank-commitments-against-reprisals>

The World Bank has commitments against reprisals in its operations.

[We do not tolerate reprisals and retaliation against those who share their views about Bank-financed projects.](#) Any form of intimidation against people who comment on Bank projects, research, activities and their impact, goes against our core values of respecting the people we work for and acting with utmost integrity.

When complaints, including allegations of reprisal in connection with Bank projects, are brought to our attention, we work with appropriate parties to address them. Those who feel they have been negatively affected are entitled to seek redress through robust mechanisms and instruments.

Measures and Tools for Prevention and Redress of Reprisals and/or Retaliation

The Bank has strong commitments against reprisals and/or retaliation within its environmental and social policies and supporting guidance. Our Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) integrates transparency, stakeholder engagement, and accountability into our projects to achieve the best possible development outcomes.

The **World Bank Environmental and Social Framework Directive on [Addressing Risks and Impacts on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups](#)** highlights the need to pay particular attention to those who could be subject to retaliation or reprisals for participating in project consultations, voicing an opinion, or raising a complaint.

World Bank financed projects are also screened for the potential for gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. A **Good Practice Note on [Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment \(SEA/SH\) in Investment Project Financing Involving Major Civil Works](#)** provides comprehensive approach to preventing SEA/H and also contains a detailed section on grievance mechanisms. Specific measures are recommended to protect survivors from stigmatization, retaliation or reprisals, including from their own community and/or families.

The World Bank Standard Procurement Documents fully reflect the ESF and integrate all relevant aspects into the selection process and the contract. There are specific requirements for contractors to prevent reprisals as part of each contractor's GRM, in provisions related to health and safety, as well as SEA/H and in the Code of Conduct's mandatory template.

The ESF requires new projects to have a **Grievance Mechanism** for workers, as well as one for the public. The borrowing country's labor management procedures must set out measures to prevent and address harassment, intimidation and/or exploitation. Contracted workers must be provided with a similar grievance process or be allowed to use employee grievance process.

Established in 2015, the World Bank's [Grievance Redress Service](#) closes the gap between project-level grievance mechanisms and the independent Inspection Panel. The redress service receives complaints on environmental and social issues associated with projects and tries to resolve issues. It contributes to the Bank's overall efforts to manage project environmental and social risks, improve stakeholder engagement and feedback, and support more sustainable project outcomes.

The [World Bank Inspection Panel](#) was established in 1993 by the Executive Board of the World Bank as an independent complaints mechanism for people who believe they have been, or are likely to be, harmed by a World Bank–funded project. The Panel has stated that “any form of retaliation threatens the integrity of the World Bank’s accountability process,” and that “a fundamental premise of the Panel’s function is that affected people can access it safely.” (See [Guidelines to Reduce Retaliation Risks and Respond to Retaliation During the Panel Process](#))

3. IFC’s and MIGA’s commitment Against Reprisals:

The Office of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO), the independent accountability mechanism for IFC and MIGA, provides an important additional grievance channel for communities affected by IFC/MIGA investments. CAO has developed an approach with respect to complainant protection and threats of reprisals which is available here.

IFC and reprisals

In 2018 IFC published a Position Statement on Retaliation Against Civil Society and Project Stakeholders.¹ In this public statement, IFC makes clear that civil society organizations and project-impacted stakeholders must be able to provide feedback, voice opposition, and raise concerns with our clients and with IFC when necessary to ensure that environmental and social impacts in IFC-financed projects are avoided, minimized, or mitigated and that the project achieves its intended development impact. IFC values the input and views of all stakeholders, and does not tolerate any action by an IFC client that amounts to retaliation – including threats, intimidation, harassment, or violence – against those who voice their opinion regarding the activities of IFC or our clients.

IFC Performance Standards require clients to establish project-level grievance mechanisms for affected communities and workers and to disclose these as part of their stakeholder engagement process. IFC’s role is to monitor the client’s implementation of Performance Standard requirements, including the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement and grievance mechanisms. In support of clients during the current pandemic, IFC has recently published a specific client tipsheet regarding reprisals during COVID-19.² This advice flags areas of elevated risk and highlights additional prevention measures clients can undertake in high reprisal risk contexts, including publishing corporate position statements on non-retaliation, incorporating additional confidentiality steps in the grievance mechanism, and undertaking reprisal-sensitive stakeholder engagement.³

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated challenges for accountability and sustainability, including in FCV contexts. In response, IFC is focusing efforts to support clients who are struggling due to impacts from COVID-19, through financial support, direct engagement on specific issues, and development of publicly available guidance for companies. This includes a tipsheet specifically on “Addressing Increased Reprisals

¹ IFC Position Statement on Retaliation Against Civil Society and Project Stakeholders, October 2018

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/ade6a8c3-12a7-43c7-b34e-f73e5ad6a5c8/EN_IFC_Reprisals_Statement_201810.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

² Tip Sheet for IFC Clients: Preventing Reprisals During Covid-19 Pandemic, June 2020

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/7959fcf5-3b4d-4da5-a252-42cc5544281f/Tip+Sheet_Reprisals_COVID19_June2020.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=naGtY29

³ Tip Sheet For IFC Clients: Preventing Reprisals During Covid-19 Pandemic, June 2020

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/7959fcf5-3b4d-4da5-a252-42cc5544281f/Tip+Sheet_Reprisals_COVID19_June2020.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=naGtY29

Risk in the Context of COVID-19,” as we recognize that reprisals against stakeholders opposing project activities have risen globally, with the potential to be magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MIGA and reprisals

In 2020, MIGA published a Position Statement on Retaliation Against Civil Society and Project Stakeholders.⁴ Similar to IFC, MIGA’s public statement makes clear that civil society organizations and project-impacted stakeholders must be able to provide feedback, voice opposition, and raise concerns with our clients and with MIGA when necessary to ensure that environmental and social impacts in MIGA-supported projects are avoided, minimized, or mitigated and that the project achieves its intended development impact. MIGA values the input and views of all stakeholders and does not tolerate any action by a MIGA client that amounts to retaliation – including threats, intimidation, harassment, or violence – against those who voice their opinion regarding the activities of MIGA or our clients.

MIGA’s Policy on Environmental and Social Sustainability (2013) and the Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability (2013) explicitly “recognize the responsibility of business to respect human rights” guided by the International Bill of Human Rights and the eight core labor requirements of the International Labor Organization. The Sustainability Framework outlines various elements of transparency, stakeholder engagement, and accountability in our projects to achieve the best possible development outcomes. Consistent with our responsibilities, MIGA undertakes due diligence to ensure its environmental and social requirements are reflected in the supported business activities. MIGA’s Access to Information Policy (2013) requires that project disclosures include a summary of key environmental and social risks and mitigation measures. These summaries are disclosed on www.miga.org and include information how affected parties can contact the Project, MIGA, and/or CAO. Throughout MIGA’s monitoring of a project’s environmental and social performance, MIGA often engages with stakeholders as part of this process. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, MIGA has supported projects to address the public health emergency and the broader impacts on people’s lives and livelihood while applying its policy, standards and procedures to emphasize the need for continued adherence to and respect for human rights.

MIGA’s Performance Standards are similar to IFC’s, and these standards have been adopted by Equator Principles Financial Institutions (over 111 financial institutions in 37 countries) in addition to some multilateral development banks which have reflected the same requirements in their updated sustainability frameworks. The Performance Standards include several requirements that consider human rights among which are stakeholder engagement, project-level grievance mechanisms, environmental and social management systems, rights of indigenous peoples, freedom of association, gender equality, and other safeguard measures.

4. COVID Response:

Saving Lives, Scaling-up Impact and Getting Back on Track: World Bank Group COVID-19 Response Approach Paper

<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/136631594937150795/pdf/World-Bank-Group-COVID-19-Crisis-Response-Approach-Paper-Saving-Lives-Scaling-up-Impact-and-Getting-Back-on-Track.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.miga.org/miga-position-statement-retaliation-against-civil-society-and-project-stakeholders>

Disrupting billions of lives and livelihoods, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens decades of hard-won development gains and demands an urgent and exceptional response. The COVID-19 crisis is exacting a massive toll on the poor and vulnerable. Millions of people will fall into extreme poverty, while millions of existing poor will experience even deeper deprivation – the first increase in global poverty since 1998. This will mean an estimated additional 18 million extremely poor people in FCSs, and the pandemic is deepening existing sources of fragility and exacerbating instability in FCV settings. The pandemic is exacerbating specific risks for women with sharp increases in domestic and gender-based violence and a substantial increase in emergency calls for domestic violence cases.

The WBG support focuses on helping countries address the COVID-19 crisis and transition to recovery through a combination of saving lives threatened by the pandemic; protecting the poor and vulnerable; securing foundations of the economy; and strengthening policies and institutions for resilience based on transparent, sustainable debt and investments. As articulated in the Approach Paper, the ambition of the WBG crisis response is to help client countries assist at least one billion people impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and to restore forward momentum towards reducing extreme poverty and increasing shared prosperity.

The objective of the WBG social response is to help countries protect poor and vulnerable households and communities from the economic and social shocks of the crisis, restore human capital, and promote equity and inclusion in the recovery. WBG's integrated approach is centered on social protection, safety nets and community driven development.

The WBG interventions include helping countries expand existing social protection delivery systems to reach excluded groups and newly poor. The WBG supports communities and local governments coping with immediate crisis impacts through provision of emergency public goods, keeping essential services running, ensuring adequate food supply and improving the standards of social care services.

In **India**, the *Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Program* (\$1 billion, approved May 15, 2020) is helping the government scale-up cash transfers and food benefits, using a set of pre-existing national platforms and programs, to provide social protection for essential workers involved in COVID-19 relief efforts, benefitting vulnerable groups, particularly migrants and informal workers, who face high risks of exclusion.

In **Pakistan**, the *Pandemic Response Effectiveness Project* (\$200 million, approved April 2, 2020) will focus on the COVID-19 preparedness and emergency response in the health sector. It will also help the poor and vulnerable cope with the immediate impact of the pandemic through social protection measures, food rations, and remote learning education.

In **Tajikistan**, the *Tajikistan Emergency COVID-19 Project* (\$11.3 million, approved April 2, 2020) will help the country's efforts to undertake preventive actions, protect its healthcare staff, and decrease, where possible, rates of COVID-19 cases, while protecting the poor and most vulnerable, especially children.

The World Bank is preparing additional interventions on human capital under the social response aimed at mitigating economic shocks associated with supply disruptions, lockdowns and social distancing which will likely result in worsened nutrition and higher stunting in children. Among interventions are ensuring adequate food supply by repurposing marketplaces to meet minimum health and security standards, supporting food banks, and strengthening safe food distribution networks.

COVID-19 crisis deepened the already-existing **education and early childhood development** challenges in many developing countries, exacerbating inequality. The World Bank is deploying its financing instruments, such as Investment Project Financing (IPF) and Development Project Financing (DPF), to recover learning losses of those who were in school, prevent dropout rates in basic and tertiary education, and reduce out-of-school populations.

During the emergency stage of the COVID-19 crisis, the Bank is supporting education systems through the use of multiplatform remote programs for learning and early childhood development, which do not solely rely on online resources in areas of limited internet penetration but also include the intensive use of social networks, SMS, radio and print media. In the restructuring stage, the support centers on school re-opening protocols with protective facilities, health screening and social distancing. The Bank will provide support to ensure access to school and prevent dropouts, especially of girls, through subsidies, scholarships and communication campaigns. As countries move to the recovery stage, the Bank's support will shift to helping rebuild a more diversified, affordable and equitable education service that can ensure continuity and acceleration of learning.

Through [IFC's COVID-19 Response](#) (esp. RSE facility) IFC is providing \$8 billion in fast-track financial support to existing clients to help sustain economies and preserve jobs during this global crisis, which will likely hit the poorest and most vulnerable countries the hardest. This has helped alleviate the impact of pandemic in general and supported the continued enjoyment of human rights around the world.

- The Real Sector Crisis Response Facility will provide \$2 billion to support existing clients in the infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture and services industries vulnerable to the pandemic. IFC will offer loans to companies in need, and if necessary, make equity investments. This instrument will also help companies in the healthcare sector that are seeing an increase in demand.
- The Global Trade Finance Program will provide \$2 billion to cover the payment risks of financial institutions so they can provide trade financing to companies that import and export goods. IFC expects this will support small and medium-sized enterprises involved in global supply chains.
- The Working Capital Solutions Program will provide \$2 billion in funding to emerging-market banks to extend credit to help businesses shore up their working capital, the pool of funds that firms use to pay their bills and employees' salaries.
- The Global Trade Liquidity Program, and the Critical Commodities Finance Program, will together provide \$2 billion in funding and risk-sharing support to local banks so they can continue to finance companies in emerging markets.

In addition, a number of [information resources / guidance notes](#) have been prepared to respond to COVID-19 which address several human rights concerns:

- Interim Advice for IFC Clients on Preventing and Managing	The main objective of this Interim Advice document is to collate and provide publicly available advice from internationally recognized sources to help IFC clients rapidly identify measures for preventing
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<p>Health Risks of COVID-19 in the Workplace</p>	<p>and managing outbreaks of COVID-19 in the workplace and for responding to community COVID-19 infection.</p>
<p>- Interim Advice for IFC Clients on Developing a COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP)</p>	<p>This document provides IFC clients with basic advice for developing emergency preparedness and response plans (EPRPs) for COVID-19-related risks, so that, in collaboration with appropriate and relevant third parties, clients are prepared to prevent and mitigate any harm to workers, their operations, communities, and other stakeholders and to be able to maintain business continuity.</p>
<p>- Interim Advice for IFC Clients on Supporting Workers in the Context of COVID-19</p>	<p>COVID-19 presents many challenges to employers globally, including IFC clients, as providers of jobs and livelihoods for workers and their families. This Tip Sheet sets out useful information to support decision making in response to the impacts of COVID-19 on workers and employment.</p>
<p>- Interim Advice for IFC and EBRD Clients on Migrant Workers and COVID-19</p>	<p>This Interim Advice provides guidance to European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and International Finance Corporation (IFC) clients on how to respond to the particular challenges experienced by migrant workers during the COVID-19 outbreak. It also sets out examples of good practice that go beyond compliance in response to the jobs-related impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on migrant workers.</p>
<p>- Interim Advice for IFC Clients on Safe Stakeholder Engagement in the Context of COVID-19</p>	<p>The main objective of this Interim Advice is to assist IFC clients in identifying alternative approaches and mechanisms for engaging stakeholders, for continuing to deliver project-related information to the communities within their areas of operations and for receiving feedback, while taking all feasible steps to protect the health and safety of those involved.</p>
<p>- Addressing Increased Reprisals Risk in the Context of COVID-19</p>	<p>Reprisals against project stakeholders who voice opinions or opposition to project activities have grown in visibility worldwide, with the potential to be magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this tip sheet is to provide practical advice that businesses can follow to minimize risk of reprisals, and to flag specific issues that could be exacerbated in a COVID-19 context.</p>
<p>- COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence: Workplace Risks and Responses</p>	<p>This guidance note seeks to inform employers about the heightened risks of gender-based violence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and outline ways in which employers can address these risks, improve employee and community well-being, and create a safe and resilient workplace.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Childcare in the COVID-19 Era: A Guide for Employers: 	<p>This guidance note is a companion to IFC's Global Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare and outlines ways in which employers can support the care and family needs of their employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and fulfill their obligations under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tip Sheet for Company Leadership on Crisis Response: Facing the COVID-19 Pandemic 	<p>Each level of a corporate structure has its role in responding and ensuring that best practices are adopted. Generally applicable to any type of business, some tips may not be relevant based on the nature or size of your business, shareholding structure or other factors.</p>

MIGA launched a \$6.5 billion fast-track facility to support private sector investors and lenders tackling the COVID-19 pandemic in low- and middle-income countries. This facility redirects MIGA’s capacity toward the purchase of urgent medical equipment, provides working capital for small and medium enterprises, corporates and individuals, and supports short-term funding needs of governments. MIGA’s COVID-19 Facility, which allows for issuance of guarantees using streamlined and expedited procedures, aims to meet coronavirus-related challenges in our client countries through four mechanisms:

- Credit enhancements for governments and their agencies to borrow on non-concessional terms to purchase urgent medical equipment, protective gear, medicines, and services.
- De-risking solutions for commercial banks and financial institutions so they continue to provide lending through their subsidiaries in low- and middle-income countries.
- Credit enhancements for governments and their agencies seeking to access the credit markets for funding economic recovery projects and programs in a liquidity-constrained environment.
- Supporting trade finance in partnership with IFC to extend cover for local banks in low income and fragile countries to ensure the continued flow of goods through global supply chains.

As of September 2020, MIGA has provided US\$2.61 billion across 19 projects to mitigate the impact of the crisis in emerging markets and developing economies. Among the countries that are receiving support from this facility are: Argentina, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Botswana, Colombia, Eswatini, Ghana, Kosovo, Lesotho, Mozambique, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Nigeria, Panama, Serbia, and Zambia.

MIGA has been sharing with its new and existing clients publicly available COVID-19 related guidance such as the IFC Interim Advice publications related to COVID-19 and human rights (which are described above) and WBG Good Practice Notes.

5. Ensuring stakeholder consultations as part of the Environmental and Social Framework

<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/875401606251371090/Fact-Sheet-Citizen-Engagement-and-Stakeholder-Consultations-during-COVID-19.pdf>

The World Bank has worked closely with client countries to rapidly design, approve, and launch a first round of projects to help countries implement emergency health operations, protect the poorest households, save jobs and businesses, and get money to people who need it most.

Stakeholder Engagement Plans are required as part of preparation for each project under the World Bank's [Environment and Social Framework](#) (ESF). These are critical to ensure that stakeholder engagement takes place, either during the design phase or in the implementation period.

We are in constant dialogue with ministries and their project implementation units to identify the most appropriate channels to consult stakeholders. Given the operational challenges during the pandemic, we are helping our borrowers identify different ways to perform, monitor and supervise stakeholder engagement as well as manage environmental and social risks, taking advantage of the technologies and channels available to them.

Some projects have begun to incorporate electronic platforms for communication into their design. In the Kyrgyz Republic, for example, a comprehensive online platform is being rolled-out to enable outreach and real-time community engagement during social distancing and travel restrictions, as part of the [CASA-1000 Community Support Project](#) and Additional Financing for the Third Village Investment, Project, which aim to support communities to rebuild livelihoods in 437 subdistricts.

We are in regular contact with civil society to hear their views on consultations.

Maintaining space for citizen engagement

While restrictions on face-to-face gatherings limit some of the usual fora for public dialogue, the World Bank is working with clients to keep lines of communication open. As lockdowns and social distancing precautions began to be applied across the world, project teams used their communication networks to distribute information on health and safety, as well as safety equipment and even food.

In Afghanistan, for example, the [Citizen Charter Afghanistan Project \(CCAP\)](#) has used its national networks to convey key coronavirus prevention messages to Community Development Councils through mobile phone applications like WhatsApp and Telegram. These communication channels are two-way, allowing citizens not only to receive support, but to share information on the changing situations in their communities, as well as their own needs and challenges, so that this information can be translated into targeted responses.

We are also engaging with communities in Ghana to provide important information about COVID-19 at the national, regional, and district level. Recent surveys indicated successful dissemination, where 83 percent of Ghanaians felt they had adequate information about the pandemic and high trust in information originating from the government. Similarly, in Cambodia, our support to CSOs who are implementing the national, Social Accountability Framework has enabled Community Accountability Facilitators to inform poor and vulnerable households of ways to protect themselves through improved sanitation and hygiene and of public services that they can reach out to such as health clinics, primary schools, and local administrative centers.

Through our [Global Partnership for Social Accountability \(GPSA\)](#), a World Bank trust fund, we are leveraging lessons to support civil society oversight. For example, we are exchanging lessons learned with [SEND Ghana](#), a former GPSA grantee that helps hundreds of NGOs across the country monitor the government's pandemic-related interventions and provide real-time feedback. Over the next five months, SEND Ghana will also monitor how the government uses the funds allocated for COVID-19 response.

Unwavering commitment

The World Bank remains fully committed to stakeholder consultation and citizen engagement, and this means continuing to work towards our target that 100% of our projects include mechanisms for receiving and acting on beneficiary feedback. The COVID-19 rapid response projects are no exception. For any projects that may not have fully incorporated citizen engagement mechanisms into their initial design due to the rapid speed of preparation, targeted support will now ensure that these important activities are put in place and actively applied throughout the project life cycle.

It is crucial that citizens have a say in the support they are receiving. The World Bank will continue working to ensure that civil society organizations can help facilitate governments' accountability to citizens, that consultation mechanisms are effectively implemented, and that emerging opportunities for citizen engagement are used to strengthen the response and recovery in our client countries.

6. Implementation examples:

- We are taking an integrated approach, helping governments and stakeholders manage across the multiple arenas where this crisis is impacting people – the immediate health response, strengthening primary health care systems, supporting governments to keep learning going even with school closures, and getting nutritious food to the hardest hit. In all of this we are targeting the poorest and the most vulnerable.
 - 24% of the bank's health emergency operations cover 900 million people in FCV which are the most vulnerable populations on earth.
- **Cash transfers are an essential foundation** to enable governments to take actions across all these arenas to protect and invest in their most vulnerable people.
 - That is why the World Bank is scaling up social safety net operations in response to COVID19, **ramping up our investment in cash transfers by \$10 billion over the next 15 months.**
 - We're working to enable governments make **direct financial transfers** from the governments to people and small businesses.
 - **In many developing countries, the scale of these payments is unprecedented;** in Argentina, Pakistan and Peru, new programs cover one-third of their populations; in the Philippines, more than 70% of households will receive emergency transfers.
 - **We are seeing a lot of innovation in how this is done:** cash transfers targeting informal workers who have few safety nets to fall back on when livelihoods are devastated; targeting food insecure households; and the creation of new public-works programs to keeping incomes flowing.
 - For example, we're helping India scale-up cash transfers and food benefits, using a set of pre-existing national platforms and programs, to provide social protection for essential workers involved in COVID-19 relief efforts.
 - In Pakistan, we're helping provide emergency cash transfers to help the poorest buy food and to help finance delivery of basic food supplies people who are quarantined or have limited mobility.
 - In Tajikistan, cash transfers targeted to food-insecure households with children under the age of two, to protect children's nutrition

- **The World Bank is using all existing platforms to reach the poorest.** We're working through CDD programs to provide cash and resources quickly to communities, providing targeted support for the most marginalized groups, including migrants, the disabled, women, unemployed youth, the elderly, and indigenous peoples. **Examples include:**
 - Afghanistan is using Citizens' Charter, the country's most reliable safety net program, to reach about 13 million people across all 34 provinces. Citizens' Charter is helping the government send out COVID-19 preventative health messages and explore ways to channel funds directly to communities and vulnerable groups.
 - **India** is leveraging women's self-help groups with the World Bank's support for the production of masks and hand sanitizer during COVID-19, dissemination of vital public health information, and preparation of food for community kitchens.
 - In **Afghanistan**, we work with communities to share COVID-19 prevention messages through WhatsApp and telegrams that reach the people most disproportionately impacted by the crisis, including refugees/IDPs, disabled, poor women, and nomads.
 - In [Indonesia](#), we are helping the Government improve the effectiveness of their own block grants (\$7 billion annual transfers) across all 74,000 villages (120 million Indonesians) and 8,000 urban wards to respond to COVID-19 and provide income support, health information, and remote area monitoring for the poor and new poor.