

MESSAGE FROM WORLD LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE-CLUB DE MADRID TO THE SPECIAL G20 LEADERS' SUMMIT ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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This is the time when the world needs unity and leadership. COVID-19 is a threat to all and must be fought by all. The effectiveness and ultimate success of our efforts will, however, depend on leadership. Therefore, the initiative of the leaders of the G-20 is very welcome. In 2009 the G-20 charted the way to overcome the financial crisis. Today, global health, our common global good, is threatened. Collective response and visionary action are necessary.

Each government must find the most effective ways to fight COVID-19, depending on the needs and conditions in its country. In the difficult circumstances caused by the global spread of the disease we have to adjust the mindsets of all leaders and, indeed, of all people, to the requirements of the situation. Many of us are working from home. Many cannot. But we all have to find ways of ensuring life and the highest possible level of health for all. This requires solidarity both within national borders and internationally.

As Members of the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid, all democratic, former heads of state and government from around the globe – and much as we did at the time of the 2008 financial crisis, we feel a special responsibility to stand with our successors, with the G20 leaders and with all citizens of the world, in addressing this pandemic and its impact on the well-being of people, the global economy and the global financial system.

The world expects the leaders of G 20 to show the way forward, with a unifying voice and specific proposals. One has already been proposed by the Government of Norway: Creation of an international fund for assistance to the Global South to deal with the consequences of COVID-19. There will be other proposals in due course and they will all deserve careful consideration and effective responses.

Meanwhile, we need funding to support the efforts of the World Health Organization to coordinate the response to the pandemic, and to facilitate the supply of face masks and personal protection gear, testing kits and equipment globally needed by health professionals. These efforts should be supported by the World Bank which already in 2016, called for a Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility. This is now essential without delay.

We also support the IMF's call for coordinated fiscal stimuli to mitigate against long-lasting economic damage. Health spending on monitoring, testing, containment and treatment have to be the main priority. Moreover, a well – coordinated, significant global fiscal stimulus package for the global economy is also needed, especially as the effects of the COVID – 19 pandemic will be greater than any global recession of past decades.

In addition, this is the time to consider long term improvements to the way the international system deals with infectious diseases and thus strengthen our common security. The efforts of the World Health Organization deserve full support, including financial support. The world is looking to the G-20 for leadership and effective measures that will help end the scourge of COVID-19 soon, and will make the world better prepared for pandemics and other infectious diseases, economically more stable, socially and politically inclusive and, above all, safer for us all. We look forward to the results of your deliberations tomorrow.