

Saudi Arabia G20 Leaders' Summit Pledge Equitable Distribution of COVID Vaccine



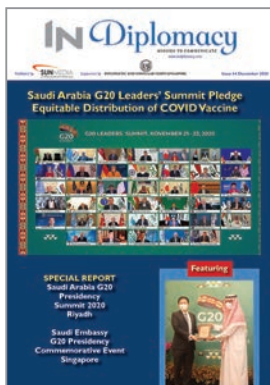
SPECIAL REPORT

Saudi Arabia G20
Presidency
Summit 2020
Riyadh

Saudi Embassy
G20 Presidency
Commemorative Event
Singapore

Featuring





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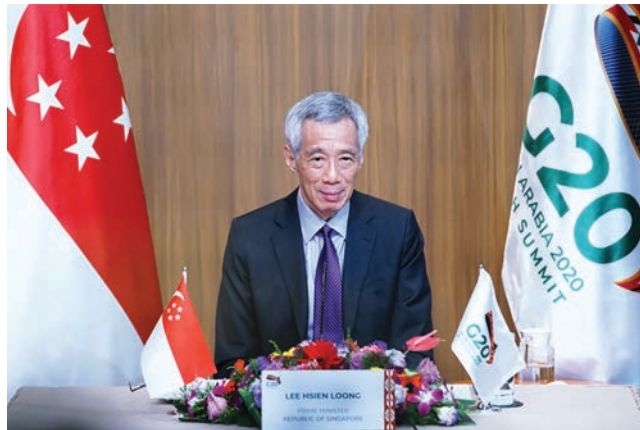
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Presentation of Credentials

24 November 2020

The Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced the following foreign Heads of Mission have presented their credentials to President Halimah Yacob at the Istana on 24th November 2020. They are the Ambassadors of Egypt and Indonesia. Following are the biographical summaries of the Ambassadors from the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



*His Excellency Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Mahmoud Assem ElMaghraby*



*His Excellency Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia
Suryo Pratomo*



PRIOR to his accreditation to Singapore, Mr ElMaghraby was Secretary-General of the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Cairo from October 2019 till October 2020. He was also Egypt's Ambassador to Hungary from 2014 to 2018, where he was awarded the 'Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary'.

A career diplomat, Mr ElMaghraby joined the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1989. Besides Budapest, he had served in Bucharest, Addis Ababa, Paris and Amman. He had also held several key appointments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Director of IT Department, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Administrative Affairs, as well as Counselor in the Diplomatic Corps Affairs. Majoring in Engineering, Mr ElMaghraby graduated from the Alexandria University in 1985. He completed his postgraduate Diploma in International Relations from the International Institute for Public Administration in Paris in 1991. He speaks Arabic, French and English. He is married to Ambassador Dr Mahy Abdelatif and they have two daughters.



AMBASSADOR Suryo Pratomo began his profession as a journalist for Indonesian newspaper Kompas in 1987. He has held several key positions in Kompas over the years, including as Editor-in-Chief of Kompas from 2000 to 2008, and Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Kompas Gramedia Group from 2005 to 2008.

In 2008, Ambassador Suryo Pratomo joined Media Group and has been on its Board of Editors since then. He served as Metro TV's News Director from 2008 to 2017, and its Chief Editor from 2017 to 2019.

He has also been on the Board of Executives of Media Group since January 2020. Since March 2020, Ambassador Suryo Pratomo has been a member of Indonesia's COVID-19 Task Force.

Ambassador Suryo Pratomo is married with two children.

Why Diplomacy Matters

Singapore is home to 70 resident foreign High Commissions and Embassies, 43 Consular Posts and 11 International Organisations. They act as a conduit between Singapore and their respective countries. Diplomatic missions are headed by influential newsmakers who open doors for business, trade, investment, education, the arts and culture. IN Diplomacy has a mission to communicate and be a bridge between the diplomatic community and Singaporeans.



Singapore's Contribution to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access

A joint press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health stated that Singapore's contribution to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Advance Market Commitment amounted to US\$5 million. It said that global solidarity is required for an effective international response to the pandemic and that: "As part of our consistent support for vaccine multilateralism, and the fair and equitable access and allocation of vaccines, Singapore will contribute US\$5,000,000 to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Advance Market Commitment (AMC) mechanism, which will help support 92 low- and lower-middle-income countries' access to COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility. AMC eligible countries include several ASEAN countries as well as small states globally. Singapore will continue to work closely with our international partners, in particular, the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations to advance vaccine multilateralism and forge a global response to this pandemic." Singapore and Switzerland co-chair the Friends of the COVAX Facility to support the work of this Facility.

APPOINTMENTS

Kingdom of Cambodia

MS Teo Lay Cheng is Singapore's next Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia from 4th January 2020. She last served as Director of Strategic Communications at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2017 to 2020. Ms Teo has also held other appointments at the Ministry's headquarters, covering Southeast Asia, Public Affairs and ASEAN. From 2009 to 2013, Ms Teo was part of the pioneer team at the Singapore Permanent Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta, serving as Deputy Permanent Representative. Prior to that, she was at the Singapore Embassy in Bangkok, completing her tour of duty as Deputy Chief of Mission.

Ms Teo graduated with a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) from the National University of Singapore. She was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Bronze) in 2009. Ms Teo paints in her spare time and has edited a coffee table book on Chinese opera genres in Singapore. She also has a keen interest in pottery.



Republic of Maldives

Mr Soo Kok Leng is Singapore's Non-Resident High Commissioner to the Republic of Maldives.

Mr Soo is Chairman of Temasek Management Services Pte Ltd and an independent management consultant. He was formerly Singapore's Non-Resident Ambassador to the Republic of Austria, from 2007 to 2017.

Mr Soo sits on several companies' boards and is also Strategic Advisor for CapitaLand and Corporate Advisor of Temasek International Advisors Pte Ltd. He was with Hewlett Packard for almost 20 years, from 1977, based in Singapore and the United States of America. After Hewlett Packard, he was the Executive Director and Group General Manager of Falmac Ltd., before leading the start-up of 3Com Technologies. He previously held various appointments in public, listed and private organisations in several industries including past appointments as Chairman, JTC, ST Electronics Ltd, CapitaLand Commercial Trust Management Ltd, Singex group of companies and Mt. Faber Leisure Group.

Mr Soo graduated with a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering from the University of Singapore and holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Strathclyde, Scotland. He received the Public Service Medal in 2006 and the Public Service Star in 2017.



Indo-Pacific Energy Sector's Importance to US

A special U.S. Department of State telephonic press briefing by Mr Francis Fannon (pictured right), the Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Energy Resources on 4th December 2020 highlighted the importance of the



Indo-Pacific Energy sector to America. Speaking from Washington Mr Fannon said the briefing is following on the East Asia Summit (EAS) Energy Ministers' meeting that he took part in on 20th November 2020 and the recent Japan-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership (JUSEP) meeting. He wanted to: "Update you on our Asia EDGE, or Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy initiative, and some of the ongoing technical assistance that we have in the region. The Indo-Pacific is a critical area for energy sector development, and that's for good reason. We currently forecast that energy demand in this area will grow more than 60 percent and require trillions of dollars of new investment by 2040. So, 60 percent of the globe's energy demand is going to take place in your region of the world. By contrast, other parts of the world, like Europe, are going to see marginal decline in some of that energy demand. So, the focus is on the Indo-Pacific."

Based on these projections he said meeting the energy demands of the region will require "significant" investment in sectors such as gas-related infrastructure, the production and deployment of renewables as well as oil, the production of indigenous oil and gas resources. He pointed out: "One key aspect of the United States' work in the region is one built on partnership, and that's also with likeminded countries that advance a shared vision of a free and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. For example, I mentioned JUSEP. And this most recent event was actually a trilateral discussion, and the host of our JUSEP discussion was Vietnam. JUSEP was launched to help provide market-based, secure, reliable, and affordable energy solutions to our friends in the Indo-Pacific region." He also said the US is also working with multilateral organizations such as ASEAN participating in the recent EAS Energy Ministers' meeting in November: "During this discussion, I met virtually with our EAS partners and underscored the US support for improving the energy security of nations in the Indo-Pacific. The ministers spoke to the vital role of regional cooperation and collaboration to meet the energy challenges of the future." The US has supported several critical energy-focused commercial ventures and agreements that was highlighted at this year's Indo-Pacific Business Forum. These engagements were part of the US State Department's work through Asia EDGE mentioned earlier which was launched two years ago and which has spent more than US\$140 million in technical assistance.



IN Diplomacy

MISSION TO COMMUNICATE

Special Report

**Realizing Opportunities
of the 21ST Century
for All**



G20 LEADERS' SUMMIT 2020
**The first time the G20 Presidency
under the Chairmanship of the
Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques**

G20 SUMMIT OPENS NEW CHAPTER IN WORLD UNITY IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19



“The G20 Summit this year once again proved itself to be the premier forum for international economic cooperation. It would not have been possible without Saudi Arabia’s tremendous efforts leading all G20 member countries to invest their resources in responding to the global crisis.”

**- Jo Byung-wook
South Korea Ambassador
to Saudi Arabia**

The 15th G20, Summit was convened by Saudi Arabia, on 21-22 November, 2020. The Summit, conducted virtually, in the light of the current Covid19 pandemic which has taken more than 1.37 million lives worldwide, saw participation of respective Heads of State/ Government of 19 member countries, EU, other invited countries and international organizations.

At the very outset, King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, in his opening remarks urged leaders to expand efforts to provide access to vaccines and treatments, as well as buoy the economies of developing nations wracked by the economic impacts of COVID-19.

King Salman said: “We have a duty to rise to the challenge together during this summit and give a strong message of hope and reassurance to our peoples through adopting policies to mitigate this crisis.”

He also lauded initiatives by G-20 nations to invest \$21 billion in global efforts to combat the pandemic and \$11 trillion to bolster the global economy.

This year’s G-20 summit was marked by a call for world leaders to mount a united response to the coronavirus pandemic. King Salman’s sentiments were supported by several world leaders. French President Emmanuel Macron said: “The only effective response to the pandemic will be a coordinated, global one, based on solidarity,” while German

Chancellor Angela Merkel called the pandemic “a global challenge” that could “only be overcome with a global effort.” According to figures released by the International Labor Organization an equivalent of 225 million full-time jobs were lost in G-20 countries alone in the third quarter of 2020. G-20 member-countries represent around 85% of the world’s economic output and three-quarters of international trade.

G-20 nations have since agreed to suspend debt payments for the world’s poorest countries until mid-2021 to allow those nations to focus their spending on health care and stimulus programs. The UN secretary general, however, has called on the G-20 to extend debt repayments through the end of 2021 and expand the scope to middle-income countries in need.

“I am confident that the Riyadh summit will deliver significant and decisive results and will lead to adopting economic and social policies that will restore hope and reassurance to the people of the world,” King Salman said.

The Summit under Saudi Presidency centered on the theme “Realizing Opportunities of 21st Century for All” which has assumed greater importance in the wake of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The agenda of the Summit focused on overcoming the pandemic, economic recovery and restoring jobs, and building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future.

G20 Summit Concludes on a High Note

WITH the 2-day G20 virtual Summit drawing to a close on Sunday 22nd November 2020, King Salman formally handed over the rotating presidency to Italy, which will hold the 2021 summit. In his closing remarks King Salman said that G20 countries have upheld their commitment to working together to confront the COVID-19 pandemic and to safeguard lives and livelihoods: "We have adopted important policies that will achieve recovery all the way to an economy that is resilient, sustainable, inclusive, and balanced."

He elaborated: "These policies will also maintain the momentum to make the global trade system work for all, and create the conditions to achieve sustainable growth."

King Salman announced that the members of the 20 largest economies have succeeded in sending a message of hope and reassurance to their citizens and the global community through the final communique of this leaders' Summit.

The King said G20 countries will work on laying the foundations to achieve opportunities for all through empowering people, safeguarding the planet and shaping new frontiers. "Our joint and individual actions will be critical in overcoming the immediate global challenge we are facing," King Salman said.

He pointed out that although it was the first time that Saudi Arabia had held the presidency, the Kingdom was able "to rise to the challenge" amid the pandemic with the support of member countries. "Due to its unique stature regionally and internationally...the Kingdom will continue to play a key role within the G20 to achieve global cooperation and find solutions to the world's most pressing challenges," the king said.

Speaking to *Arab News* Italian ambassador Roberto Cantone said: "The Kingdom has given proof of excellent organization. The Saudi presidency has worked since the beginning to adapt the original program to the challenges of the reality. The Saudi president managed to catalyze G20 action to tackle one of the most pressing global emergencies of our time. This has been done in a very comprehensive manner, focusing both on the health emergency and on the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic." He said the incoming Italian presidency will build on the legacy that Saudi Arabia has left.



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**- Roberto Cantone
Ambassador of Italy
to Saudi Arabia**

Realizing Opportunities of the 21ST Century for All



PM Lee Highlights Equitable Distribution of COVID Vaccines

SINGAPORE Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has urged world leaders to work together to ensure affordable and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and boost global disease surveillance networks to prepare nations for any such future outbreaks. In his address on the first day of the virtual G20 Summit PM Lee said that the group is well placed to coordinate and drive the global response required to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, a point also made by other leaders, including King Salman. Singapore which has been invited to this year's G20 meetings as a guest is also convener of the Global Governance Group - an informal coalition of 30 countries that seeks to influence the G20 to take into account the interests of smaller countries affected by its decisions.

PM Lee expressed happiness that the G20 had advanced vaccine multilateralism by backing global initiatives such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (Covax) Facility, which were set up to ensure that the distribution of any new vaccines would be shared equally. Singapore is a co-chair of the Friends of the Covax Facility, and will do its part in contributing to the Covax Advance Market Commitment, which helps fund vaccines for lower-income countries, said the Prime Minister. He also said Singapore will continue to work closely with the WHO and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations to accelerate vaccine development and enhance long-term pandemic preparedness.

PM Lee pointed out that the Saudi presidency had galvanised international action by coordinating fiscal resources, priorities and policies on a level, by supporting the most vulnerable countries and by completing a G20 action plan for a strong and sustainable economic recovery. He said that Singapore stands ready to support the G20 in its endeavours to reinvigorate multilateralism - and to create a fair, predictable and stable international order, which will allow every country, big and small, to grow and prosper. He also hoped that all countries would embrace multilateral cooperation under the leadership of the WHO. He said: "COVID-19 has reinforced the need for countries to work together. Ultimately, no country is safe until every country is safe."

US Reaffirms Working Together for Future Prosperity



PRESIDENT Donald J Trump participated in the first day of the Summit and discussed with other world leaders the need to work together to restore strong economic growth and jobs as the world works towards overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic. In his remarks the US President highlighted how the United States marshalled every resource at its disposal to respond to the crisis as well as the economic recovery of the country on a foundation of tax and regulatory cuts, energy independence and fair trade deals. He spoke about the aggressive actions and safety measures the United States took to protect the vulnerable, pioneer groundbreaking treatments and develop vaccines and therapies at record-setting speed that will save millions of lives. President Trump also reaffirmed the importance of the G20 working together for future economic growth and prosperity.

China Ready to Narrow Differences through Dialogue



CHINA is ready to pursue peaceful coexistence with all countries on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, President Xi Jinping said on Saturday, and suggested narrowing differences through dialogue and resolving disputes through negotiation. He also said China has joined the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility and stands ready to step up cooperation with other countries on the R&D, production and distribution of vaccines. "While containing the virus, we need to restore the secure and smooth operation of global industrial and supply chains. We need to reduce tariffs and barriers, and explore the liberalisation of trade of key medical supplies." Xi said China has fully implemented G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and put off debt repayment totalling over USD 1.3 billion.

"Meanwhile, China will increase the level of debt suspension and relief for countries facing particular difficulties and encourage its financial institutions to provide new financing support on a voluntary basis and according to market principles," he said. "We need to reduce tariffs and barriers, and explore the liberalisation of trade of key medical supplies. We need to further harmonise policies and standards and establish "fast tracks" to facilitate the orderly flow of personnel," said President Xi Jinping. China has proposed a global mechanism on the mutual recognition of health certificates based on nucleic acid test results in the form of internationally accepted QR codes, he said. "We hope more countries will join this mechanism. We also support the G20 in carrying out institutionalised cooperation and building global cooperation networks to facilitate the flow of personnel and goods," said the Chinese President.

India: COVID-19 is World's Biggest Challenge



THE COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge the world is facing since World War-II and is an important turning point in the history of humanity, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the G20 summit on Saturday, as he offered India's IT prowess for the efficient functioning of the grouping. Modi also said that "Work from Anywhere" is a new normal in the post-COVID world and suggested the creation of a virtual G20 secretariat.

The prime minister also suggested developing a new global index for the post-corona world that comprises four key elements — the creation of a vast talent pool, ensuring that technology reaches all segments of society,

transparency in systems of governance and dealing with Mother Earth with a spirit of trusteeship. Based on this, the G20 can lay the foundation of a new world, he said.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman opened the Group of 20 summit as the coronavirus pandemic overshadows this year's gathering of heads of state that is being held in the virtual format. India is scheduled to host the G20 summit in 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Transparency in our processes helps in inspiring our societies to fight crisis collectively and with confidence. Spirit of trusteeship towards planet Earth will inspire us for a healthy and holistic lifestyle," he said.

Indonesia: Calls for Support to Developing and Underdeveloped Nations Recover from COVID-19

REACHING out to world leaders assembled for the virtual 2-Day G20 Summit in Riyadh, when attending the first day of the meet video conference from the Presidential Palace in Bogor, West Java, on November 21 evening, Indonesian President Joko Widodo called upon on the G20 economies to help developing and underdeveloped nations recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn.

The President reminded the UN Secretary-General's statement on the need for strong solidarity for developing countries, as quoted by the Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi. He said without the assistance of the G20 countries, developing and underdeveloped countries will not easily recover from the pandemic and economic downturn, according to Marsudi.

The President said that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has requested financial support of 2.5 trillion USD so that developing countries



are able to get out of the economic downturn, Marsudi said.

The foreign minister shared that the President also conveyed the importance of debt restructuring assistance for low-income countries, especially from large debt-giving countries, in support of the world economic recovery, while it is important to continue providing extraordinary support for fiscal, monetary and financial sector policies.

On the occasion, the President also called for the important funding for health recovery, saying that the vaccine is one of the ammunitions against COVID-19. President Widodo said the world was currently watching and waiting for the meeting of the leaders of the G20 economies who are expected to bring the world out of the health crisis and economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



"The Summit successfully provided a clear direction for the international community in the midst of the crisis, which is significantly meaningful in such a difficult year. Saudi Arabia has demonstrated tremendous leadership in delivering clear and vital messages to the international community that the G20 would take the lead in creating an international order for the post-coronavirus world"

**- Tsukasa Uemura
Japan's Ambassador to
Saudi Arabia**



“We have very much appreciated the Saudi presidency for holding the Extraordinary Summit in March, where G20 leaders discussed the most urgent consequences of the pandemic on all aspects of our lives”

**- Patrick Simonnet,
EU Head of Delegation to
Saudi Arabia, Bahrain
and Oman**

“A friend sent me a message from China that amid the unprecedented pandemic Saudi Arabia has achieved exceptional success in chairing the G20 over virtual conferences, and he was very impressed. I agree, as the Kingdom has won the respect and appreciation of the world”

**- Chen Weiqing
China’s Ambassador
to Saudi Arabia**

Russia: Oppose Protectionism and Unilateralism



“We have to tackle the urgent problems that have accumulated in international trade. In particular, it is necessary to strive to curb protectionism, abandon the practice of unilateral sanctions, and resume supply chains,” Putin said.

President Putin is of the belief that there is no alternative to the World Trade Organization today, and a stable and effective multilateral trading system based on universal norms and principles is needed.

As reported by Xinhua, the President felt that countries need to strengthen effective mechanisms of multilateral cooperation and strengthen key international institutions, while relying on the UN Charter and generally accepting norms and principles of international law.

WHILE addressing the G20 summit via video link on Nov 21, 2020, Russian President Vladimir Putin came out strongly against protectionism and unilateralism

Saudi Crown Prince Proposes Two G20 Summits a Year



WHILE chairing the final session of the 15th annual G20 Leaders' Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday, 22nd November 2020, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman proposed holding two G20 summits annually in the coming years. Of these one, would be held virtually, mid-year, and a second in-person at the year end.

“We hope that Italy works on this initiative,” said the Crown Prince after Italy’s Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte thanked King Salman on the Kingdom’s presidency of the G20 and for unifying G20 endeavor, while announcing his country’s readiness to assume the summit of the G20. As reported by *Saudi Gazette*, Crown Prince Muhammad said that since the beginning of this year, the Kingdom had set one goal, ‘Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century For All,’ which includes themes such as: empowering people, safeguarding the planet, and shaping new frontiers.

“This pandemic knows no borders. It has reached all countries and affected, directly and indirectly, every person living on this planet, which has necessitated the activation of the pivotal role played by the G20. To this end, the G20’s leaders met twice during one presidency, a precedent since the foundation of the G20,” Crown Prince Muhammad said.

The need for global coordinated actions is more important than ever now. The leaders of the G20 met for the second time under the Saudi Presidency to address the most pressing challenges of our times, with the vision to take further steps to overcome the pandemic while building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for all. The pandemic revealed the deep and pervasive weaknesses in health systems worldwide and vulnerability in the capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to pandemic threats.

Saudi Arabia Embassy's Commemorative Event for Kingdom's G20 Presidency

Shangri-La Hotel Singapore 16th November 2020



(Top row from left): Minister Lawrence Wong and Ambassador Saad Saleh; Dr Fahad Almoubarak, Minister of State and G20 Sherpa of Saudi Arabia. (Left): Singapore was represented by its Minister of Education and Second Minister of Finance Mr Lawrence Wong. (Above and below): A rare meeting of the diplomatic corps during COVID-19 organised by the Saudi Embassy that followed strict social distancing protocols

A special commemorative event was organised by the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for the G20 Presidency by the Kingdom on 16th November 2020 at the Shangri-La Hotel. H.E. Saad Saleh Alsaleh welcomed almost 50 guests which included the Singapore Government's representative Mr Lawrence Wong, Singapore's Minister for Education and Second Minister for Finance.

Minister Wong remarked in his address how "It is quite rare these days for us to have a face-to-face session, so I am glad to see all of you here together in this room. Saudi Arabia and Singapore enjoy close relations which have been growing and improving from year to year." This



included the first State visit by President Halimah Yacob to the Kingdom and support from Singapore in various areas such as infotech (see accompanying story next page).

Ambassador Saad Alsaleh also introduced a video speech by Dr Fahad Almoubarak, Minister

Continued on next page...



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of State and G20 Sherpa of Saudi Arabia; a video presentation on the Kingdom's strides in women empowerment and Ms Marwa M. Alkhuzaim (pictured top left on this page) who is the new Managing Director of Aramco Singapore Pte who also talked on this subject and her own experiences in working in Saudi Aramco. In a pre-recorded message to the attendees, Dr Fahad covered the Saudi G20 Presidency Agenda, the G20 response to the pandemic and the way forward to the Riyadh Summit. He said at the heart of the G20 actions is empowering people through fostering resilience and healthcare prevention, renewing the focus on education and protecting the labour market while also prioritising women and youth empowerment. Safeguarding the planet is another top priority in the agenda he added.

The embassy had invited the mission heads of the G20 countries or their representatives in Singapore as well as members of the diplomatic corps. Before the Shangri-La hotel meeting the Saudi embassy had also organised the **Saudi Arabia G20 Presidency Webinar Series** on the Impact of Digitalisation on the Global Labour Market on 26th November 2020 and launched a *Special G20 Edition of Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East*.

Singapore Minister's Three Wishes for G20

MR Lawrence Wong, Singapore's Minister for Education and Second Minister for Finance in his address at the Commemorative Event for Saudi G20 Presidency at Shangri-La Hotel remarked how "When we look at what has happened through the year, and it has indeed been very exceptional, I think we all would recognise that Saudi Arabia assumed the mantle of leadership amidst very extraordinary times."

He noted "This year, of course, our relationship takes on greater significance because of Saudi Arabia's heading of the G20. Singapore is honoured to have been invited by the Saudi Presidency to attend the G20 Summit and all the associated meetings this year. One good example is the Monetary Authority of Singapore's support for Saudi Arabia's inaugural G20 Techsprint event. This was a virtual hackathon where private sector players came together to develop technology solutions for financial regulators and supervisors. It was the first time that an event like this was happening under the G20, and the MAS came in to provide support for it."

As the G20 Summit approached he shared "three wishes" for a successful outcome: The Minister said: "First, we hope that the G20 will rally global support for the World Health Organisation; and its very critical efforts to develop safe and effective vaccines that can be distributed equitably and affordably worldwide. We cannot afford to get into vaccine nationalism."

"Second, more than ever, I hope that the G20 can send a strong signal of support for a rules-based multilateral trading system that has benefitted all of us for so long. Keeping markets open and supply chains intact is key for access to essential medical supplies and crucial for minimising disruptions and enhancing economic recovery."

"Third, I hope that Leaders of the G20 will signal their collective determination to rebuild the global economy in a way that is greener and more sustainable. Investing in new sustainable infrastructure will be a powerful means of recovery and growth; and crowding-in the private sector through green finance will buttress these efforts."