**IRD 416**

**Is there a manifestation of Order or Disorder in the Present World? Analyse logically and in line with global realities.**

The manifestation of World Order or Disorder can be viwed in line with the global realities of the present world. With 2019 behind us, 2020 is already testing how we work together to address critical challenges at home and across borders. Support for international cooperation hangs in the balance at precisely the moment when total collaboration is needed most. From promoting climate change and sustainability, to averting conflict within and between nations, to confronting the systemic forces that create unequal societies, in 2020 we must answer the question: How resolved are we to confront the challenges and embrace the opportunities ahead, and what is needed to do so?

1. CLIMATE ACTION ACCELERATED?

The past decade has been the warmest in recorded history. Deadly wildfires including those affecting Australia, hurricanes, extreme weather events, and climate-influenced migration and hunger in many parts of the world are now regular occurrences. Ice caps are melting, sea levels are rising, and the very survival of island nations is being threatened. Indeed, our entire ecosystem is at risk: 1 million animal and plant species may be extinct within years, the largest-scale ecological loss humans have seen. And a mounting global movement of youth impatient for change is pushing climate protection into the global consciousness like never before.

We have a decade to significantly curb carbon emissions and avoid catastrophe. Because of years of delayed action, we face an even more pressing mandate. We need to halve global emissions by 2030 but the emissions gap between what is needed and our current commitments is significant. Starting this year, we need to cut emissions by 7.6% every year for the next 10 years to limit warming to 1.5 degrees.

The UN’s Climate Action Summit last year set a roadmap for action and the UN Secretary-General continues to serve as a moral compass, pushing countries and other actors to do more, now: “If we do not change course by 2020 we risk missing the point where we can avoid runaway climate change with disastrous consequences for people and all the natural systems that sustain us.” And the 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Madrid (COP26) did not send a strong signal of positive intent.

In 2020 we must decarbonise large swaths of the economy, shift financial flows, protect ecosystems, and adapt for the future. Countries are all expected to reduce more emissions under the Paris Agreement. The 2020 Conference of the Parties in Glasgow, UK, will enable the global community to take stock of which nations stepped up and by how much. Yet the countries who have so far pledged to cut carbon outputs at the highest rates represent fewer than 10% of those producing global emissions. At current rates, that means that temperatures will rise more than 3 degrees this century.

We need all countries, and especially leading economies, to sign off this year on bolder commitments and actions. This also means generating robust international agreement on biodiversity at the UN Biodiversity Conference in October 2020. Such an agreement must protect and preserve our natural environment, support individual actions, and encourage strong and diverse leadership from the private sector, regional governments and bodies, and civil society organizations. It also means focusing on the social dimensions of climate change, including gender and health.

There is good news to be had, which we can hope will deepen in 2020. Individuals, including the younger generation and tomorrow’s leaders, are taking to the streets to push for climate action like never before. Public opinion is shifting. And leadership is growing in cities and boardrooms alike. For example, a bipartisan coalition of 25 U.S. state governors plus Puerto Rico, known as the U.S. Climate Alliance, will reduce their states’ and territories’ emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. Together this represents more than half of U.S. GDP and over half its population. In the private sector, 177 companies have agreed to reduce emissions to levels required to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. And the European Commission, the world’s largest economic bloc, announced a European Green Deal to drive greater action.

But with the United States expected to officially withdraw from the Paris accord on November 4th, and next steps for climate leadership uncertain, there is no guarantee that the world will mobilize around this global crisis. Youth climate activist Greta Thunberg, named TIME Magazine’s Person of the Year in December 2019, said it best: “The biggest danger is not inaction. The real danger is when politicians and CEOs are making it look like the real action is happening, when in fact almost nothing is being done.”

2. CRISES ON THE BRINK: CONFLICT, PEACE, AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The year 2020 marks the 9th anniversary of the war in Syria, and the 5th in Yemen. Venezuela may very well become the source of the world’s largest and most underfunded refugee crisis. Lethal violence and violent crime is on the rise, affecting growing cities in an urbanizing world. And the risk of interstate conflicts and geopolitical strife has taken center stage.

These factors build on worrying trends from 2019, where more people required assistance than initially forecast due to conflicts and extreme weather-related disasters. Women and children are being disproportionately affected and are at higher risks of sexual and gender-based violence. Over 60% of the world’s chronically food insecure people live in countries affected by conflict.

According to the 2020 Global Humanitarian Report, one out of every 45 people on this planet will need help and protection next year. In 2020, almost 170 million people in crises will need help and protection across more than 50 countries, the highest figure in decades.

These figures put into stark relief the challenges of achieving the SDGs in such daunting contexts. At current rates, 80% of the world’s population living in extreme poverty in 2030 will be in fragile or conflict-affected settings.

We have just witnessed the first year of implementation of UN reforms intended to better connect development work with peacekeeping and security, with an emphasis on preventing conflict. The UN has also been working to strengthen the world’s financial support in times of crisis including through the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund, which provided $200 million to underfunded crises around the world. But the scale of the response still does not match the global need, and greater attention must be given to resolving conflicts and providing peace in 2020.

3. THE UNITED NATIONS AT 75

The year 2020 is the time to move the world closer to a sustainable, equitable, and just future and to set the tone for the decade ahead. This comes as the UN approaches its 75th anniversary, offering a moment to reflect on the world we have achieved working together. It is also an opportunity to look forward together.

The UN is launching a global conversation about the future we want and the issues that matter most, with an intent of asking us all – countries, communities, businesses, organizations, individuals – to help define what we need to get there. It is looking for new ideas, approaches, and partnerships crucial for the complex challenges the world faces, like the ones detailed above. It will encourage us to consider  the intersecting issues and mega-trends that will shape the world ahead: digital technology, conflict and violence, inequality, climate change, shifting demographics, and global health.

4. THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC

It is unfortunate that the corona virus pandemic should have plagued the international community at its weakest moment, where national politics and economic parochialism are upending the idea of “one global village”. As Professor Sridhar Venkatapuram correctly notes, we take issue with the current state of the international order in our book, The New World Disorder & the Indian Imperative. It is not the values and norms that it ostensibly professes that we take objection to, but the means through which they have been devised, exercised and often betrayed.

Among the many crises of global governance we document, two, in particular, stand out in regard to this new pandemic. First, the waning legitimacy of international institutions. The WHO’s response to the outbreak, with its indulgence of the official Chinese line for far too long, is an important case in point. Many of our global institutions and their agencies suffer from politicisation, manipulation and a lack of representation, independent leadership and purpose. The second crisis relates to national sovereignty, and its resurgence amidst the wave of nationalism sweeping the world.

Headlines from around the world bear testament to these symptoms. The Trump administration’s “America First” instinct has seen it attempt to source a vaccine for the American people alone from Germany, to cancel pharmaceutical imports from China and to prevent global consensus on the response by insisting on the divisive “Wuhan virus” formula at the G-7 and, currently, at the UN Security Council. Beijing, meanwhile, has got away with letting the virus loose, handling it initially in an opaque manner, and manipulating the institutional architecture that should have responded to it. It is now attempting to play saviour by supplying emergency medical equipment to the world and emergency medical teams to Italy. Experience suggests that nations will pay for this help with silence on China’s misdemeanours. Even the EU has struggled to support its member states in their worst public health emergency in modern history.

Had global governance been working effectively, the world would have identified the coronavirus as soon as it emerged; sounded a global alarm earlier about its dangers

The coronavirus epidemic is a devastating reminder of the consequences of disorder. It is also a timely memo to sovereign states that the re-assertion of sovereignty must not imply an abandonment of global responsibilities. When the current pandemic is over, the globe must learn lessons about what happened, and how international systems and institutions can be strengthened and radically reformed in order to forestall its recurrence.

Many will find in this pandemic an opportunity to close themselves off to the international community. Leadership in these times — and a new resolve for global governance — may be just the vaccine that the international community needs to navigate a new decade.

These issues have real and pressing implications today, but their fast-moving trajectories demand global cooperation. This September’s UN General Assembly will serve as an important inflection point on the progress made, gaps remaining, and future needs for collective action to tackle poverty, climate, climate and inequality. And this anniversary year for the UN is a moment to look forward at the many critical paths the world faces and to put in place critical efforts that will affect our world not just today but in the years ahead. The stakes are high and the challenges are not to be underestimated. In 2020, our ability to act, in our shared best interest and for greater collective impact, has never been more important.

References

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