

T20 ramps up engagement during pandemic and calls for G20 leaders to use COVID-19 as an opportunity to build back better

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, October 30, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Global political leaders must take a long-term view of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Think20 ([T20](#)) experts advise as their Summit Season comes to an end ahead of November's G20 Summit.

T20, the research and policy advice network of the Group of 20 (G20), kicked off its T20 Summit Season in September 2020. In previous years, T20 has concluded its calendar with the T20 Summit held in the host country. When it became clear COVID-19 would have a long-lasting impact, the decision was taken to replace the physical summit with the Summit Season, a digital programme consisting of six weeks of webinars in which each task force would have the opportunity to openly discuss themes, present ideas and share recommendations leading up to the virtual two-day summit in November.

Over the course of the Summit Season, 4,000 registrants had the opportunity to attend eleven webinars featuring 153 speakers. Additionally, T20 attracted over 40% more policy brief submissions than in previous years, a level of engagement and activity that would not have been possible before COVID-19 and the response to the virus, including remote working, restricted traveling and the increased use of digital platforms for communication.

[Fahad M Alturki](#), vice president and head of research at King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) and T20 chair, said: "When we unveiled our priorities at a two-day conference held in January 2020, the gravity of COVID-19 and the impact the virus would have



Think20 Logo

globally were not yet fully known. More than 150 institutions and think tanks and over 550 attendees from 65 countries participated in the T20 Inception Conference, and participation has continued to grow despite the pandemic.

"As the world began to react to the increasing threat of COVID-19 and priorities shifted, T20 continued to see high levels of engagement as it transitioned from physical meetings to a virtual conference. For example, in 2019, more than 400 Japanese and global think tank experts from around the world came together and prepared

104 policy briefs in ten subject areas. Although travel has been extremely limited, the T20 Summit Season this year saw more than 4,000 people register and 146 policy briefs published, authored by 678 individuals from 464 institutions in 62 countries, which marks the highest number of researchers participating in the think tank engagement group since its inception."

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pandemic unfolded. TF11 explored how countries could develop resilient healthcare infrastructure and the impact of pandemics on markets, financial institutions, vulnerable social groups, education and the environment.

T20 steering committee member and KAPSARC president, Adam Sieminski, said: "The necessity of and the urgency for creating TF11 was apparent for all involved. Within two weeks of establishing the new task force, we had received 70 abstracts, which we consolidated into 18 policy briefs. A number of the recommendations made in these briefs have already been implemented by governments around the world, demonstrating the importance and influence of engagement groups such as T20.

"It was also evident COVID-19 was impacting the discussions being held by other task forces. The



Fahad M Alturki, vice president and head of research at King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) and T20 chair

overwhelming feeling was the pandemic is affecting every facet of our lives, regardless of where you live or your socio-economic standing. A theme that has run throughout this chapter of T20 is inclusivity, whether that be through the participation of non-G20 countries or ensuring women and youth were represented. For example, we saw the pandemic affecting regional submissions on migration and young societies as well as international submissions on sustainable energy, water and food systems. Every task force comprised of researchers from around the globe explored the effects of the pandemic and what action needs to be taken in the short and long-term to recover."



Adam Sieminski, T20 steering committee member and KAPSARC president

With COVID-19 acting as an overarching theme, the task forces' policy briefs have highlighted the need for global preparedness and give recommendations to leaders on how to rebuild more resilient economies, working cooperatively between borders. Sieminski said: "What we outline is a three-step process. Initially, we are all going to be working to return the economy and availability of jobs to pre-COVID levels. Countries will then need to invest in healthcare and technology infrastructure to ensure we are ready to deal with the next pandemic or disruptive global event. We can then really focus on being able to build back better.

"We advise leaders to take a long-term view and focus recovery stimulus activity on encouraging sustainable economic and environmental solutions. We have the unique opportunity to foster innovation in such a way that it benefits everyone, everywhere. However, no one recommendation alone is going to reap the results we need. Leaders will need to take a more holistic view, ensuring they do not embrace recommendations at the expense of others."

Alturki concluded: "This year has not been without its struggles and it has taken the hard work and dedication of our participants to ensure we were able to coordinate the many moving parts of T20 effectively. However, as we come to the end of our Summit Season, we have learned valuable lessons we will be passing on to Italy for next year's T20. First and foremost, inclusivity is critical. T20 is a funnel for ideas, and the more people who can share their ideas and be involved, the better the outcomes and recommendations will be. We should also take every opportunity to work together towards a common goal, with flexibility and openness."

At the T20 Summit on November 1, T20 will present its Communique to representatives of the G20. The document, comprising 32 policy proposals grouped into seven high-level categories, will be considered by the G20 leaders at the G20 Virtual Leaders' Summit, taking place from November 21-22, 2020.

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