

## KEY MESSAGES

2022 Human Development Report

'Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a World in Transformation'

### Challenges

- **Growing global turmoil has led to unprecedented reversals in human development progress in 90 percent of countries.** The pandemic – compounded by inequalities, climate shocks, rapid technological innovation, and social mistrust – has whipped up a perfect storm to wipe out human progress.
- Human Development reversing for a second consecutive year constitutes **a backslide in Human Development never seen before**, setting us back to levels recorded at the start of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the adoption of Paris Agreement in 2016.
- **A new uncertainty complex:** Humanity's biggest challenges – the climate and biodiversity crises, inequalities and political polarization as well as technological upheavals - are piling up and feeding off each other. This is happening at a speed and scale beyond what humans have ever experienced.
- **Intersecting uncertainties means that crises are having devastating impacts on our deeply connected societies.** The invasion of Ukraine has compounded the greatest cost-of-living-crisis in a generation and a looming global food insecurity crisis that is threatening to leave hundreds of millions without food. The COVID-19 pandemic, beyond its damage to people's health and mental wellbeing, has also devastated economies and exacerbated gender inequality.
- **People are feeling more distressed.** Stress, sadness, anger and worry have been increasing over the last decade, now reaching record levels. The proportion of people reporting stress worldwide is over 35 percent, 10 percent more than one decade ago.
- **The current mental health crises impair human development and limit people's freedoms and opportunities.** Children are particularly affected: more than 50 percent of them have experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence. About 450 million children – or one in six - currently live in conflict zones, with devastating consequences for their mental wellbeing, including post-traumatic stress disorder.
- **Uncertainty, inequality and insecurity go hand in hand with polarization and lack of trust.** Political polarization and mistrust shrink our capacity for social dialogue and stifle collective action. Globally, less than 30% of people think most people can be trusted, its lowest recorded value.

## Ways Forward

- **There is opportunity in uncertainty.** The growing mismatch between the world as it really is and conventional ways of understanding and doing things is an opportunity to do something new. **Doubling down on human development will help us navigate the future and unleash people's potential to be agents of change.**
- **We must break humanity's current paralysis and set a new course** by defusing polarization, rebuilding trust and allowing everyone to be part of decision-making.
- **Navigating uncertainty requires open and inclusive dialogue**, to explore what communities want for their futures. Change, such as green transitions, is vital but can be destabilising unless carefully managed.
- **Evidence alone is not enough to change people's minds.** We must widen our understanding of human behaviour to recognise the roles of emotions, cognitive biases and culture.
- Many traditional approaches to public policy – from education to finance – are rooted in the past. **Institutions need to adapt to the world as it is today in order to achieve the future we aspire to.** They must go beyond setting new policies to interact with social movements and shape new norms and values.
- **We must ease mental distress, mitigate crises and build psychological resilience** to help us navigate an uncertain world. This includes significantly expanding access to mental health care - often a privilege accessible only to a few.
- **Policies that focus on investment, insurance, and innovation will enable people to thrive in the face of uncertainty.** *Investment* —from renewable energy to preparedness for pandemics and extreme natural hazards— to ease planetary pressures. *Insurance*— including social protection— to prepare our societies for the contingencies of an uncertain world. *Innovation* in its many forms—technological, economic, cultural—to respond to the unknown challenges that humanity will face.
- **We can accomplish a lot if we work together towards shared goals.** By addressing inequality and unlocking our human potential through enhancing people's freedoms and opportunities we can create futures in which both people and the planet thrive despite uncertainties. **Where we go from here is up to us.**