
The Commonwealth-La Francophonie G20 Annual Dialogue

Washington DC, 21 April 2018

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Ministers and senior officials from developing countries of the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, including senior officers from regional and international organisations met in Washington to share their views on the 2018 G20 Presidency's three key priorities, namely: *The Future of Work; Infrastructure for Development; and, A Sustainable Food Future*.
2. Key interventions were provided by Argentina G20 Sherpa Ambassador Villagra Delgado and Ms Laura Jaitman, the G20 Finance Deputy, the latter marking the first official engagement of the Commonwealth-La Francophonie meeting with the G20's Finance Track.
3. This year's meeting was Chaired by Mr Moncef Follain, Advisor to the Secretary General of La Francophonie. Opening remarks were provided by Professor Prajapati Trivedi, Director, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development at the Commonwealth Secretariat, followed by four substantive discussions framed around the 2018 G20 Presidency's priorities, a progress update on key G20 initiatives and mechanisms for strengthening the Commonwealth-La Francophonie G20 relationship.
4. Ambassador Delgado affirmed the commitment of Argentina to undertake outreach activities, not only to discuss the Argentinian Presidency agenda but to listen and reflect on perspectives beyond the G20 priorities. In this respect, he welcomed the opportunity to engage in the annual dialogue with The Commonwealth and La Francophonie, noting the large membership of the two organisations.

5. He emphasised the need to place people at the centre of the G20 agenda and the important role of the G20 in helping to shape a global response to forces that are increasingly transforming global and national economies, with consequent social and political impacts.
6. Ambassador Delgado also spoke on the technological developments transforming labour markets as well as on the issue of widening inequality, migration, corruption, and low female labour participation. He further noted the importance of continuity in the G20 agenda across Presidencies and highlighted the creation of jobs - especially for the burgeoning youth population; closing the infrastructure gap; and the impact of climate change on food security as significant issues that require immediate response of all countries.
7. Senior representatives acknowledged the relevance and importance of such outreach meetings and welcomed both the recent focus of the G20 on Africa as well as the reflections of Ambassador Delgado on the G20 agenda from the perspective of the incoming Presidency.
8. Countries and regional organisations represented also welcomed the focus on education as a means of capitalising on technology and innovation. However, education financing costs, especially around teacher salaries and education infrastructure expenses were cited as major developing country challenges that need to be addressed if countries are to realise benefits from technological gains. Specifically, representatives highlighted the inability of developing countries to finance salaries for trained teachers, noting that it often leads to brain drain and perverse education outcomes. Additionally, countries highlighted the need to maintain a great attention to primary education for boys and girls, to ensure inclusiveness and the capacity of all young people to enter the future job market.
9. Representatives were receptive of Argentina's plans to investigate the impact of technology on the future of work and recognised the need for global initiatives in this area as well as in promoting investment in infrastructure. They re-emphasised the importance of infrastructure for growth, energy, water security and transportation, acknowledging that a global approach to infrastructure is needed to achieve the SDGs. In particular, countries emphasised the importance of infrastructure and agriculture development for rural areas, which is crucial to the fight against poverty and for promoting inclusiveness.
10. Countries of the two Associations called on the G20 to also recognise access to food as a major issue, in addition to proper soil management. In this regard, they highlighted the impact of climate change on food security, and reflected on the frequency and strength of recent hurricanes, which have caused

damages amounting to more than US\$100 million per year in some countries, with consequences for food security.

11. Ms Laura Jaitman, the G20 Finance Deputy from the Argentina's Ministry of the Treasury provided an update on G20 progress in the areas of tax, financial stability and remittances. Members welcomed the update, whilst also commenting that more needs to be done by the G20 in the area of taxation and extractive industries, and fisheries. To increase drastically the mobilisation of domestic resources to finance the SDGs, countries highlighted the need to address issues such as revising tax and investment treaties, sharply reducing tax exemptions (especially those requested and/or supported by bilateral and multilateral development partners) and improving large and multinational enterprise audits.
12. Regarding financial stability and remittances, representatives emphasized the need for capacity building and support to help developing countries to fully apply the Financial Action Task Force's recommendations.
13. As it relates to strengthening the Commonwealth-La Francophonie G20 relationship, Ambassador Delgado confirmed the Argentina Presidency's willingness to support more regular engagements with a view to enhancing awareness and participation.

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