



**OECD/GOV Webinar Series: OECD  
Building A New Paradigm For Public  
Trust**

**The Trust Divide: How COVID-19  
Exposes the Impact of Inequality on  
Citizen Confidence in Government**

**Closing Remarks by Jeffrey Schlagenhauf,  
Deputy Secretary-General  
OECD**

**[19 October 2020, 3 pm CET]**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Good afternoon,

Many thanks to all the panellists for your contributions, as well as to everyone who has made it to this third webinar in our series "**Building a new paradigm for public trust**". Your questions and inputs made today's discussion all the more interesting. I also want to thank **Elsa Pilichowski**, Director of the OECD Public Governance Directorate, for moderating this crucial discussion about the multiple links between inequality and trust in governments.

Trust is the foundation upon which our economies are built, as well as the cornerstone of the legitimacy and sustainability of our political systems. **Restoring trust will be crucial also for a successful recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.**

The OECD Interim Economic Outlook, launched in September, clearly shows that **public policies have an important role in mitigating the economic and social impact of the crisis**. However, the success of those policies depends to a large extent on their capacity to build and harness trust from people and businesses.

Policymakers need to prove that they are working to improve peoples' lives, including by improving the delivery of essential goods and services. And this challenge is not exclusive to OECD countries. Today we learnt that many Latin American countries for instance are confronted with similar situations. **The challenge is global and it requires a global solution** – with more international cooperation in governance, science, commerce and regulations.

In today's webinar, we have heard different perspectives from academia, civil society and policy-makers about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on different groups of people, and about how various types of inequality affect people's trust in public institutions.

Our panellists addressed the ways in **which governments can improve the representation of disadvantaged groups in policymaking**, with the aim of reducing inequalities and enhancing trust. As we advance in shaping economic recovery policies and make investment choices for the future, it is crucial for countries to have the **relevant data and evidence on how to design, implement and communicate reforms to restore trust**.

If you would like to continue engaging in this reflection, you are invited to join us for our **next webinar on November 12th**. The webinar will specifically address how the public sector can **enhance its capacity for addressing complex challenges and improve agility to adapt to new circumstances**, with the objective of building a trusting relationship the population.

I hope to see you there. Thank you.