The 2nd Conference on State Fragility, organised by g7+ and Club of Lisbon, discussed the implications of the pandemic in fragile countries and explored why national efforts must be matched by international cooperation to succeed in the fight against COVID-19 as well as to ensure a fast-track vaccination of the world population, with a particular emphasis in the most vulnerable, poorest and conflict-affected countries.

The conference contributed to identify challenges in responding to current crises, share experiences and mobilise support on promoting and strengthening international solidarity and cooperation.
The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting countries in fragile and vulnerable situations in a serious and disproportionate way, with immediate, long-lasting and multiplier effects in aggravating poverty and inequalities and reversing development gains for millions in poor countries. While the impacts have been felt everywhere, countries and populations that were already behind will fall even further and an estimated additional 150 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty, particularly in fragile contexts.

We have witnessed in recent years a growing match between fragility and poverty (50% of the world’s poorest people will live in fragile countries in 2030) and conflict (76% of fragile countries are currently conflict-affected countries compared to 61% in 2010) and these trends are likely to be exacerbated by the consequences of this systemic shock, which further demonstrates the importance of addressing state fragility.

With the world’s media focused on the pandemic, other important issues have been even more overlooked but did not cease to exist. The climate crisis continues to have damaging consequences particularly in vulnerable countries, protracted and emerging humanitarian crises hinder development prospects, and the dynamics of several ongoing armed conflicts did not change because of COVID-19 – with the appeal of the UN Secretary-General to a global ceasefire being largely disregarded. It is now clearer than ever that we will not be able to progress on the global goals that the world signed up to at the United Nations unless we address the problems of state fragility.

COVID-19 is mainly exacerbating the multidimensional causes of fragility, in contexts where the capacity to respond to external shocks and the conditions to tackle multiple crises are generally lacking. In the short-term, this has been particularly evident in the difficulties experienced by health systems that were already weakened and under-resourced before the pandemic (both in equipment/infrastructural conditions, as well as in financial and human resources), as well as in effectively implementing sanitary measures (such as social distancing or lockdowns) within contexts of poverty or conflict, due to inadequate water and sanitation, poor housing and precarious work conditions. Social groups already disadvantaged or affected by inequalities were particularly hit by the pandemic, such as women, who were much more likely to have lost their job, and notably in countries with insufficient social protection and large informal sectors. The combination of several indirect effects, including on health, education, food security and others, will certainly contribute to reinforcing vicious cycles of vulnerability.

Furthermore, just as the virus has particularly severe effects on weaker immune systems, it has also deeper repercussions in states with weaker governance and deficiencies in one or more of three state core functions: capacity (e.g. in delivering basic services), authority (e.g. in enforcing rule of law) and legitimacy. Previously, fragile and poorer countries already lacked the
resources to handle medical emergencies, lacked information (and statistical capacity) to channel the scarce resources they have in the best possible way, they often struggled to deliver services while suffering from violent conflict and, in some cases, not being able to control parts of their territory. Against this background, a study from the German Development Institute (DIE) focused on Africa, has highlighted how structural weaknesses experienced by Least Developed Countries, conflict-affected and fragile countries amplify the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, influence the type of state responses to coping with the crisis, and also hinder recovery prospects.

At the geopolitical level, what will the world look like after COVID-19? We are currently witnessing shifts in foreign policies, a reduced and contested role of some international organisations, as well as health diplomacy strategies changing the narratives of friends and enemies in the world. While globalisation created the conditions for a widespread pandemic, this, in turn, is also affecting globalisation and contributing to increasing polarisation, in which global power may become quite disparate. The future of sustainable development and development financing is in danger, within a context where uncertainty and volatility have become prominent features of the international system.

“We had expected that the onset of the pandemic would induce empathy and solidarity and, therefore, the call for ceasefire would be respected. We had anticipated that regional cooperation would take new forms where it would rest on humane solidarity rather than mere vested political and economic interests. Our hope was that the rich nations of the world join hands to curb this crisis while leaving behind political differences. But to our dismay, the opposite happened.”

– Francis Kai Kai, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone, and Co-chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding.
The fact that very few countries have been able to recover from fragility - Timor-Leste being one of the few recently taken from the OECD list - illustrates its protracted causes and effects, but some countries also may have avoided or prevented fragility (e.g. Singapore) and others have managed to make commendable progress on reconciliation and economic growth (e.g. Rwanda). Addressing state fragility is not an easy task, as the causes are usually multiple and mutually reinforcing. In contexts such as Somalia, for instance, there is a combination of conflict, corruption, weak institutions, a very weak sense of state legitimacy, low levels of public trust in the government, weak private sectors and scarce employment opportunities, high levels of poverty, amongst other factors.

These interlinkages show that trying to identify and deal with isolated issues is insufficient (integrated approaches are required) and implementing one-size-fits-all approaches to specific realities is ineffective (tailored and adapted responses are needed). Therefore, taking into consideration the specific context and dynamics of each country is crucial, in order to anticipate possible harmful impacts and promote more balanced and integrated responses – for instance, there are several...
“Many of the approaches that have been taken in the past have failed. In some cases, they did not work because I think we have not addressed the issues that are really holding these countries back”
— David Cameron, Co-Chair of the Council on State Fragility

examples in which achieving peace or promoting democracy, when not translated in the improvement of living conditions, has little sustained effects in breaking the fragility cycle.

Several analyses and inquiries – such as the Fragility Commission report on Escaping the Fragility Trap - have evidenced that most approaches to addressing state fragility have not worked or had results that could not be sustained.

So, what should be done differently?

First, pragmatism is needed: it should be recognised that in fragile states with weak institutions, corruption issues, weak levels of trust and legitimacy, and often recovering from conflict, trying to achieve everything at the same time and having grandiose ideas about what can be done is not helpful.

Second, it is crucial to focus on local priorities, rather than handing down a set of international priorities, as has often been argued by several organisations such as the g7+. When there is a government in place that functions and has a clear vision about the country’s priorities, finding ways of helping national authorities deliver their agenda has proven much more effective than imposing externally driven agendas. Third, and related to the previous point, it is vital to work directly with the governments whenever possible, rather than bypassing them. Many well-intentioned aid interventions fail because they end up undermining the governments and institutions that they are attempting to help.

Fourth, probably one of the most controversial findings in the research on fragile settings is that we should try to prioritise reconciliation efforts rather than rushing towards elections in post-conflict situations. This does not mean the election of a legitimate democratic government is not necessary, but time spent on tackling internal divisions, promoting reconciliation and fostering internal settlements is frequently more important than setting a tight election timetable without addressing any fragility issues - as often Western countries and organisations who want to help do. When a country is fractured around different ethnicities, religions or nationalities, this may lead to further tensions and/or to winner-takes-all situations.

Finally, institution-building is vital and should be strongly supported. It should be complemented with nation-building, i.e., the development of a sense of unity and a shared national story, therefore contributing to restoring the trust in governments and fostering public support to the longer-term decisions that governments need to make. Clear vision and leadership are also very important for the successful creation and implementation of a common plan by which all the different groups and regions of a country can buy-in.

Sometimes there are specific moments in the life of a country where there is a real opportunity to make a difference and promote change, and international partners should be ready to seize that opportunity by building on the lessons learned and working with local partners. This also means to focus less on reports and bureaucratic procedures, and more on concrete action and results, particularly on delivering for the poorest and most excluded.

One should be aware that investing and providing assistance to poorer countries is both a moral imperative and a self-interest driven goal - as the consequences of fragility are easily spread in an interconnected world, being the mass movement of people, terrorism or other concerns. The pandemic is undoubtedly a timely reminder of our interconnectedness and interdependence in a shared planet, at many levels, which prompt us to act on a more global basis.
WHAT NOW?
RECOVERY PROSPECTS

Structural weaknesses of fragile and conflict-affected countries constrain and delay their recovery: they have the worst growth predictions, are highly dependent of external resources, have extremely low revenue collection capacities, limited access to healthcare and social protection, and weak institutional capacities, as well as social structures that potentially amplify the pandemic’s effects on growing poverty and inequalities. Furthermore, weak economic diversification, low labour productivity, high inequalities and significant informal sectors are very prominent elements in most of the poorer economies and can play a significant role in hindering their recovery. These challenges, however, make it even more important to have a specific focus on fragile countries.

Although it is still early to fully assess economic and social impacts, projections for Sub-Saharan Africa indicate the worst economic impacts in conflict-prone countries, in countries focused on tourism, and resource-dependent economies. Even if the impact on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) may be lower than in OECD economies, the challenges ahead point out to existing constraints that will delay African recovery. Although sound macroeconomic management has proven to be very resilient in some countries (with some positive effects), the pandemic has caused state revenues to fall by more than 10% and expansionary fiscal policies have led to fiscal deficits, therefore rising debt levels.

In Latin America, the World Bank economic estimates are very uneven among countries, but the most fragile country of the region (Haiti) will not experience a very large GDP contraction (around 3.3%) mainly because it has already been in recession in previous years due to political instability. With previous considerable social vulnerabilities and inequalities, the pandemic is causing setbacks in social gains that Latin American countries were able to achieve especially after the commodities boom in the early 2000s. These countries are particularly vulnerable to external shocks and some countries have recently experienced multiple and cumulative ones: St. Vincent and the Grenadines, for instance, was affected over the last two years by several hurricanes, a volcanic eruption, as well as the pandemic. Furthermore, Latin America is now the most indebted region in the world, which hinders recovery prospects.

As mentioned in the previous sections, the pandemic has reinforced cycles of vulnerability: economic uncertainty aggravates social and political tensions, and in turn the deepening of social cleavages and inequalities also affect the prospects for economic policies and recovery. Within this context, one of the most important insights of empirical analysis is that social trust and cohesion play a key role in a society’s resilience to the pandemic’s impacts and hence in their recovery prospects. In the short-term, high inequalities and social tensions have generated more severe lockdown policies and restrictive measures, particularly in middle-income countries, while many Least Developed Countries showed higher levels of social cohesion and cooperation between social actors.

Cohesion results from good trustful relations within a society, and between the society and the state, including from individuals cooperating for the collective and common
If social recovery is not at the core of future policies and measures, tensions and unrest might rise in several countries due to the frustrations created by the pandemic. The perception of exclusion of certain social and ethnic groups was aggravated by those frustrations and can only be resolved by investing in programs that address acute poverty, provide access to basic services and properly address social tensions and conflict-related issues.

The resources that are (and will be) made available by international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), should therefore not be almost exclusively focused on the economic dimension, as they seem to be, disregarding the critical need (and opportunity) of investment in the social dimension. In addition to the risk of new resources being mainly invested in infrastructures, rather than on critical social sectors such as health and education, they may be largely targeted to middle-income countries, disregarding least developed and fragile countries, the ones most in need.

Looking ahead, the diversification of economies, the creation of new jobs and future-oriented industries, the tax base enlargement and domestic resource mobilisation are some of the key elements for countries to be able to increase resilience, as well as to address political and social challenges in the future. Challenges will be particularly daunting in Africa, as urbanisation rises and population will grow to around 2.5 billion people in the next 30 years, therefore requiring considerable investments both in infrastructures – particularly water and energy – and in the so-called “economy of life” – health and education –, as well as focusing on local production and micro-business segments that can contribute to create new jobs and reinforce the economic fabric.

However, the structural weaknesses of poorer and vulnerable countries are also manifested in the difficulty in mobilising additional resources. The figures are overwhelming: while a country like Japan was able to rapidly inject a stimulus to its economy that represents 20% of its GDP, the average in Africa is less than 2%. Furthermore, the risk factor in Africa is frequently overrated by markets and this hinders access to capital markets, even in periods of high liquidity.

Many of these economies are very exposed to external shocks and their recovery will depend on the global economic prospects, which are very uncertain, given the insecurity and volatility of the situation, as the pandemic is far from being over. However, the resilience of global value chains should not be confused with protectionism. Integrating the economies into value chains may increase their vulnerabilities to shocks and amplify the impact of the pandemic in the short-term but being linked to these global chains can also help to bounce back and increase economic diversification in the medium/long-term, therefore making them more resilient to shocks. The focus should be on how to manage the integration in value chains and not how to close borders, take protectionist measures, renationalise industries or shorten supply chains. The new African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) seems a promising example of a way forward to strengthen economic integration within Africa and build regional value chains, therefore ameliorating the response to external shocks in the future.
The COVID-19 health crisis also provides an opportunity to undertake economic and political structural transformations that have long been on the agendas of poorer countries and international policymakers. In this framework, we should also be thinking about what kind of recovery should be actively promoted and supported. Beyond the short-term need to address immediate challenges (such as access to vaccination), the world should be able to look ahead by investing in a recovery that provides the basis for inclusive and sustainable transformation. The financial flows being generated in the recovery process should therefore contribute to future-oriented, low carbon and clean industries, technologies and sectors.

One should bear in mind, however, that this can potentially widen structural inequalities between countries, as greater gains will likely benefit countries with available resources and/or that are able to make good use of them to rapidly invest in knowledge, innovations and future-oriented recovery. It is therefore of the utmost importance that (re)focusing on priorities that enable green and sustainable development is also linked to the promotion of universal social systems and to the strengthening of political institutions capable of providing public goods. This means, inter alia, a necessary (re)focus on reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for which global leadership and responsibility are key.
SDGs will not be possible to achieve without increased coherence, coordination and resilience of development finance. Nevertheless, the pandemic has left development finance on the verge of collapse, due to its impacts on trade, investment, debt, fiscal and tax issues, among others. The development financing gap is widening: if we consider the scale of resources needed to implement the global health agenda alone, not to mention the agendas on climate change and poverty eradication, we easily conclude that the actual needs will not be met by rising resources’ mobilisation in the short-term. In a few months, developing countries’ funding gap to achieve the SDGs has widened at least from USD2.5 trillion to USD3.7 trillion due to COVID-19.

While governments of high-income countries were already able to mobilise USD16 trillion for stimulus measures and their economic recovery, only 1% of this amount is being allocated to assist developing countries through development aid. Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows have proven to be resilient even in uncertain times, but the additional USD8 billion registered in 2020 (corresponding to a 3% increase in ODA) is 2000x less than the above-mentioned amounts mobilised for the economic recovery in developed countries, which is particularly worrying given the decrease in all other major flows of income for developing countries - trade, foreign direct investment, and remittances – due to the pandemic. Furthermore, more than half of developing countries were already in a situation of indebtedness before the pandemic, which is now worsening, with noticeable but insufficient initiatives in response, as these should be focused not only on debt suspension but also on restructuring.

The 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI)/ODA international target is a promise made by wealthy nations to poorer countries that should be kept and fulfilled. Within this framework, fragile countries should not disappear from the radar of the international community’s support, and development cooperation organisations need to keep focusing on challenging state
contexts, in order not to generate the so-called “aid orphans”, with unforeseeable consequences to the world’s security and development aspirations. The **predictability of support and long-term engagement** must also be ensured to allow for some stability and planning capacity.

On the other hand, only a very small portion of ODA targeting fragile countries is being **allocated for peacebuilding and even less for conflict prevention**, notwithstanding the centrality of peace and security for development processes in these countries. An increasing part of aid resources to fragile countries is focused on responding to humanitarian and emergency needs, and there is still a noticeable confusion between crisis management (focusing on the symptoms) and approaching fragile contexts (which implies addressing the causes). Against this background, the “triple nexus” approach may promote greater coordination and interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actors/areas of action, among which there is still significant fragmentation, incoherence and competition.

Finally, while we have been speaking about global public goods within global governance for quite some time, the pandemic was a major reality check. Resilience to pandemics, climate action, conflict prevention or migration management are some of the issues that can only be addressed by increased cooperation and multilateralism, moving forward to **adequately protect, regulate and finance common goods**.

“There will be no possibility of achieving the SDGs without increased coherence, coordination and resilience of development finance, by adequately addressing issues of debt, trade access, private investment, development aid, and also domestic resources mobilisation.”

JORGE MOREIRA DA SILVA, director of OECD Development Co-operation Directorate.
Global solidarity and cooperation are the only way to mitigate the grim and long-lasting impact of COVID-19. On a positive note, the pandemic seems to have spread the notion of interdependence among citizens (particularly in developed countries), who are increasingly pushing their governments to take more effective measures, to keep them safe and properly address this worldwide challenge. The protection of public health has emerged as a global common cause that is present in everyone’s concerns. Global crises usually generate changes in the global architecture, and leaders are being prompted to be more aware of the need for coordination and to respond to people’s aspirations. In this sense, the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator initiative and its global vaccine access programme COVAX, as well as some of the measures taken by the G20 and G7 are worth mentioning, particularly because they seemed unlikely to have happened before. In the future, the pandemic may also be a condition for changing mentalities in international development partnerships, as the pressure on resources/budgets will push for an increased focus on quality and for the relevance of building effective partnerships.

For poorer and fragile countries, it was also a wake-up call on existing dependencies (not only of financial resources but also in mindset), therefore promoting an increased awareness about their responsibilities, as well as on the need to reinforce their responsiveness and resilience. In Africa, the African Union launched an initiative to improve joint responses to the pandemic and worked with a sense of urgency – the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) led the process and has proven the need for such a body –, and several countries are taking steps to increase their capacities in producing tests and vaccines (as Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria).

Despite some positive examples, however, most international reactions seem to suffer from the “too little, too late” axiom, if we consider the magnitude of the crisis. It became rapidly clear that we were not all in the same boat, including on access to vaccines. This has become a key issue in responding to present and future challenges, both for fragile/poor countries and worldwide, as global economic recovery largely depends on controlling the pandemic at a global scale and the spread of new virus variants/mutations. The frequently stated mantra of “no one is safe until everyone is safe” is not only wishful thinking but rather scientific evidence. This is also true for economic recovery: if full vaccination in developing countries is only achieved by 2024, the global economy will lose around $USD5 trillion.

Nevertheless, inequalities are striking in this regard. Approximately 80% of vaccines have been administered in high-income countries and while around 70% of adults are fully vaccinated in the UK, in African countries the average is less than 2%. The competition over vaccines is fierce: when the African Union tried to buy vaccines, they had already been effectively and preventively purchased by developed countries and regions. Although vaccine nationalism may be understandable in a pandemic due to political and public pressures, it is now clear that wealthy countries are monopolising the delivery of vaccines and the production is not being adequately distributed. As stated by the WHO Director-General, these unequal vaccine policies mean the world is facing a “catastrophic moral failure.” Indeed, the vaccination of healthy young people in wealthy countries before those most vulnerable to the virus and those on the front line of response in poor countries may be classified as a moral flaw that will be paid with lives and livelihoods in these countries, arising from the mistake – already made – of not approaching vaccination in a global perspective and as a global public good.
Controlling the pandemic in poorer countries implies moving forward and more quickly on closing the significant vaccine supply gap, ensuring fair and equitable access to vaccines, promoting transparent information and combating misinformation/disinformation, as well as investing in strengthening health systems and institutional capacities.

**Closing the vaccine supply gap** would be possible through a comprehensive global plan ensuring both predictability (plan the supply) and equitability (needs-based allocation), for which efforts must be shared fairly. Regarding vaccine sharing, GAVI alliance and COVAX should not be blamed, as this and other initiatives are sharply underfunded, relying on the goodwill of donations and the fulfilment of promises made. On the other hand, measures announced by the G7 in the June 2021 Summit may be significant in translating a sense of global responsibility, but they fall short of what is required to deal with the pandemic and to accelerate the support to poorer countries in this regard. The scale of needs largely surpasses the pace of current support (not to mention the time needed to implement such measures), with a huge gap between what is offered and what is required: pledges are now to provide around one billion doses to poor countries, but that is only enough to vaccinate 10% of the population in poor countries, while the G7 and European
Union (EU) countries currently have 2.5 billion more doses than necessary to vaccinate their entire populations.

Although there were no additional financial commitments in the G7 summit, a recent IMF paper has concluded that $USD50 billion would be enough to vaccinate 40% of the people living in poor countries by the end of 2021 and at least 60% by the first half of 2022, therefore helping to curb the pandemic in the developing world, reducing infections and loss of lives, accelerating the economic recovery through the generation of additional $USD9 trillion in return, besides considerable benefits on people’s health and lives around the world. This points to the issue of political will (to provide for resources), although that should be regarded as one of many elements of a complex, delicate and very unpredictable situation.

Cooperation is key not only for distributing vaccines, because fragile and poorer countries are not able to meet the real costs of delivery on the ground (e.g. Sudan had already to discard vaccines because was not able to administer them, and the Democratic Republic of Congo returned one million doses due to lack of capacity). CARE International estimates that for every dollar invested in vaccines, $5 are needed to deliver those vaccines to populations. This means that international support will be vital to remedy these shortcomings, including by identifying and fostering new partnerships and approaches to reach communities, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalised. Furthermore, other diseases (such as measles or yellow fever) and immunisation, in general, are significant challenges in fragile settings, where there is also a very important gap on basic vaccination, that has a great impact on child mortality and has been aggravated by the pandemic. In this context, it would also be important to reflect on how immunisation is carried out in many fragile and vulnerable countries, to go beyond the traditional humanitarian partners and identify others with comparative advantages to deliver and scale up new approaches.
Vaccines’ production is a major issue, as it is concentrated in a few countries (USA, some EU countries, India, China and Russia) and from these, only China and the EU are exporting vaccines in practice (around 400 million each, to date). Within this context, opinions are divided on the role played by the EU so far. EU support to global vaccine-sharing mechanisms, including the pledge in May 2021 to donate at least 100 million doses through COVAX and the EUR 3.2 billion financing of GAVI, as well as the provision of EUR 1 billion to support vaccine production in African countries that already have production facilities, are commendable initiatives, particularly if we consider that Europe was the most hit continent by this pandemic one year ago. The EU is also keen to stress that its position differs from Russia and China on vaccine diplomacy, as it pursues no preferential treatment for specific partners and no trade-offs, such as exchanging vaccines donations/exports for expensive loans, access to markets and natural resources, or even other strategic support on specific political issues. However, one can also say that the solidarity message came along rather late and decisions to support EU partners were slow and insufficient. EU Member States’ positions are also mixed, as France is bilaterally supporting Africa and Portugal and Spain have decided to share 5% of the purchased vaccines, while other European countries are still waiting to take action. In addition, EU decisions to temporarily restrict vaccines’ exports, or to block the patents’ waiver at the international level is being criticised by civil society groups (such as CONCORD) and by poorer countries.

Many opinions stress the need to turn the entire supply chain monopoly-free, including (but not limited to) the lifting of patents. Fragile countries have supported the pledge of a wide group of developing countries for a WTO TRIPS waiver, but patents’ suspension may not be such a straightforward issue, for different reasons. Some argue that the incentive for companies to continue investing in research must be ensured (mainly the EU argument), while others perceive the lifting of patents as a necessary but not sufficient measure, because it does not solve the delivery/
distribution issue, as suspending patents is like providing the information on the ingredients for a recipe, without explaining what should be done to successfully execute the recipe. In any case, the pandemic has shown that the high concentration of vaccine’s production in few countries is a danger, especially if we consider the possibility of other forthcoming pandemics, and the possible waiver in patents must be complemented with the removal of export bans of vaccine components, knowledge and expertise sharing, technology transfer and other support to vaccine production in developing countries.

It is now clear that there will be other pandemics, and if we want to face coming threats, we must respond better and faster, as well as making sure we have the necessary mechanisms in place for the future. Namely, it will be crucial that every country can increase their testing and diagnostics’ capacity, as well as to sequence the genome of the virus to study and predict mutations. This could be achieved by creating a global surveillance body, set up as a network of scientific organisations that could implement a “radar system” to sequence viruses and detect new pathogens, and by sharing that information in a transparent, open and non-politicised way. If we have the capacity to prevent and to deal quickly with arising issues, we know we can improve the response provided at various levels, but this will only be possible if resources and expertise are shared, including with poorer countries.

International cooperation will also be key to seize the opportunity of building back better, particularly in supporting robust and equitable health systems around the world. In this context, other infectious disease outbreaks, and particularly the experience of Sub Saharan African countries with Ebola, tuberculosis, and even HIV have brought us important lessons and examples of the right paths to follow, including the importance of primary healthcare capacity, the investment on public health plans and community engagement programmes, the need to ensure good working conditions and social protection to health workers, and the focus on robust supply and delivery systems. We should capitalise on all the existing political attention on global health and focus on creating and improving resilient health systems that are capable of reaching (and working with) communities - which is the best way to prevent further health crises.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled the fragility in global systems and mechanisms, a phenomenon the fragile countries have lived in for decades, as it has been proven that the world is not well equipped, either institutionally or politically, to pursue quick solutions in pressing global problems. This unleashed fragility points to the urgent need of reinforcing multilateral structures, instruments and mechanisms, since only multilateralism and cooperation will be able to provide for shared solutions and help to overcome any common global challenge (like COVID-19 and its long-lasting impacts). While the UN Summit in September and the G20 summit in October 2021 may be key moments to potentially move forward in this regard, changes in the conditions for global governance and more systematic cooperation are needed.

“This pandemic has proven the need to strengthen and provide adequate resources and instruments to multilateral structures that deal with disaster situations and manage early warning mechanisms for health crises on a global scale. (...) Will it now be possible to equip the United Nations and surrounding agencies with the necessary means and conditions for better world regulation to deal with the uncertainties of the future?”

– Francisco Seixas da Costa, President of Club of Lisbon
The source of all the contents and data presented in this report are the speakers’ presentations and debates held at the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Conference on State Fragility.

This review on State Fragility was drafted by Patrícia Magalhães Ferreira. The author is responsible for the report’s and infographic’s content, including errors and misinterpretations.

The infographics were designed by Marília Ferreira da Cunha.

Layout and design:

Read the concluding remarks sent by the conference organisers to the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council.

Read the Statement of Solidarity and Cooperation by the g7+.

Watch the videos here.

More information on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Conference on State Fragility.
The Conference had 345 participants from around the globe. It was streamed through a dedicated platform and Youtube. Around 64% of the viewers were aged 36 to 65 years old and there was a balance between male (53.4%) and female (40.8%) participants. The event was advertised on Club of Lisbon’s Facebook and Instagram pages reaching out to 57483 people.

This global event had 19 speakers from 13 countries, including current and former members of governments, multilateral entities, academia, the private sector, media and civil society.

The event was organised by Club of Lisbon and g7+ with the support of Camões, I.P., the Lisbon Municipality, the Institute Marquês de Valle Flôr, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
Conferences on
STATE
FRAGILITY

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