Responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic

Dear Partners,

Since the Green Climate Fund’s (GCF) communication in early March on our initial response to the COVID-19 outbreak to safeguard personnel and families while ensuring continuity of operations, the impact of what is now a global pandemic has grown at unprecedented speed and scale. The world collectively faces the biggest health crisis in modern history, with devastating impacts on human lives. At the same time, communities and countries across the globe are experiencing severe socio-economic costs within a shrinking window of opportunity to tackle climate change.

Under these extremely challenging and uncertain circumstances, I am writing to share an update on additional internal measures taken by the GCF in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as on our partnership approach to help address the impact on GCF-funded projects, contribute to global recovery efforts, and continue to advance climate action within the context of the crisis.

The Covid-19 pandemic is directly affecting the GCF family. Unfortunately, some of our GCF staff and relatives have contracted COVID-19. We are deeply concerned and continue to support affected staff and their families through these difficult times. In February, we authorized all GCF personnel (staff, consultants, interns and contractors) to work from home to minimize risk of infection. These special flexible working arrangements have been extended and travel and in-person meetings have been cancelled to further protect our staff and partners during the crisis.

In order to continue to support developing countries under these new operating conditions, we have significantly enhanced our ICT capabilities to enable the GCF to function as a fully digital organization. We continue to monitor the ongoing crisis very closely, provide regular updates and guidance to our personnel, and take proactive response measures to ensure timely and appropriate action.

The interlinkages between people, planet and prosperity have never been clearer than they are today, and the far-reaching impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the catastrophic implications the world will face as a result of climate change. The GCF is fully committed to working with our partners in a flexible manner to ensure we support developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable, strengthen their resilience to this crisis and future shocks in ways that foster low-carbon, sustainable and inclusive growth pathways.
The GCF will continue to make critical investments in this regard, including in climate resilient water resource management, health care facilities, energy systems, agriculture and livelihoods, which are essential to preventing, responding to, and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the GCF will step up its efforts to align finance with sustainable development and catalyze green investment to restart economies on low emissions and climate resilient pathways. The GCF will also focus on access to finance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and local governments to promote community level socio-economic benefits from climate action. The GCF Readiness Programme is available to support developing countries identify the most effective climate investments that also promote recovery and resilience economy wide.

As we continue to maintain continuity and momentum on global climate action, addressing the consequences of COVID-19 is a shared responsibility that requires a collaborative and adaptive management approach. The GCF fully recognizes that all our partners and GCF-funded projects are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the mitigation measures in place worldwide, including stringent travel and movement restrictions. We suggest that our partners work closely with the Secretariat to conduct impact assessments of the COVID-19 pandemic on their portfolios and re-accreditation, and identify a menu of potential response measures and new climate investment opportunities with strong social and economic co-benefits that can be presented to the GCF Board. Based on these consultations, the GCF will take a phased and risk-based approach to prioritize measures needed to address project implementation challenges.

To alleviate the immediate impacts of the crisis, the GCF will provide a 6-month blanket no cost extension to grants under the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme and Project Preparation Facility with a completion date after 1 March 2020. The GCF will also allow a reasonable reallocation of travel budgets and the use of the contingency budget to cover unforeseen project management costs related to the pandemic in line with the Secretariat’s policies and guidance. The GCF is also exploring additional ways to provide flexibility to our partners, notably for funded activities under implementation and proposal development.

Your GCF focal points will be in touch and we welcome your feedback and suggestions on how best we can support developing countries address urgent mitigation and adaptation needs during these turbulent times.

On behalf of the GCF, I would like to deeply thank you for your tireless efforts to advance our shared goal of climate-resilient and sustainable development, and I wish you, your staff and partners good health and safety.

Yours sincerely,

Yannick Glemarec