

Subject Line: B20 Saudi Arabia welcomes G20 Leaders' commitment to tackle COVID-19 pandemic

Hello,

On the heels of yesterday's extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit, the [B20 Saudi Arabia](#), the voice of business to the G20, released a statement on the COVID-19 announcement at the end of the summit.

The statement, issued by B20 Chair Yousef Al-Benyani, commends the G20's commitment to addressing the pandemic and calls for clear action to do so. As businesses of all sizes will play a pivotal role in the economic recovery stage post-pandemic, the B20 Saudi Arabia previously announced a [COVID-19 Initiative](#) to address how to get business up and running again, as well as how to plan for future crises of this magnitude.

Please click [here](#) to view the statement in its entirety. We have also included the statement below this email.

Do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions or requests.

Best,

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On Behalf of the B20 Saudi Arabia

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B20 Saudi Arabia, the official voice of the private sector to the G20, welcomes the G20 Leaders' commitment to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

March 27, 2020

B20 Saudi Arabia welcomes the statement on the need for global coordination to respond to the impact of COVID-19, announced at the end of the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit. We commend the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in particular The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, for organizing the meeting at this critical juncture and address this devastating pandemic. His call at the onset to address the wellbeing of all, particularly of those in greatest need in developing countries, demonstrates the leadership required in such challenging times.

The commitment for a 'transparent, robust, coordinated, large-scale and science-based global response, enhanced by specific direction and calls to action of various institutions is extremely reassuring to those impacted by this unprecedented global crisis.

B20 Saudi Arabia particularly praises G20's recognition for the complementary private sector role in "rapid development, manufacturing and distribution of diagnostics, antiviral medicines, and vaccines."

The timing of the meeting and its outcome are important as last week, B20 Saudi Arabia announced an initiative to address the impact of COVID-19, in addition to future crises that could have similar or even more devastating impacts on global businesses and financial markets. As part of this initiative, the B20 is

establishing a holistic and pandemic specific cross-border group that will review a multitude of issues connected to the health and wellbeing of businesses around the world and the billions of people that they employ and serve. Based on the results of their consultations, the group will then develop a set of recommendations that will be submitted to the G20 for review and inclusion in its official communiqué.

The G20 statement addresses challenges, including those posed by trade barriers, on production, transport, availability, and affordability of essential medical supplies. Rallying their support to the WHO for coordinated efforts and assurances to close the financing gap, must be followed up on an urgent basis. Focus on ramping up epidemic preparedness is necessary, and the special mention to Africa and small island nations is an expression of global solidarity.

The immediate injection of over \$5 trillion into the global economy, with a focus on workers and vulnerable groups, and MSMEs (Micro Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) will provide much needed relief. However, the B20 stresses that as the socio-economic impact continues to unfold, more fiscal and monetary measures, along with easing of trade and regulatory regimes might be necessary. B20 Saudi Arabia expects that the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, tasked to prepare the action plan in time for their meeting in April, will address these issues.

The planned joint meeting of the Health and Finance ministers in the coming months is particularly noteworthy. B20 Saudi Arabia reiterates its recommendation for factoring health epidemic risks into economic risks by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, working in close partnership with the WHO.

Most importantly, while the G20 statement is positive, reassuring and directional, it must be followed by clear actions and monitoring. B20 Saudi Arabia reiterates its support to the G20 and commits to channeling its efforts and collective energies of its members and partners to propose actionable recommendations to the G20 through its COVID-19 initiative in the coming weeks and months.

Yousef Al-Benyan
B20 Saudi Arabia Chair
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This material is distributed by Edelman on behalf of SABIC. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

Good Afternoon XX,

My name is XX and I am reaching out on behalf of [Dr. Ilham Mansour Al-Dakheel](#), Chair of the B20 Saudi Arabia Future of Work and Education Task Force.

As a facilitator of a global conversation on the future of work and education with the private sector, Dr. Ilham has penned an op-ed where she identified **several key considerations for business continuity amidst the COVID-19 crisis as well as the future of work and education post-pandemic (see below)**.

Dr. Ilham is a Saudi businesswoman with more than 25 years of experience in the Education sector. She's also the CEO of Dur Alkuttab, a Saudi educational company established in 2016, following a strategic alliance between the Higher Education Fund of the Ministry of Education and Mulkia Investment Company.

Please let me know if this is something you would consider for publication, and we'll be happy to share a near final draft for your review.

Best,

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On behalf of the B20 Saudi Arabia

- **Movement of human & intellectual capital cannot be stymied.** COVID-19 has not just put limitations on but revoked in many cases the flow of large numbers of workforce and talent, affecting movement and availability of human and intellectual capital. In the post-crisis period, governments must ensure that there are no selective biases against movement of people across borders. National health can be maintained using other effective measures rather than imposing such restrictions that could be extremely expensive to national and global economic growth and development. As business leaders it is our duty to be on guard and anticipate such discriminatory and trade-impinging measures, and advocate now for openness and unhindered flow of workforce and talent.
- **We need to consider a crisis fund for small and local business.** All businesses will feel the financial pinch of the COVID-19 crisis, but none will be hit harder than the small and local businesses who are the lifeline of communities around the world. Their economic wellbeing is critical not only to the towns and villages where they operate but also to the supply chains of multinational corporations who are reliant on their goods and services. We propose creating a crisis fund to support micro, small and medium businesses (MSMEs) that are affected by such crises – now and in the future. While large companies have the financial capability to withstand this tide, MSMEs – which are also the largest job creators – need attractive working capital to survive, revive and thrive.
- **We must be the voice against protectionism.** In crises such as this, we can expect that pro-protectionist voices could gather strength. We must be diligent and continue to advocate for multilateralism, openness and globalization in order for the world to realize the economic upswing, in the post-pandemic phase. This will be particularly important for the disadvantaged

populations who could end up bearing the brunt of such protectionist actions. We can only make this possible by reinstating movement of people for work, trade, and leisure.

- **Digital technologies and infrastructure have been put to the test.** We must ensure it works for all. Many cannot afford the tools needed to work from home or attend school online. Right now, only about 59 percent of the global population has access to technologies that allow for digital work and education. We must change that if we want to bridge this global digital divide. This means government must upgrade their infrastructure and technologies, including clearing the path for 5G networks. For businesses and education systems, this means fast tracking adoption of digital technologies and, in doing so, they could leapfrog by years the gradual transition we had anticipated pre-pandemic to a more digitalized world. After the current crisis wanes, organizations may realize the cost-saving benefits of this new reality and may not fully roll-back to old ways of working and learning.

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