



G20 Leaders' Side Event: Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, November 21, 2020

On the margins of the G20 summit, the Saudi G20 Presidency hosted a high-level Side Event on Pandemic Preparedness and Response.

The G20 leaders along with global organizations emphasised the need for a continued coordinated response to the coronavirus pandemic, especially to support the most vulnerable, whilst increasing the pandemic preparedness spending for further research and innovation to create tools and vaccines.

The world has been undergoing a health and economic crisis of an unprecedented scale and severity. As of November 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has infected around 54 million people, claiming over 1 million lives worldwide.

The G20 Saudi Presidency has led international efforts by organizing, at the beginning of the pandemic, an Extraordinary Summit where G20 Leaders pledged to do whatever it takes to overcome the pandemic and protect lives, jobs, and the most vulnerable. As a result of this Summit, G20 members have contributed to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic with over USD21bn at the outset of the crisis to support health systems and the hunt for a vaccine. Moreover, G20 made available over USD14bn in debt relief for developing nations and injected an unprecedented USD11 trillion so far to safeguard the global economy.

The G20 is now looking forward. The G20 Saudi Presidency will hold the second Leaders' Summit in 2020 with the ambition of bringing world leaders together to secure the necessary next steps towards a safer world and build an Inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future. The spirit of solidarity that brought the leaders together in March was the initial mark of unity in the fight against the pandemic. This has mobilized world leaders to take collective actions to protect people from pandemics and to make sure we are better prepared in the future.

Addressing the meeting the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, said:

"Your Majesties, Your Excellencies, Your Highnesses,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Pandemic Preparedness event.

The world is facing an unprecedented global health challenge on people, communities, and economies.

From the onset of the pandemic and in an attempt to jumpstart the global response, we met in an extraordinary summit last March where we all took swift and collective actions to counter this crisis. We continue to do so.

The pandemic has demonstrated that international cooperation is the optimal way to overcome crises. We must focus on the most vulnerable segments. We must provide support for all countries of the world, for we would not be safe until everyone is safe.





In April, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia joined forces with international organizations and global leaders to launch the Access to Covid Tools-Accelerator . We co-led the Global Coronavirus Pledging Event to meet the global shortage in developing and distributing vaccines and diagnostic tools, where the Kingdom contributed \$500MN towards that end.

With the advances we are witnessing in the Covid-19 vaccine development, our top priority is to ensure affordable and equitable access to the vaccine and diagnostic tools for all.

This pandemic is a true test for our global health systems. Therefore, through the G20 Presidency, we utilized a number of vital initiatives to close the pandemic preparedness and response gaps.

During our Presidency, with the support of the G20 members , we proposed the Access to Pandemic Tools (APT) initiative, which aims at ensuring focus on sustainable preparedness and response to counter any future pandemic. We look forward to furthering this discussion and implementation during the Italian Presidency next year.

Together we can reach our goal of protecting lives, livelihoods and shaping a better world to realize the opportunities for the 21st century for all.

In this regard we would like to hear form their Majesties, Highnesses, Excellencies to share their relevant initiatives and best practices.

Thank you."

The event was hosted by the Saudi G20 Presidency and took place virtually, speakers in the side event, included:

- The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
- Prime Minister of Italy – Giuseppe Conte
- President of Argentina– Alberto Fernández
- President of France – Emmanuel Macron
- Chancellor of Germany– Angela Merkel
- President of South Korea – Moon Jae-in
- President of South Africa – Cyril Ramaphosa
- Gavi Alliance – Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Prime Minister of Italy, Giuseppe Conte, said:

"The G20 itself has taken unprecedented measures...which allowed to reach important milestones – the access to the COVID tools Accelerator is one of those milestones."

President of Argentina, Alberto Fernández, said:

"In Argentina we have worked on a comprehensive approach, putting the protection of people's lives first.

"Cooperation and solidarity are the two key elements to fight the Pandemic."





President of France, Emmanuel Macron, said:

"The only effective response to the pandemic will be a coordinated, global one, based on solidarity."

"We can reasonably expect that before the end of the year, a vaccine will be available, which is totally unprecedented. But an even more difficult fight must be fought. It is that of universal access to health technologies against COVID-19."

Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel said:

"A global challenge, which is what the pandemic undoubtedly is, can only be overcome with a global effort. The G20 has a crucial responsibility in this area. For example, we have launched the ACT Accelerator and its COVAX facility. This unique global platform serves to promote the development, production and distribution of medicines, diagnostics and vaccines."

President of South Korea, Moon Jae-in, said:

"We must work together more closely in solidarity to defeat the coronavirus. I hope that the efforts of the G20 will inspire hope to the world."

President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, said:

"We are pleased there appears to be consensus in the G20 that access to an effective COVID-19 vaccine should be universal, it should also be fair and equitable."

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Gavi Board Chair, said:

"The virus is winning. Only through adequate financing for a global exit strategy like Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) can economic vitality be restored at home and catastrophe in the poorest countries averted. A commitment by G20 leaders to invest the \$4.6 billion to fill the ACT Accelerator's immediate funding gap will save lives, lay the groundwork for mass procurement and delivery of ACT-A Tools – tests, treatments, and vaccines – around the world. In addition, a joint commitment to spend a proportion of future stimulus to mobilize the \$24 billion needed in 2021 for the COVID-19 tools needed globally, the G20 will build a strong foundation to end the pandemic."

Further information about the G20, including the Presidency Agenda and full program of events, visit www.g20.org.

For more details and to access the full video, please visit the [G20 Media Microsite](#).

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