

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
G20 Chairman

Paris, 12 March 2020

Your Majesty,

We are writing to you on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) – the institutional representative of over 45 million businesses – to respectfully call for urgent action from G20 leaders in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Building on the welcome statement from G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors on 6th March – and following yesterday’s decision by the World Health Organization (WHO) to designate COVID-19 as a global pandemic – we believe there is now a pressing need for G20 Heads of State and Government to agree on an overarching policy response from the world’s largest economies. It is our view that swift and decisive action from G20 Heads of State and Government – under the leadership of the Saudi Presidency – would significantly help reassure global business, markets and citizens throughout the world in the face of growing uncertainty and volatility.

In this connection, we believe that an initial priority must be for G20 leaders to agree on coordinated action to ensure access to essential medical supplies and scale all necessary public health funding to tackle COVID-19. This should encompass clear commitments to:

1. avoid export bans or limits on the free flow of all necessary medical supplies, medicines, disinfectant, soap and personal protective equipment;
2. reverse existing export bans on medical supplies needed to tackle COVID-19;
3. reduce the costs of all necessary medical supplies by lifting import taxes, quotas and other government-imposed costs;
4. allow and encourage the private sector to support government services in mass testing for the disease for both diagnostics and surveillance;
5. strengthen incentives to increase domestic production of necessary medical supplies and to speed up research into vaccines and other treatments; and
6. immediately scale funding for the WHO’s Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and any other appropriate global response mechanisms.

Following the effective response of the G20 to the global financial crisis, we also respectfully call on world leaders to pledge to do whatever is necessary to keep the world economy out of recession, including by:

- enacting measures to restore confidence, growth and jobs;
- providing coordinated support for affected sectors and small businesses; and
- making available all necessary financial assistance to the world's poorest countries.

Alignment among G20 leaders on such a package of measures would significantly boost ongoing efforts to manage the pandemic – while minimizing the potential social and economic impacts of COVID-19.

As the world's largest business institution, ICC stands ready to assist the Saudi Arabian Presidency and G20 leaders in any way possible in developing a coordinated action plan to robustly address the current pandemic.

We thank you for your ongoing leadership of the G20 process and please do count on the full support of the global business community in the weeks and months ahead.



Paul Polman
ICC Chairman



John W.H. Denton AO
ICC Secretary General