



**Opening Remarks by Permanent Representative  
Ambassador Guillermo Fernández de Soto  
Permanent Mission of Colombia to the UN**

***The Lancet COVID-19 Commission: Briefing for Permanent Representatives  
to the UN and Mission Staff***

Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> 2021

11:30am – 1:30 pm

**4 MINUTES**

Dear Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Chair of The Lancet COVID-19  
Commission, Distinguished Co-chairs, Speakers, and  
Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to welcome you all today and to co-host this  
briefing.

It has been already a long and dramatic year since the WHO  
declared the pandemic.



We have been facing a triple crisis at the global level that comprises the spheres of health, economics, and politics.

It affects all, but it is causing enormous suffering in the countries with the lowest levels of development.

Also, it is impacting the most vulnerable populations, especially women, children, and the elderly.

Although there are positive steps in the development of multiple vaccines against Covid-19, the pace of its global distribution and administration is disappointing.

According to experts, “The world’s richest countries have received 86% of vaccines administered so far. Only 0.1% of doses have been administered in low-income countries”.



It corroborates once again the current global unbalances and inequalities.

This is unacceptable especially in the field of public health.

The situation in many parts of the world remains acute, as the virus continues to mutate in new linages.

Therefore, an equitable, rapid, and extensive vaccination campaign to all remains paramount.

All the efforts for cooperation are essential in 2021.

We ought to build a new political consensus around the roadmap to follow in the post-pandemic world.

We need to move forward to attain a sustainable, transformative, inclusive, green, and digital recovery to



reinforce our collaborative work and a strong commitment to accomplishing the 2030 Agenda.

We have to work together towards the construction of a new social contract for a better society as Minouche Shafik – Director of the London School of Economics- has suggested in her most recent book.

There is the opportunity to implement a new generation of reforms focused on institutional strengthening, public goods, and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

In this context, we recognize the work of The Lancet COVID-19 Commission, launched in July 2020.

This interdisciplinary initiative across the health sciences, business, finance, and public policy, works around four (4) main themes and is supported by twelve (12) Task Forces, in areas



ranging from vaccine development to humanitarian relief strategies, to safe workplaces, to global economic recovery.

Dear colleagues,

I do believe that it is only through multilateralism, international cooperation, and solidarity that we will be able to mitigate the multidimensional consequences of this pandemic.

We must continue working together based on these principles to strengthen multilateralism and global institutions.

I would like to reaffirm that you can count on Colombia's commitment and readiness to cooperate.

My final message for today is encapsulated in the following line:



We need a new political consensus, social contract, and generation of reforms.

More global social equity is our aim.

Thank you.