

shut out of testing services and health facilities. Perhaps 11 million of the poorest girls in the world may never go back to the classroom⁽⁸⁾. People living in the poorest countries are at the tail-end of the vaccine queue.

It does not have to be this way.

A groundswell of opinion is determined to address inequality so that we can come out of the pandemic looking forward to a better world, sustaining and expanding responses where they have shown a better path. Governments have offered income support to millions of people in places where, before the pandemic, that had been considered a political impossibility. Campaign-based health services, like immunization, have bounced back rapidly. Service delivery in health is being changed for the better through people-centred initiatives, such as those in telemedicine or with the multi-month dispensing of medications. The links between green and sustainable futures and a pandemic-free world are being drawn more clearly than ever before.

Ending this pandemic as quickly as possible goes hand in hand with preparing to avert another one. Paying attention to what went wrong, as well as to what went right, will be invaluable pointers to ways in which the world can get back on track to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This pandemic has shaken some of the standard assumptions that a country's wealth will secure its health. Leadership and competence have counted more than cash in pandemic responses. Many of the best examples of decisive leadership have come from governments and communities in more resource-constrained settings. There is a clear opportunity to build a future beyond the pandemic that draws on the wellsprings of wisdom from every part of the world.

