



POLICY BRIEF

DEALING WITH INTERLINKAGES - A FOCUSED APPROACH FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SDGS AND OVERCOMING THE COVID-19 CRISIS



Task Force 7
**G20 SUPPORT FOR SDGS AND DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION**

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موجز السياسة التعامل مع الترابطات - نهج مُركّز لتنفيذ أهداف التنمية المستدامة والتغلب على أزمة كوفيد-١٩

فريق العمل السابع
دعم مجموعة العشرين لأهداف التنمية المستدامة
والتعاون الإنمائي



المؤلفون

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ABSTRACT

In 2020 and beyond, the Group of Twenty (G20) must invigorate its implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Both challenges are global in nature and require a universal, integrated, and transformative response. Thus, the G20 should: (1) reorient its political agenda following the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report's proposal of six entry points for transformation, and focus on the "economy and finance" and "science and technology" levers; (2) reshape its working structures accordingly; (3) act collectively toward a science-based direction for sustainable development; and (4) ensure that the response and recovery measures regarding the COVID-19 crisis follow the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, and are conducive to achieving its sustainable development goals.

خلال العام ٢٠٢٠ وما بعده، يجب أن تنشط مجموعة العشرين في تطبيق جدول أعمال ٢٠٣٠ للتنمية المستدامة والتجاوب مع أزمة كوفيد-١٩. فكلتا المسألتان ذواتا طبيعة عالمية وتستلزمان تجاوبًا عالميًا متكاملًا وتحوليًا. وبالتالي، ينبغي لمجموعة العشرين أن: (١) تعيد توجيه جدول أعمالها السياسي بعد تقرير التنمية المستدامة لعام ٢٠١٩ الذي يقترح ست نقاط تعتبر مدخلات ومتطلبات أساسية للتحويل، ويركز على عوامل الرفع التالية "الاقتصاد والتمويل" و"العلوم والتقنية"؛ (٢) تعيد تشكيل هيكل العمل التنظيمي الخاص بها وفقًا لذلك؛ (٣) تعمل بشكلٍ شامل وقائم على أساس البحث العلمي نحو اتجاه تحقيق التنمية المستدامة؛ و(٤) تضمن أن تدابير الاستجابة والتعافي المتعلقة بأزمة كوفيد-١٩ تتسق مع روح جدول أعمال ٢٠٣٠، وتؤدي إلى تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة.



CHALLENGE

The global outbreak of the COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2) has propelled the Group of Twenty (G20) into crisis mode. Tackling the pandemic and shaping the future beyond the crisis will become a defining hallmark of the G20 under Saudi Arabia's presidency in 2020, and Italy's in 2021. The G20's quality of leadership will decide how the international community collectively combats the pandemic. Even more importantly, it will decide whether the world will simply return to the status quo or decamp for a more resilient, sustainable future. To this end, holistic approaches that transcend the traditional divisions of labor between policy fields and ministries, as well as between G20 workstreams, are required.

The COVID-19 crisis struck as the world entered the “decade of action and delivery” toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs; United Nations 2019a). Immediately after the 2030 Agenda was adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the G20 held its 2016 Hangzhou Summit, and agreed upon a G20 Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda (G20 2016). Although the Action Plan has been updated at each consecutive summit, and monitored by accountability reports to some extent, the G20 has lost traction in its implementation within and beyond G20 countries (G20 2019a, 2019b; Bauer et al. 2019; Fischer 2019; Kloke-Lesch forthcoming). The G20 must now revisit its approach with the 2030 Agenda given not only the first United Nations SDG Summit to review progress on the 2030 Agenda (United Nations 2019a), but also the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. At the 2019 UN SDG Summit, G20 leaders, along with their fellow global leaders, reaffirmed their “determination to implement the 2030 Agenda” (United Nations 2019a). They acknowledged “the potential of a systemic and holistic approach” proposed by the Global Sustainable Development Report (United Nations 2019b), “including the identified entry points for transformation and transformative levers for realizing the 2030 Agenda” (United Nations 2019a).

At an extraordinary COVID-19 summit, the G20 leaders described the pandemic as a “powerful reminder of our interconnectedness and vulnerabilities” that requires “a transparent, robust, coordinated, large-scale, and science-based global response in the spirit of solidarity” (G20 2020). They “committed to do whatever it takes to overcome the pandemic” and to outline “solid foundations for strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth” (Ibid).

Thus, the G20 currently faces dual challenges. On the one hand, it must reinvigorate and reshape its implementation of the 2030 Agenda; on the other hand, it must design a rapid, effective response to the pandemic and its socio-economic aftermath in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda and conducive to achieving the United Nations' SDGs. Both challenges share significant characteristics: they are global in nature and require a universal, integrated, and transformative response. To successfully embrace this opportunity for mutual reinforcement, the G20 should learn from its experiences of implementing the 2030 Agenda since 2015 and develop a better structured, more integrated approach. The SDG framework is fit for this purpose, as it aims to increase societal resilience and the capacity to act globally and effectively.



PROPOSAL

One innovative feature of the 2030 Agenda involves the integration of its sustainable development goals. The agreement contains multiple targets that refer to several SDGs and span policy fields, and reflect that the main problems of the 21st century have multiple origins and require systemic approaches to solve them. However, such approaches contradict the current division of labor between policy fields and ministries, as well as between G20 workstreams. The traditional rationale behind this approach is based on a specific, narrow understanding of the effective policy-making that governs each field. In particular, it is a smaller set of goals that relates to specific sectors of society, the specific instruments to achieve them, and the assumption that the sum of rational actions in each field yields the best societal impact. From this perspective, the coordination and cooperation across policy fields as demanded by the 2030 Agenda is considered both pointless and onerous. Nevertheless, ensuring productive and healthy food systems, securing social well-being and resilient global health systems, tackling existing or future risks to climate or ecosystems, or constructing a “future-proof” infrastructure require more than isolated efforts in agricultural, social, or health policies or infrastructure investments.

How can implementation strategies that use coordination where it is most relevant and productive be conceived? An innovative approach to this challenge was presented in the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR; United Nations 2019b), drafted by an independent group of scientists appointed by the United Nations’ Secretary-General. The GSDR (United Nations 2019b) recommends implementing the SDGs through selected transformations to promote sustainable development, identifies six entry points and four levers for transformation (Figure 1),¹ and urgently calls for “strengthening the directionality of science on behalf of a mutually beneficial ‘moon landing’ for humanity and the Earth” (United Nations 2019b, 32). The GSDR (United Nations 2019b) also aims to restructure the United Nations’ High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to increase its effectiveness; thus, it can be noted as an accepted framework in the United Nations to demonstrate how sustainability transformations can occur.

1. The underlying concept of transformations to sustainable development was first developed by The World in 2050 Initiative (2018) and presented in its “Transformations to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.” This was further refined by Sachs et al. (2019).

How do the G20's priority commitments and workstreams intersect with the GSDR framework? Table 1 in the Appendix maps 14 sustainable development sectors as proposed by the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda; the G20 priority commitments during 2016–2019 as identified in the G20's Compliance Reports (G20 Research Group 2016); and the Saudi G20 Presidency Agenda given these six entry points and four levers. The mapping clearly illustrates the G20's focus on topics related to the “economy and finance” lever. Simultaneously, it indicates that the G20 agenda still predominantly follows a silo-type approach leading to a scattered array of unrelated commitments. Thus, little progress was made toward an integrated implementation of the SDGs and societal resilience. Commendably, and of relevance in the COVID-19 context, health has continuously been included as an identified priority commitment. However, the 2030 Agenda itself has strayed from the list of identified priority commitments up to 2019, while the 2030 Agenda offers an integrative action perspective on addressing overlapping and interacting current and future challenges. Specifically, the COVID-19 virus stems from remote biodiversity hotspots that must be sufficiently protected (SDG 15, “Life on Land”). Controlling its destructive impacts requires, *inter alia*, well-equipped and universally accessible health infrastructures and social security systems (SDG 3, “Good Health and Well-Being”; SDG 1, “No Poverty”). This also necessitates international cooperation for emergency relief, especially in developing countries, and the swift collection and exchange of data and information (SDG 17, “Partnership for the Goals”). In this context, it is also encouraging that the Saudi G20 Presidency Agenda aims to accelerate the 2030 Agenda's implementation, particularly through concrete actions toward financing (G20 Saudi Secretariat 2019).

The G20 will collectively benefit from refocusing its work on the entry points and the levers of transformation for sustainable development outlined in the Global Sustainable Development Report. This will create more effective policymaking in coping with sudden crises that result from 21st century challenges—such as the COVID-19 crisis, weather extremes induced by climate change, or migration—and their connected consequences (Lyytimäki et al. 2019). Further, it would also help in tackling their underlying causes. Therefore, our recommendations address (1) the G20's strengths in achieving these objectives, (2) its working structures, (3) the increasing importance of scientific cooperation, and (4) how to ensure that investment in socio-economic recovery after the COVID-19 crisis also increases global resilience for future crises. The proposed restructuring and restart of the G20's implementation of the 2030 Agenda could include its collective contributions in the time prior to the next high-level political leadership forum in 2023.

Proposal I**Capitalize on the G20's comparative strengths when prioritizing key entry points and levers for transformations toward sustainable development**

The comparative strengths of the G20 were illuminated in the 2008–2009 financial crisis. These were the ability to agree on measures to limit economic fallout, and a consensus regarding the steps to regulate banks and financial markets, which would limit financial risks and illicit financial flows. The G20 acted based on shared concerns and for the global common good. However, the average crisis in the 21st century will be more complex, as illustrated by the COVID-19 outbreak, and preserving the common good will require a better understanding of its complexity. The 2030 Agenda requires that the G20's coordination and cooperation must reach beyond economic and financial measures and include other areas fundamental for societal resilience: to protect the public interest while ensuring inclusion in labor markets, the financial sector, education and health systems, and protecting the environment and the global commons, the rule of law, and political institutions. Further, the G20 must act to prevent foreseeable crises, such as in the context of climate change. Thus, it will be paramount for the G20 to coordinate actions toward the public interest for coping with and preventing complex crises.

Subsequently, the G20 should reorient its political agenda along all six entry points for sustainable development following the call to action from the GSDR. Figure 1 demonstrates that such a step can build on and incorporate the Saudi 2021 presidency's priorities, and likely those of consecutive G20 presidencies. Doing so would reveal where the G20 must act differently, and where it must focus more.

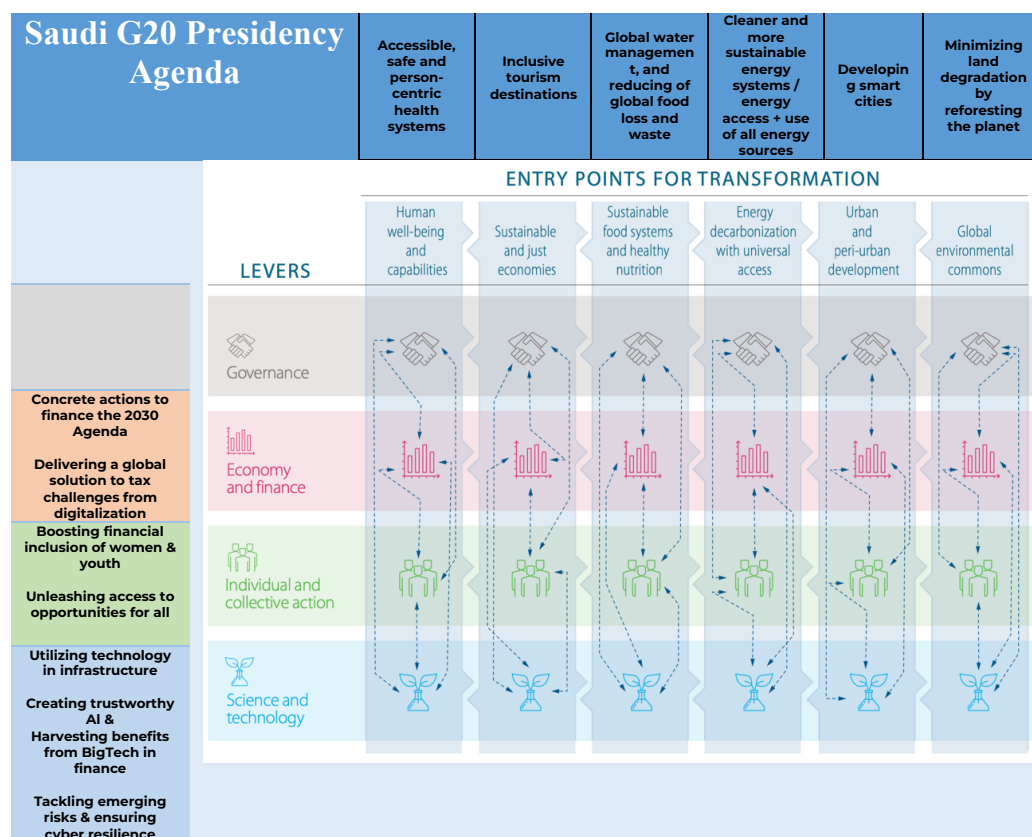


Figure 1: The Saudi G20 presidency's agenda, relative to the entry points and levers for transformation toward sustainable development

Source: Authors' compilation based on the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 (United Nations 2019b) and the Saudi G20 Presidency Agenda (G20 Saudi Secretariat 2019).

The entry points and levers for transformation should be substituted for the 14 Sustainable Development Sectors from the G20 Action Plan in the 2030 Agenda. Given the G20 members' heterogeneity and their proven ability to coordinate economic and financial policies, we consider that of the four levers of transformation mentioned by the GSDR, the "economy and finance" and "science and technology" levers are the most appropriate for collective action by the G20. Therefore, the G20 should consider:

- restructuring and relaunching its Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda along all entry points for sustainable development; and
- focusing its contribution to these entry points along the "economy and finance" and "science and technology" levers.

We illustrate the significance of this new way of working for the first entry point, or “human well-being and capabilities,”² as it includes health, and thus, options for handling the COVID-19 pandemic and promoting global health. Specifically, if the G20 were to follow the GSDR recommendations, it should consider the following:

The “economy and finance” lever

- The G20 should accelerate the implementation of taxation agreements (BEPS)³ and financial regulations to improve the mobilization of domestic resources, and thus, the financial means for the universal provision of and access to quality services, including those related to health, education, water, sanitation, and social protections.
- It must ensure that trade and investment agreements include cross-border cooperation provisions for crises that disrupt value chains and trade flows, which could avoid supply problems that affect human health; and
- The G20 must agree that trade and investment agreements must respect national institutions that deliver public services and restrain commercial competition in these areas.

The “science and technology” lever

- The G20 should enhance international cooperation in science and technology fields and direct these efforts toward the provision and protection of services fundamental for human well-being—and thus, for economic activity. This must include the development of vaccines as actions subsequent to the Okayama Declaration of G20 Health Ministers in 2019.

2. The GSDR observes that advancing humans’ well-being—including their material well-being, health, education, voice, access to a clean and safe environment, and resilience—is at the core of transformations toward sustainable development (United Nations 2019b, xxii).

3. The OECD and G20 agreed on an inclusive framework for combatting tax-avoidance strategies that exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to avoid paying tax. These practices are summarized under the Base Erosion and Profit Sharing initiative, which includes 135 countries and a 15-point action plan (<https://www.oecd.org/tax/beps/>).

Proposal II

Reshape the G20's working structure in line with its prioritized contributions to implement the 2030 Agenda

The G20's working structure has evolved over time and is incrementally reframed under each consecutive presidency. It involves a complex set of approximately 30 workstreams that are grouped under either the Sherpa Track or the Finance Track. These include ministers' and deputies' meetings as well as work groups and task forces only partially linked to ministers' meetings. Figure 2 provides a map of the G20 workstreams under the Saudi Presidency given the GSDR's entry points and levers for transformation.

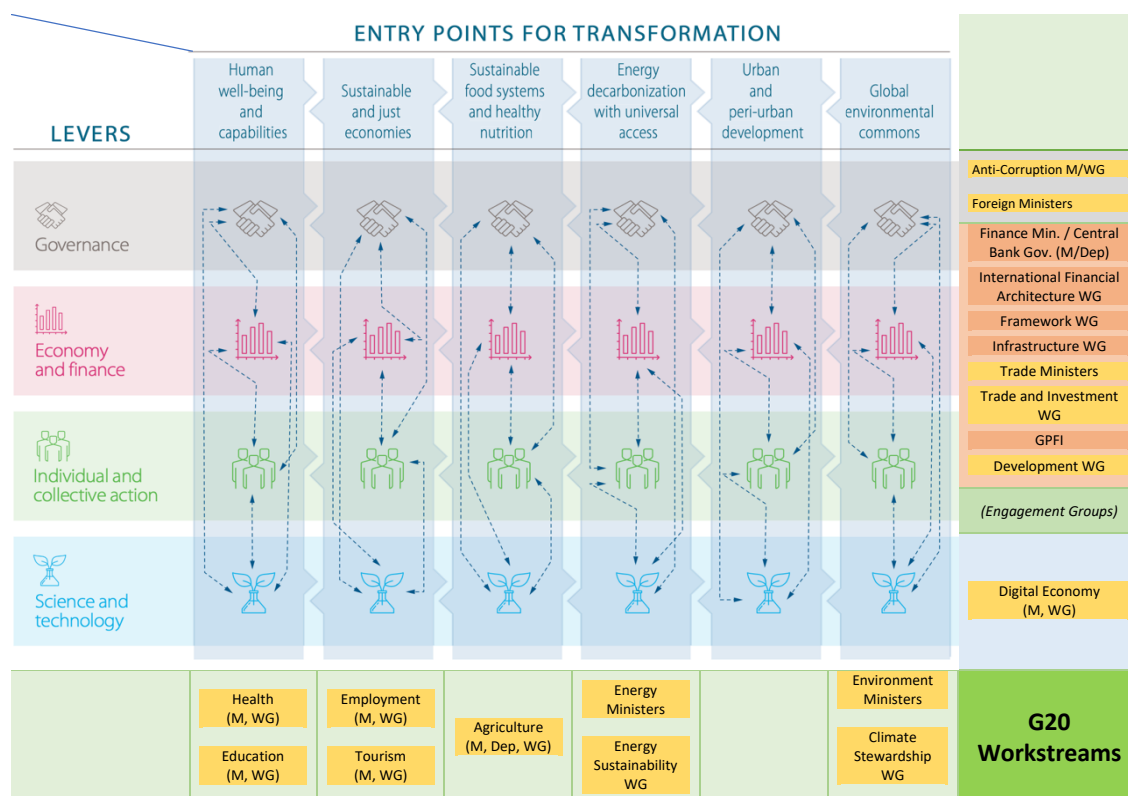


Figure 2: G20 workstreams relative to the entry points for and levers of sustainable development

Notes: M = Ministers; Dep = Deputies; WG = Working Group/Task Force; GPFI = Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion; and **Sherpa Track** / **Finance Track**.

Source: Authors' own compilation based on the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 (United Nations 2019b) and the G20 workstreams under the Saudi G20 Presidency 2020 (<https://g20.org/en/g20/Pages/events.aspx>).

This mapping clearly illustrates two features: First, the largest cluster of workstreams relates to the “economy and finance” lever, while all but one of the entry points are at least partially mirrored in several workstreams. Aside from the engagement groups’ work, the mapping does not cover the “urban and peri-urban development” entry point and the “individual and collective action” lever. Further, workstreams are overlapping, although they only address (smaller) parts of the entry points and levers. It is particularly noteworthy that the “science and technology” lever is not addressed beyond the digital economy.

Second, the different workstreams must function together to successfully address the connections between the entry points and the levers when striving for a necessary transformation. However, this is ultimately difficult, as most of the lever-related workstreams belong to the Finance Track, while all entry point-related workstreams fall under the Sherpa Track. Moreover, the Finance Track workstreams take a limited view on their policy developments’ impacts on the six entry points for transformation. In contrast, workstreams addressing these under the Sherpa Track regularly lack key policy levers. Third, the development working group is grouped in the Sherpa Track, not supported by minister-level meetings, and not well positioned to fulfill its original mandate to “act as a coordinating body and policy resource for sustainable development across the G20.”⁴

If the G20 wants to substantially contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and address acute crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it must review and re-structure its working structures accordingly. This would allow it to systematically address the COVID-19 crisis as an urgent challenge related to the “human well-being and capabilities” and “sustainable and just economies” entry points. Here, the G20 must fully use the potential of its workstreams related to the “economy and finance” lever while closely monitoring the maximization of its co-benefits with other entry points, such as those pertaining to “energy decarbonization” and “global environmental commons.” Simultaneously, the workstreams related to the “human well-being and capabilities” entry point must identify the necessary G20 contributions by key levers, and especially those pertaining to “science and technology.” Further, a fundamental investment in societal resilience and crisis preparedness must also involve improvements to biodiversity protections and other “global environmental commons.”

4. For the mandate of the Development Working Group, see Annex A in the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda (G20 2016).

Therefore, G20 workstreams must come together across the different entry points and key levers with a focus on two specific objectives:

- (1) To coordinate transformative policies to reduce negative spillovers and transaction costs while benefitting from such cooperation.
- (2) To exchange learning experiences in transformative areas to accelerate effective domestic action and develop collective activities to support non-G20 countries in this process.

Specifically, the G20 should consider:

- re-structuring and realigning all workstreams to the entry points and levers for transformations toward sustainable development,
- reorienting all workstreams toward the six entry points for transformation, identifying and working on the most critical contributions the G20 can deliver, and maximizing the co-benefits with other entry points and levers,
- establishing a working group in the “science and innovation” lever that strives to achieve a scientific directionality toward sustainable development, strengthens scientific cooperation among the G20, and facilitates cooperation with non-G20 members to enhance global and local knowledge capacities for sustainable development,
- assembling regular bi- or trilateral meetings of different workstreams to address their interfaces and promote joint transformative action,
- establishing a dedicated joint structure between the Sherpa and Finance Tracks to oversee and steer the G20’s contribution to the 2030 Agenda by augmenting and refining the work of the Development Working Group, which should be re-named as the Sustainable Development Working Group.

Proposal III

Launch a collective approach with a scientific directionality for sustainable development

The societal transformations needed for sustainable life on Earth will be knowledge-intensive and require investment in cross-disciplinary research to understand the context-specific processes required, including the natural, physical, and social sciences as well as the arts and humanities. The G20 must invest in the next generation of scientists, and cross-disciplinary work which enables them to transcend borders with a science-policy interface is crucial. The G20 should aim to foster a scientific directionality toward sustainable development and enable early career researchers to work in transdisciplinary, transboundary, inclusive, and transformative ways, and to shape national, regional, and global pathways toward sustainability.

The G20 should support such a transformation by:

- **Committing to substantial increases of public funding for research and development⁵**

We agree with the GSDR that increasing the global capacity for all sciences, as well as strengthened, multidirectional transfers of technologies, capabilities, and skills to achieve the SDGs across and beyond the North–South binary are required. The G20 should provide more opportunities for improved cross-border collaboration. This requires countries to ease visa requirements for researchers (Nshemereirwe 2018), while providing funds for international and cross-disciplinary scientific grants and exchange programs. They must also invest in training researchers to provide scientific policy advice. Further, it is critical to increase, optimize, and direct G20 research and development spending to tackle sustainable development challenges. Concurrently, resources should also be mobilized toward the development and delivering of e-learning modules that could be globally distributed; global and fair, open science policies are key.

5. The OECD uses a target of 3% of gross domestic expenditures on research and development relative to GDP as a reference for good practice. The European Union set this target for itself in its 2020 Strategy (<https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>). The OECD compiled expenditure data for G20 members in its 2016 report for the G20 science, technology and innovation ministers' meeting (OECD 2016). In 2014, actual expenditures ranged between 0.1% (Indonesia and Saudi Arabia) and 4.3% of GDP (Korea). We recommend G20 countries to fulfill their own set targets at the least.

- **Adjusting G20 working structures to facilitate collaborative, global scientific pursuits to solve global challenges**

With the new G20 workstream on the previously proposed “science and technology” lever, the G20 should task its science and technology ministers to ensure that the policies and institutions enable scientific development. Specifically, the G20 should encourage the scientist community’s responses to global challenges as framed by the six entry points for transformation, rather than merely isolated disciplinary or national approaches (InterAcademy Partnership—IAP 2020; Global Young Academy—GYA 2020). This requires the G20’s political commitment and a change in framing. Global science organizations—such as the International Science Council, the IAP, and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network—have already restructured their work to better align with the United Nations’ SDGs. The G20 should act similarly to ensure that their workstreams account for offerings from all sciences.

- **Promoting greater scientific diversity by supporting scientists’ careers**

The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the power of applying science to address global problems (Editorial in Nature 2020). To empower the next generation in achieving this, young scholars’ organizations must be strengthened and supported. To quote the GSDR, “Young scientists often play a central role in mobilizing [. . .] those ideas through creative science and independent voices, facilitated by networks such as the Global Young Academy and the Major Group on Children and Youth.” The national young academies and the Early Career Researchers Network of Networks in Future Earth also provide platforms for young scientists to connect with each other. Such networks provide early-career researchers with opportunities to learn from each other, hone their skills, and engage in policy advice. Universities, policymakers, and research funders should increase the support for research that is guided by the 2030 Agenda, such as sustainability science. Research institutions must change their promotional and reward structures to consider interdisciplinary and societal engagement.

- **Increasing (young) scientists’ involvement in SDG policy appraisal systems and in the HLPF**

All scientific disciplines must commit to working together by seeking connections among them. In addition to including scholars in developing SDG-compatible and transformative national science, technology, and innovation policies, international and national SDG appraisal systems should involve all the necessary scientific perspectives. The G20 can assume leadership by inviting the scientific community, including thinktanks, to play a unique role in their workstreams as well as in the

G20's voluntary peer-learning mechanism and monitoring processes to fulfill the 2030 Agenda. Further, the G20 and its members should ensure that scientific perspectives are heard and included as a part of the United Nations' processes to implement the 2030 Agenda. It must reform the HLPF to allow for honest accountability measures that are also based in science. The same is true for nations' implementation and appraisal systems. Young scholars can help synthesize existing knowledge and develop new information, provide advice regarding national SDG assessments and the expansion of voluntary national reviews, help improve SDG indicators, and pioneer innovative intergenerational partnerships to support evidence-based policymaking.

Proposal IV

Fight the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda and in a way conducive to achieving SDGs

The G20 members should ensure—both collectively and individually—that the immediate responses to the COVID-19 emergency and actions to enable a post-pandemic social and economic recovery parallel the 2030 Agenda's principles and objectives as well as the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Coordinated action, and especially to support the poorest and the most vulnerable, follows the principle of “leaving no one behind.” This is needed in the short-term, whether within the G20 members' own jurisdictions or by supporting third-world countries with the least resources to counteract the COVID-19 crisis. Regarding the post-crisis recovery process, it is paramount that the G20 and its members do not return to business as usual, but embark on a way to achieve a sustainable future. This type of normative leadership will strengthen the G20's global role and its social, economic, and political foundations.

Specifically, in 2020, the G20 should commit to:

- accelerating the implementation of commitments under the Japanese G20 presidency in the global health field, and specifically, regarding risk preparedness and strengthening the World Health Organization,
- including new commitments for multilateral support to developing countries in coping with the COVID-19 emergency and improving their health systems,

- adopting a double-pronged approach in its economic measures and public spending for recovery, and connecting these to an implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, as an effective investment of public resources for these purposes and to reduce the vulnerability to further crises,
- making full use of the G20's acquis on sustainable finance and extending it to reshape the entire financial system when designing recovery measures to substantially increase global economic, financial, and societal resilience.

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Disclaimer

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Table 1: Entry points and levers for transformation in the Global Sustainable Development Report (2019) and the G20 Agenda

Table: Entry points for and levers of transformation of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 and the G20 Agenda

Entry points for transformation

Entry points for transformation (GSDR 2019)	Sustainable development sectors (G20 Action Plan)	Evolving “G20 PRIORITY COMMITMENTS” 2016-2019					The Saudi G20 Presidency's Agenda
		2016	2017	2018	2019	Number	2020
Human well-being and capabilities	Human resources development and employment	Migration and refugees	Migration	Development: early childhood development	Development: human capital investment	2016: 1 2017: 2 2018: 2 2019: 3	
	Global health		Health: health system strengthening	Health: universal health coverage	Health: public health preparedness and response	Total: 8	Accessible, safe, and person-centric health systems
					Health: healthy and active ageing		
Sustainable and just economies	Financial inclusion and remittances		Macroeconomics: inclusive business ecosystems	Macroeconomics: inclusive growth	Macroeconomic policy: strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth	2016: 1 2017: 1 2018: 3 2019: 3 Total: 8	
	Inclusive business	Employment: gender		Employment: skills development	Employment: opportunities for and employability of the young population		Boosting financial inclusion of women and youth
					Gender: gap in unpaid care work		
				Employment: future of work			Inclusive tourism destinations
Sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns	Agriculture, food security, and nutrition		Food and agriculture: information and communications technologies	Food and agriculture: sustainable agriculture		2016: 0 2017: 1 2018: 1 2019: 0 Total: 2	Global water management, and reducing global food loss and waste
Energy decarbonization and universal access	Energy	Energy: fossil fuel subsidies			Development: energy	2016: 2 2017: 1 2018: 1 2019: 1 Total: 5	
		Energy: energy efficiency	Energy: sustainable energy	Energy: cleaner, flexible, and transparent systems			Cleaner and more sustainable energy systems
							Energy access and the use of all energy sources
Urban and peri-urban development						Total: 0	Developing smart cities
Global environmental commons		Climate change	Climate change: energy and energy efficiency	Climate change		2016: 1 2017: 2 2018: 1 2019: 1 Total: 5	
			Environment: waste reduction		Environment: discharges of plastic litter and microplastics to the oceans		
							Minimizing land degradation by reforesting the planet

Levers of transformation

Levers of transformation (GSDR 2019)	Sustainable development sectors (G20 Action Plan)	Evolving "G20 PRIORITY COMMITMENTS"					The Saudi G20 Presidency's Agenda 2020
		2016	2017	2018	2019	Number	
Governance		2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Sustainable Development Goals: alignment			2016: 3 2017: 2 2018: 0 2019: 2 Total: 7	
	Anti-corruption	Corruption	Corruption: resilience		Crime and corruption: cyber resilience		
		Corporate governance			Terrorism: open, free, and secure internet		
Economy and finance	Growth Strategies	Macroeconomics: growth policy tools					Concrete actions to finance the 2030 Agenda
		Financial regulation: financial sector reform agenda	Financial regulation: Basel III				
		Financial regulation: terrorism		Financial regulation: technology		2016: 9 2017: 4 2018: 6 2019: 6 Total: 25	
	International financial architecture			Reform of the international financial institutions: International Monetary Fund	Macroeconomic policy: exchange rate commitments		
	Domestic resource mobilization	Tax: base erosion and profit shifting	International taxation: base erosion and profit shifting	Financial regulation: international taxation	Financial regulation: consensus-based solution		Delivering a global solution to tax challenges from digitalization
		Development: tax administration	Tax: fair and modern system	Financial regulation: tax administration			
	Trade and investment	Trade: anti-protectionism	Trade: trade and investment frameworks	Trade: reform of the World Trade Organization	Trade: reform of the World Trade Organization		
		Trade: E-commerce					
		Trade: lowering trade costs			Trade: keep our markets open		
		Investment					
	Infrastructure			Infrastructure: infrastructure investment	Infrastructure: G20 principles for quality infrastructure investment		
	Industrialization						
	Climate finance and green finance				Climate change: inclusive finance for sustainable development		
Individual and collective action			Development: digital and financial literacy			2016: 0 2017: 2 2018: 1 2019: 1 Total: 4	Unleashing access to opportunities for all
			Gender: access to labor markets	Gender: economic empowerment	Gender: improved access to STEM ⁶		
Science and technology	Innovation	Innovation	Digitalization: digital economy	Digital economy: data governance	Digitalization: interoperability of different frameworks	2016: 2 2017: 1 2018: 1 2019: 2 Total: 6	Utilizing technology in infrastructure
		Technologies and innovation: knowledge diffusion and technology transfer			Climate change: innovation for low emissions and resilient development		Creating trustworthy AI and Harvesting benefits from BigTech in finance
							Tackling emerging risks & ensuring cyber resilience

Source: **Authors' own compilation on the basis of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 (UN 2019), the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (G20 2016), the G20 Compliance Reports (G20 Research Group 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 (forthcoming)) and the Overview of Saudi Arabia's 2020 G20 Presidency (G20 Saudi Secretariat 2019).**

NB: **The table limits itself to the priority commitments as listed by the G20 Compliance Reports as a reasonable proxy indicator of what was perceived as a priority.**



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