



93rd and 94th CACCI Council Meetings to be held virtually on October 26



CACCI is pleased to announce that the 93rd and 94th CACCI Council Meetings are scheduled to take place virtually on October 26, 2021, 03:00 PM – 5:00 PM, Taipei Time.

On the agenda for the 93rd CACCI Council Meeting, which will run from 3:00 to 4:00 PM, are the following items, among others:

- Report of the Director-General
- Financial Report
- Membership Report
- Report of the Advisory Board
- Election of New CACCI Officers
- Briefing on the Program of the 35th CACCI Conference

The 94th CACCI Council Meeting will begin with brief remarks from the incoming President, after which council

members will proceed to discuss matters such as the framework for the 2021-2023 CACCI Work Program and preparations for the 36th CACCI Conference in 2022. The following items are also included in the agenda:

- Report of the CACCI Budget Commission
- Report on the CACCI Awards
 - A. 9th Local Chamber Awards
 - B. 8th Asia-Pacific Young Entrepreneur Award
 - C. 3rd Asia-Pacific Woman Entrepreneur Award
 - D. 4th Hydropower and Clean Energy Award

Updated information and other relevant details (e.g., registration link, etc.) will be sent out as soon as arrangements are finalized. In the meantime, should you have further questions, please contact the Secretariat at cacci@cacci.biz.

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CACCI Organizes First Virtual Summit on Business and Investment Opportunities



The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), in cooperation with the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA), Taiwan, the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce, Taiwan (CNAIC), and the Importers & Exporters Association of Taipei (IEAT), jointly conducted the first virtual CACCI Business and Investment Summit on June 4, 2021 which was attended by some 130 delegates from 24 countries.

With the COVID-19 pandemic triggering economic and social shocks globally and sparing no nation from this devastating impact, CACCI held the Summit aiming to explore business and investment opportunities in the region. The Summit is also part of a series of activities in 2021 to celebrate CACCI's 55th Year Anniversary since its founding in May 1966.

The two-hour virtual Summit was kicked off by the Welcome Remarks of CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi. He expressed his appreciation to participants who joined the virtual Business Summit, stressing the importance of CACCI as an apex regional business organization and platform where businesses can network and explore areas of cooperation, thereby increasing business interaction and promoting regional economic growth. Mr. Modi also indicated that the Summit is only one of several activities CACCI has planned for 2021 to celebrate the milestone

of its 55th founding Anniversary. And depending on the outcome of the event, more Business and Investment Summits may be organized in the future to showcase other CACCI member countries.

Moderated by Ms. Kristy Hsu, Director, Taiwan ASEAN Studies Center Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research, Taiwan, the virtual Summit featured the following speakers: from Bangladesh — Mr. Mohammad Hasan Arif, Joint Secretary, and General Manager of Administration & Finance at the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA); and Mr. Shekar N. Rajashekar, Managing Director and Sub-Cluster Head of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at Citibank; from Taiwan — Mr. William Tang, Director at InvesTaiwan; and Mr. Brett D. Aaron, CEO of BABI International Corp.; from Vietnam — Ms. Hoang Thanh Tam, Head of the Investment Promotion Division, Foreign Investment Agency at the Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam; and Mr. Brian Chen, Partner at KPMG and Director of The Council of Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam.

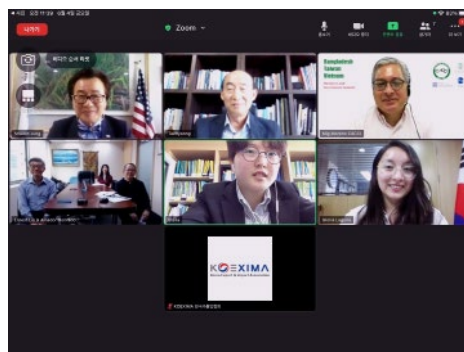
Invited speakers were requested to share their insights on the latest economic trends and investment policies in Bangladesh, Taiwan and Vietnam, as well as the business potentials and advantages that each country has to offer for foreign investors. Their presentations all indicate that, despite being impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, their respective economies show positive outlook as they begin to regain their footing and show signs of recovery. This encouraging prospect is attested to by recent economic forecasts released by the Asian development Bank, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

As CACCI President Mr. Modi mentioned in his Welcome Remarks, "Given such an optimistic outlook, now is the time to invest in the region."

CACCI Connects with KOEXIMA

CACCI Secretariat executives led by Director-General Mr. Ernest Lin on June 4 met virtually with key officers of the Korea Export and Import Association (KOEXIMA) led by Chairman Mr. Howard Jung to know more about each other's organizations and exchange ideas on possible areas of collaboration.

Mr. Lin also took the opportunity to invite the KOEXIMA officers to register for the online CACCI Business and Investment Summit scheduled to take place on the same day of the meeting, as well as to consider participating in the upcoming 35th CACCI Conference to be held virtually on November 2, 2021.



For his part, Chairman Jung offered to provide KOEXIMA's assistance and services to connect CACCI members with its partners in 79 countries worldwide.

With headquarters located in Busan, Korea and Boston, Massachusetts, USA, KOEXIMA is one of the biggest economic organizations not only in Korea, but also in the USA. It aims to facilitate exports, imports, and invest into the country all over the world. Its services include searching business partners (buyers, suppliers, and investors,

etc.), holding Business Seminars, linking with other government agencies to provide more complete services and information, and to promote cultural exchange among nations.

YEGAP ExCom Holds First Visioning Workshop



The Executive Committee of the CACCI Young Entrepreneurs Group (YEGAP) on June 16, 2021 held its first visioning workshop in an online format.

Chaired by YEGAP Chairman Mr. Mangesh Lal Shrestha, the two-hour session aimed to provide the YEGAP Executive Committee members to brainstorm and exchange ideas on the vision, the mission, the core values, and the proposed activities of YEGAP in order to lay the foundation that will ensure the long-term success, stability, and sustainability of the group.

The workshop – which carried the theme “Asia’s Future – Envisioning YEGAP with CACCI” – was divided into five major parts, with each part focusing discussions on the following:

- Review of YEGAP, from its founding in 2004 to its current state
- Discussion on the Purpose of YEGAP

- Discussion on the Mission of YEGAP
- Discussion on the Core Values of YEGAP
- Discussion on the Future of YEGAP (The Way Forward)

The Committee thereafter broke into three groups to separately share their thoughts on what they think should be the Purpose, the Mission, and the Core Values of YEGAP.

Following the group discussions, each group was requested to make a summary report of what their respective group thinks should be the Purpose, the Mission, and the Core Values of YEGAP.

Before adjourning the meeting, Mr. Lal Shrestha said that as a next step, the reports presented by the different groups would be compiled and refined, and shared with the Committee members, and later discussed again to come up with statements on the Purpose, Mission, and Core Values of YEGAP that are consensually agreed by the Committee.

Thereafter, Workshop Two will be conducted during which the Executive Committee will mainly discuss the following issues:

- The strengths and weaknesses of YEGAP
- YEGAP Governance
- Value Proposition of YEGAP
- Activities, Programs and Events of YEGAP
- Define the Committees to be created
- The Way Forward

The Committee agreed to meet again on July 7, 2021, from 02:00 PM to 04:00 PM, Taipei Time, for Workshop Two.

CACCI to Conduct Webinar on the WTO with India's Commerce Minister



Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Government of India



the WTO and what reforms are necessary and how to achieve them. The Tentative Program will be as follows:

3:00PM – 3:05PM - Welcome
Remarks by Mr. Uday Shankar, President, FICCI; Opening Remarks by Mr. Samir Modi, President, CACCI

3:05PM – 3:25PM - Presentation

by Minister Piyush Goyal

3:25PM – 3:55PM - Q & A Session

3:55PM – 4:00PM - Closing Remarks

The July 6 webinar will be the first of a series of webinars that CACCI plans to organize to provide our members the opportunity to understand and have a clear idea of what trade officials in CACCI member countries think of what the WTO should achieve and how to go about it.

Interested parties may register free-of-charge through the following link: <https://ficci.in/registration/invitee-form.asp?evid=25582>.

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), in cooperation with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), is organizing a webinar on the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the WTO reform efforts on July 6 from 3:00PM to 4:00PM, New Delhi Time.

The one-hour session will feature Shri Piyush Goyal, the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry and Railways, Government of India. Hon'ble Minister Goyal will elaborate on the views and position of his Ministry on the current operation of

Steering Committee for CACCI World Trading System study holds fifth, sixth meetings

The fifth and sixth virtual meeting of the Steering Committee for the CACCI Study on “Resurrecting the World Trading System” was held at 2:00 PM on May 24, and 3:00 PM on June 15, respectively. Both sessions were chaired by CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi.

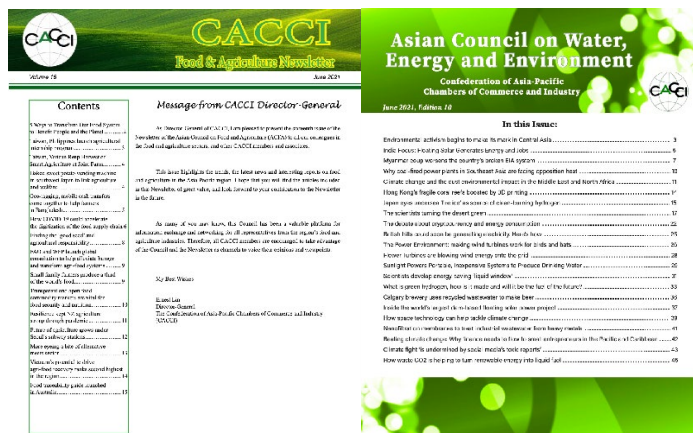
During the fifth meeting, Dr. Andy Stoeckel proposed that the study would need

to define CACCI’s position on the purpose and principles behind the WTO, which should focus on trade-related issues, and not on other issues such as human rights, gender equality, climate change, etc., which while important, can be addressed by other relevant bodies. Additionally, the CACCI study should recommend a set of principles that are clear and simple.

At the sixth meeting, the Steering Committee was updated on the status of the first draft of the study, which has been completed and has since been circulated to members for their comments. Other matters were also discussed, including how best to present the results of the study.

The Committee agreed to meet again at 2:00 PM on June 29.

CACCI releases latest Food & Agriculture, and Water, Energy, and Environment newsletters



Agriculture Newsletter and the Asian Council on Water, Energy and Environment (ACWEE) Newsletter.

The Food and Agriculture Newspaper is the publication of the Asian Council on Food and Agriculture. The sixteenth issue, released this month, highlights the trends, the latest news and interesting reports on food and agriculture in the Asia-Pacific region, which include smart agriculture, food traceability and digitization of the food supply chain, to name a few.

The Water, Energy and Environment Newsletter is the publication of the Asian Council on Water, Energy and Environment (ACWEE). The tenth edition was published this month and includes features on environmental activism in Central Asia, cryptocurrency and energy consumption, as well as various novel methods to treat and recycle wastewater, generate energy sustainably, and help tackle climate change.

CACCI recently published the latest editions of two Product and Service newsletters: the CACCI Food and

News Update

ICC holds Global Briefing session with new WTO Director-General



The International Chamber of Commerce, on June 3, held a Global Briefing session with the World Trade

Organization (WTO) Director-General, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who took office on March 1.

ICC Secretary General John Denton, who opened the session, said "We are extremely optimistic about the WTO's future under the leadership of Dr. Okonjo-Iweala, who has hit the ground not just running but sprinting."

During the hour-long session, Dr. Okonjo-Iweala met with over 1,000 members of the ICC's global business community to discuss the importance of

the trading system and prospects for MC12. She also engaged them in discussing key topics like vaccine equity, inclusive trade, and harmful fisheries subsidies.

According to Dr. Okonjo-Iweala, "ICC has such a long history of excellent work in international trade and investment, and it's really a pleasure to work with all of you."

She said, "The rules we deal with at the WTO have a direct impact on businesses' ability to move goods and services across borders and tap into global

markets,” adding that “the business community can help us understand what is working well and what is not.”

On the issue of making trade work for people and the planet, Dr. Okonjo-Iweala said more

interaction and engagement from the business community, including MSMEs, is needed, emphasizing that the WTO wants to hear from the end users.

ICC Launches ICC Trade Now



ICC has launched ICC Trade Now, a suite of digital products and services to tackle the global trade finance gap in all its breadth and complexity.

Through tailored partnerships with cutting edge solution providers, ICC Trade Now will scale up trade finance solutions, empower small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and provide financiers with new investment opportunities.

International trade is a key driver of growth and innovation for SMEs worldwide – yet over 45% of SMEs see their requests for trade finance rejected and often struggle to find alternative sources of funding. Without adequate access to capital, SMEs are effectively cut off from international markets and unable to grow their operations to meet international demand.

Coupled with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, SMEs desperately need short-term liquidity and access to international trade to survive the ongoing economic crisis and thrive once the worst effects of the crisis have subsided. Building on extensive market research, ICC is taking bold action to ensure that SMEs worldwide have the right tools and access to capital to trade now. ICC Trade Now will connect SMEs to innovative service providers who can help finance their trade operations and seize new business opportunities globally

ICC Trade Now will bring together and offer a portfolio of solutions that can address the various facets of the trade finance gap. SMEs will be able to select the solution provider that is most aligned with their needs while a wide array of financiers will be able to leverage ICC Trade Now solution providers to service SMEs profitably. Three digital solutions – ICC TRADECOMM, TradeFlow Capital, and FQX – have already been announced under the ICC Trade Now campaign with more solutions expected to be added in 2021.

ICC TRADECOMM powered by Finastra will allow investors to finance trade transactions against title documents and equip SMEs with a broader set of solutions to mitigate perceived

risk and the burden of compliance. TradeFlow Capital – developed in partnership with TradeFlow Capital Management – offers investors a non-credit approach based on direct ownership of the commodities and quick and low cost on-boarding of SMEs with full bank level KYC and AML checks. FQX is a blockchain-based digital infrastructure that enables the issuance, transfer and settlement of electronic promissory notes for obtaining and providing trade finance in 152 countries around the world.

EU-ABC urges faster action to improve ASEAN competitiveness and sustainable recovery



ASEAN Economic Integration: Time for a Post-Pandemic Reset?



ASEAN Economic Integration: Practical Suggestions to Advance Trade Facilitation



The EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) published two papers calling for more progress on ASEAN’s regional economic agenda and linking a durable recovery from the pandemic to ASEAN’s Leaders, Trade and Finance Ministers putting in place specific measures to accelerate work on the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

The EU-ABC, which represents the interests of the European business community across Southeast Asia, cited concerns about the lack of progress on key elements of ASEAN economic integration under the AEC, particularly in the area of the elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade. In their reports, the EU-ABC also noted that even pre-COVID-19, ASEAN was seeing a flattening off of foreign direct investment to the region, and a fall in trade. COVID-19 has only worsened that position and therefore there is a more pressing need to accelerate regional economic integration to assist with the economic recovery from the pandemic. The EU-ABC therefore calls for more coherent, faster and transparent action to aid with the economic recovery of the region and to bolster its attractiveness for investments.

In the papers, the EU-ABC said that it perceived the following as hampering progress on economic integration:

- Lack of commitment or inability to deliver on the promises enshrined in both the 2015 and 2025 ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprints;
- Targets set by ASEAN are regularly missed, in particular commitments to tackle non-tariff barriers

to trade are hampered by ineffective processes and tools;

- Existing trade facilitative agreements, such as the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), remain to be fully implemented or adhered to;
- The region is adding new ideas and programmes, such as in digital transformation, but continues to fail to deliver on existing ones.

A consequence of ASEAN's lack of progress in these areas is that most multinationals (as well as regional SMEs) treat ASEAN as ten individual markets, and consequently focus on one or a few markets that are of most importance or interest to them and do not address the region as a whole. An even more significant consequence is that a sustainable recovery from the pandemic hangs in the balance.

According to EU-ABC Executive Director Chris Humphrey, "The pandemic offers ASEAN a challenge and an opportunity for a "reset" in its approach to economic integration. More urgency, more commitment, more resources are needed to deliver the AEC Blueprint and realise the region's huge potential. Business needs to play its part by identifying barriers and then executing with more jobs, more trade and more investment whenever barriers are eliminated."



Building back safer, better and greener: ASEAN must get serious about greening and sustainable development

CARI ASEAN Research and Advocacy (CARI), in collaboration with its supporting partners ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN BAC) and ASEAN BAC Malaysia, hosted the "Greening ASEAN: Towards Green Recovery in ASEAN Post Pandemic" to discuss the major concerns and requirements towards ASEAN recovery and its contribution to the overall global climate agenda.

The session featured a keynote presentation by the Hon. Dato Seri Paduka Dr Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, the Brunei Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy (Economy), Ms. Duangjai Asawachintachit, the Secretary-General of Thailand's Board of Investment, Dr San Oo, Chair of ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN), as well as Mr Cedrice Rimaud, a Corporate Bonds and Green Finance Specialist at Climate Bonds Initiative. Tan Sri Dr Munir Majid, Chairman of CARI and ASEAN BAC Malaysia, served as moderator.

ASEAN is committed to long-term sustainable goal through public-private partnership and cross-sectoral collaboration

The Hon. Dato Seri Paduka Dr Haji Abdul Manaf Bin Haji Metussin (Dato' Dr Manaf), Brunei Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy (Economy) remarked that despite the

global unprecedented shock in the political, social and economic, and financial structures of the modern world, ASEAN has shown its solidarity and joined hands to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, without losing sight of its integration efforts.

The ASEAN Economic Community, Brunei Darussalam has identified thirteen (13) Priority Economic Deliverables under three strategic thrusts, namely Recovery, Digitalisation and Sustainability. The deliverables are complementary to the work currently being carried out under the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF).

The pandemic has given ASEAN a window to rebuild towards a safer community and a better and greener economy

In a series of reports released by CARI examining ASEAN's fiscal policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate-aligned measures were found to be lacking in various stimulus spending, national budgets, taxation policies as the emphasis was directed towards saving lives and livelihoods.

Jukhee Hong, the executive director of CARI, who presented the findings of the reports, highlighted that climate aligned and sustainability measures should be included in future state budgets while tax relief in the form of tax credits should be given to companies involved in climate change mitigation, green building practices, and green technologies in the short term.

Green recovery is the only way forward for ASEAN's economic recovery

Madam Duangjai Asawachintachit observed that the pressure coming from trading partners to provide green supply chains and sustainability certification, coupled with obligations under international agreements and Sustainable Development Goals, are among several factors that have driven Thailand towards green investment.

"Green recovery for ASEAN is not a luxury but a necessity. In Thailand, there is growing awareness and pressure in the business community as Thai businesses have to embrace green practices to remain competitive in the international markets, such as the need to migrate to renewable energy and implement eco-packaging," she said.

ASEAN unity is key to a regional green recovery

Dr. San Oo presented on the Vision of ASEAN's Cooperation on Environment 2025, given that the region is endowed with rich natural resources, and shared with the audience on the various ongoing ASEAN Greening Projects under the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) such as the Regional Dialogue on Carbon Pricing (REdiCAP) and ASEAN Low Carbon Energy Programme (LCEP). He also highlighted Myanmar has seen rising investments and development of the country's natural resources for the energy and power sector, gas, hydropower, mining, agriculture and forestry sectors. The AWGCC will release a joint statement at the COP 26 Summit later this year.

Ample capital available for climate-resilient projects in ASEAN to reset economy due to pandemic

Corporate Bonds and Green Finance Specialist Cedric Rimaud remarked that climate change impact cannot be reversed overnight and the next decade is critical in changing the direction of governments' injection of large capital in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative that these capitals are invested appropriately to take account of the shifting risks happening in the region.

ASEAN needs to be serious about greening and sustainable development

Tan Sri Munir, the Chairman of CARI emphasised that "We must be honestly serious about greening and sustainable development - and not just pay lip service to it. Climate change is a real threat". He calls for development in ways that protect people and the environment. He also stressed that the foundation is to let people see how sustainable development goals (SDGs) are not distant and abstract terms but have real relevance to the lives of the people - good health, clean water, efficient and cheap energy, good transportation, no pollution, a green environment, secure jobs and social support.

Addressing the digital divide and inequality: A road to equitable COVID-19 vaccine delivery

Digital technologies, including mobile technologies, are facilitating every stage of the vaccine supply chain, from planning, through delivery and post vaccination monitoring. A recent study found that a robust data infrastructure helps local authorities identify priority groups, send invitations, and arrange transport for those who may need assistance. The advantages of digital solutions are even more clear in the last mile vaccine delivery: they enable people to access information about the national and local vaccine campaigns, check eligibility, register for vaccination, and schedule follow-up appointments whilst minimizing human interaction throughout the process. Indeed, online systems, e-mail, and mobile applications are the predominant way that countries are distributing vaccines to their citizens.



In countries where the vaccine campaigns have already begun, we are seeing that the digital divide, if unaddressed, has a risk of widening the vaccine divide, potentially leading to negative health outcomes. The availability and access to high-speed internet and devices such as computers and smartphones as well as one's ability to navigate the web play a crucial role in accelerating COVID-19 vaccine delivery in some countries.

The digital divide is universal and multifaceted

The relationship between the digital divide and unequal vaccine distribution is exacerbated in developing countries where digital disparities are wider and more varied. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), only 28% of the rural households in developing countries had access to the internet in 2019 (65% in urban areas) compared with 81% in developed countries (87% in urban areas).

The gender gap in access to the internet remains large as well: In developing countries 40% of women and 49% of men used the internet in 2019, compared to 86% and 88% in developed countries. In LDCs, this gap is even wider: only 15% of women and 28% of men used the internet in 2019.

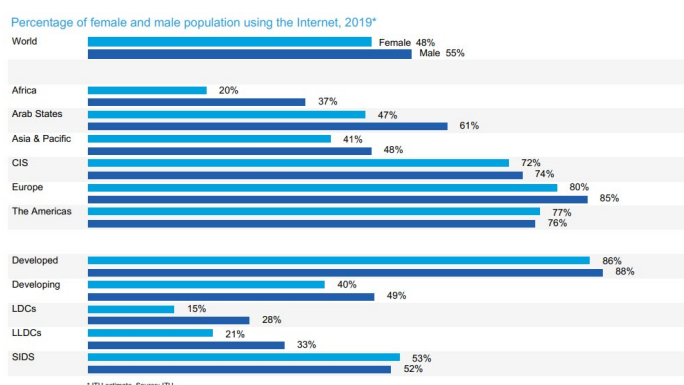


Figure 1. Percentage of female and male population using the internet, 2019 (Source: ITU)

Digital connectivity is key to ensuring that nobody is left behind in COVID-19 vaccine delivery efforts. As the immediate first step, countries embarking on the vaccine rollout should assess the connectivity needs in health clinics, schools and other community facilities that will house, manage, and distribute vaccines to the local population. Governments, in partnership with private sector operators, should consider a range of policy options to expand broadband access and capacity like a temporary release of frequency spectrum and a review of the rules governing the use of Universal Service Fund (USF) to address connectivity gaps particularly in rural communities.

Closing the gap

Implement rapid connectivity solutions for key facilities and community centers

In the areas where physical infrastructure and terrestrial networks are not readily available, government and local authorities can consider innovative measures to provide broadband connectivity. For example, Avanti Communications Group, in partnership with the Kenyan Education Ministry and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), is providing satellite broadband connectivity to 245 rural and remote schools for more than 180,000 children, thereby enabling e-learning through iMango Initiative. Similarly, in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, the World Bank has provided free Wi-Fi connectivity to 30 critical public institutions, including hospitals and schools by purchasing bandwidth capacity and equipment for

Wi-Fi hotspots through the ongoing Digital Malawi project. By adopting such connectivity solutions, among other technology solutions that can generate rapid impact, health clinics and facilities can be a central hub for vaccine delivery and serve as community networks in the future.

Provide measures to temporarily subsidize/address affordability of data and devices

In addition, it is also necessary to address the internet usage gap by connecting those who are currently offline to internet-capable devices, such as phones, tablets, and computers, and making the cost of the internet more affordable. Increased availability of digital connectivity can only enable people to obtain information about vaccination and schedule appointments when people can actually use the internet. Governments and local authorities, in partnership with mobile network operators, can consider providing subsidies or offering loans for purchasing devices. By way of an example, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently introduced Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to provide a monthly subsidy for broadband services as well as a discount on purchasing a device. As another example, at the outset of the COVID-19 outbreak, many operators and governments around the world, including Ghana, Djibouti, and South Africa, zero-rated — or making free of charge for certain services and conditions — access to educational platforms and websites to ensure the continuity of learning. The zero-rating service could be applicable to the COVID-19 vaccine delivery as well with free access to relevant websites.

Beyond the emergency response for equitable COVID-19 vaccine delivery, countries can leverage this opportunity to strengthen the key underlying pillars of digital economy, including digital infrastructure and digital skills, forging resilience to future shocks. A strong foundation of the broadband ecosystem and digital infrastructure brings transformative benefits across various sectors and applications, such as telehealth, online learning, digital government systems and e-commerce. In the meantime, it is also necessary to make progress toward digital equality within a country between different age groups, genders, and urban-rural communities, among others. To this end, investment in digital skills and literacy is an essential part of efforts to expand broadband access and usage.

World Bank Blogs

UNESCO declares environmental education must be a core curriculum component by 2025

Over 80 ministers and vice ministers and 2,800 education and environment stakeholders committed to taking concrete steps to transform learning for the survival of our planet by adopting the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at the end of a three-day virtual World Conference held from May 17 to 19, 2021.

The Conference, followed online by over 10,000 viewers,



was organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of Germany and the German Commission for UNESCO as advisory partner.

UNESCO has called for Education for Sustainable Development to be a core component of all education systems at all levels by 2025.

UNESCO's launch of a new publication, which analyzed educational plans and curricula frameworks in close to 50 countries informed the discussions. UNESCO found that more than half make no reference to climate change, while only 19% speak about biodiversity.

The Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development outlines a range of policies to transform learning encompassing teaching, learning, professional training and civic engagement. It also highlights the need to implement Education for Sustainable Development with focus on cognitive skills, social and emotional learning, collaboration skills, problem solving, resilience-building.

"We need training for sustainable development not to be a privilege but accessible to all people. The success of the Education for Sustainable Development programme for 2030 will bring us closer to all the SDGs," said German Chancellor Angela Merkel in her welcoming address, describing Germany's broad network of partners working on sustainability at all levels of education and training.

Throughout the Conference, countries shared plans to integrate Education for Sustainable Development. Ms Anja Karliczek, Germany's federal minister of education and research, shared the commitments of 18 countries of the European Union to implement the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework, underscoring it as a driver for the achievement of all the SDGs.

Laurent Fabius, who presided over COP21 where the Paris Agreement was sealed, stated the "fight against climate change begins at school." He recalled commitments in the Paris Agreement to education, and called for increased efforts to improve teacher training on ESD and increase financing. "2021 is the year in which we will overcome the pandemic and embark on a sustainable development model for the future that must include ESD. If we miss this occasion, we will lose decades. This is a race against the clock."

The voices of young people were given a platform throughout the Conference, as those leading the call for change so that they can #LearnForOurPlanet.

The adoption of the Berlin Declaration will create momentum for the implementation of ESD for 2030 Roadmap – the framework for this decade of Education for Sustainable

Development. Every UNESCO Member State will be asked to create a network of actors who together can implement the ambitious vision for education.

From Berlin, 2021 will provide key opportunities for governments to apply this commitment, including the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) and the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

G7 Reach Global Tax Deal Aimed at Ending Profit Shifting



The top economic officials from the world's advanced economies reached a breakthrough in their yearslong efforts to overhaul international tax laws, unveiling a broad agreement that aims to

stop large multinational companies from seeking out tax havens and force them to pay more of their income to governments.

Finance leaders from the Group of 7 countries agreed to back a new global minimum tax rate of at least 15% that companies would have to pay regardless of where they locate their headquarters.

The agreement would also impose an additional tax on some of the largest multinational companies, potentially forcing technology giants like Amazon, Facebook and Google as well as other big global businesses to pay taxes to countries based on where their goods or services are sold, regardless of whether they have a physical presence in that nation.

Officials described the pact as a historic agreement that could reshape global commerce and solidify public finances that have been eroded after more than a year of combating the coronavirus pandemic. The deal comes after several years of fraught negotiations and, if enacted, would reverse a race to the bottom on international tax rates. It would also put to rest a fight between the United States and Europe over how to tax big technology companies.

While the agreement is a major step forward, many challenges remain. Next month, the Group of 7 countries must sell the concept to finance ministers from the broader Group of 20 nations that are meeting in Italy. If that is successful, officials hope that a final deal can be signed by Group of 20 leaders when they reconvene in October.

Garnering wider support will not be easy. Ireland, which has a tax rate of 12.5 percent, has come out against the global minimum tax, arguing that it would be disruptive to its economic model. Some major countries such as China have been quietly tracking the proceedings but are considered unlikely to buy in. Finance officials believe that if enough advanced economies sign on, then other countries will be compelled to follow suit and they plan to exert political pressure on Ireland to join the agreement.

The Group of 7 delegations, which represent Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, negotiated late into June 4 to hash out details of how the new tax systems would work and the language in the statement.

France, which had been pushing for a tax rate above 15%, wanted to ensure that there remains flexibility for the tax to be higher. The United States was pushing European countries to eliminate their digital services taxes, which the administration says unfairly target American technology companies. France, Italy and Britain have resisted abandoning those taxes until the agreement is finished and in place — a process that could take up to four years.

The joint statement, or communiqué, released on June 5 suggested that the digital taxes would remain in place for now.

“We will provide for appropriate coordination between the application of the new international tax rules and the removal of all digital services taxes, and other relevant similar measures, on all companies,” the statement said.

To prevent individual countries from imposing dozens of digital taxes around the world, the agreement would apply a new tax to large businesses with a profit margin of at least 10%. The finance ministers agreed that the tax would be applied to at least 20% of profit exceeding that 10% margin “for the largest and most profitable multinational enterprises.”

Huge sums of money are at stake. A report this month from the EU Tax Observatory estimated that a 15% minimum tax would yield an additional 48 billion euros, or \$58 billion, a year. The Biden administration projected in its budget in May that the new global minimum tax system could help bring in \$500 billion in tax revenue over a decade to the United States.

The agreement signaled a return to comity among the club of wealthy countries, which was fractured in recent years as the Trump administration imposed tariffs on American allies, but has regained its footing since President Biden took office. Last year, the Treasury secretary at the time, Steven Mnuchin, abandoned the talks after negotiations over the digital taxes stalled and President Donald J. Trump prepared retaliatory tariffs against countries that planned to tax American technology companies.

The negotiations regained momentum this year after US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen offered new proposals that succeeded in breaking the gridlock. She suggested a global minimum tax rate of at least 15% and proposed replacing European digital services taxes with a new levy on the world's largest 100 companies that would be based on where a company sells its goods or services, regardless of whether it also has a physical presence in those countries.

Despite the breakthrough, completing such a sweeping agreement will not be easy and the threat of a trade war remains if countries keep their digital services taxes in place. The Biden administration said that it was prepared to move forward with tariffs on about \$2.1 billion worth of goods from Austria, Britain, India, Italy, Spain and Turkey in retaliation for their digital taxes. However, it is keeping them on hold while the tax negotiations unfold.

New York Times

New trade task force must act fast on competitiveness: ACCI



A new trade taskforce set up to cut copious amounts of red tape and regulation must move quickly or Australia's global competitiveness will continue to rapidly decline.

The new Simplified Trade System Implementation Taskforce, to be led by Mr. Randall Brugeaud, "is a result of more than eight years of discussions around how to modernise Australia's antiquated trade system," ACCI's international director Bryan Clark said.

"As our 2021 National Trade Survey shows, international competitiveness has remained the number one issue for exporters for years. We are 106th in the World Bank rankings for ease of border crossing and are in dire need of an improved competitiveness

overhaul."

"Our trade costs are mounting, our border administration systems are cumbersome, and our technology and approaches are outdated. We drastically need to modernise our system to remain competitive and improve our place in the world.

"We are seeing increased cyber-attacks on both business and Government. Our trading systems and the system for compliance must be able to withstand any incursions from bad actors – our integrated cargo system cannot be the weakest link for ransom or trade disruption."

ACCI, with partners PwC and the Port of Brisbane undertook a pilot programme to demonstrate how to improve trade systems, supported by blockchain technology and covering the complete logistics and regulator landscape for trade. The programme could help reduce costs across the economy by at least \$1 Billion annually.

According to Mr. Clark, "Ultimately, it's vital this taskforce move with speed and have access to multiple government departments, from DFAT to the departments of Industry, Home Affairs, Treasury and Finance. We need a whole-of-Government approach to fix our antiquated trade system."

"With our extensive resources and experience on trade systems, we look forward to working with the Government on this task to urgently address our outdated models and diminishing global competitiveness."

ACCI Media Release

FBCCI president urges strengthening bond between industry, academia



Md Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI), urged strengthening the bond between industries and educational institutions to encourage economic progress.

"The biggest problem in our country is the lack of communication between our industries and educational institutions," he said, adding that Japan and South Korea have made progress through industry-academia collaboration.

Universities should focus on teaching all the subjects that have demand in the job market, he added.

"If we want to increase our capacity, we have to make partnerships with educational institutions. We need to strengthen the bond between industry and the business community," the FBCCI president said while speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on Industry - Academia Collaboration, jointly organized by North South University (NSU) and the apex trade body of the country.

The main objective of the seminar was to provide timely education to the students through joint research of industry and academia and involving academics to solve various problems of the industry, reads a press release.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of NSU and former president of FBCCI MA Kashem was present as the special guest at the seminar. He said NSU's duty is to make a student capable for the job market, which is why it encourages students to conduct joint research with the industries.

"I would like to thank the FBCCI for showing their interest in conducting joint research with NSU. I think this joint effort will help our students to become skilled in the job market as well as help the industries to find skilled people and solve various problems.

Dhaka Tribune

CCC, Japan to organise more trade meets



The Cambodia Chamber of Commerce (CCC) has renewed its support for the Japan External Trade Organisation (Jetro) in organising trade meetings between Cambodian and Japanese businesses to promote better trade cooperation between the two countries.

The commitment was made during a June 2 meeting between CCC director-general Nguon Meng Tech and Jetro Phnom Penh Office chief representative Marisa Haruta.

During the meeting, Meng Tech noted that the two institutions have previously organised many joint business events to attract more investors from Japan to invest in Cambodia and that the CCC will continue to back Jetro's efforts to share insights and examples of the Kingdom's potential with Japanese businesspeople.

According to a report from Jetro, trade between Cambodia and Japan in the first quarter of this year totalled \$633.12 million, up by 7.8% from the same period last year. Cambodia's exports to Japan include garments, components for electronic equipment and electronics, while imports from Japan include machinery and high-tech products.

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and Japan in 2020 was worth \$2.10178 billion, down by 8.35% from 2019. From 1994 to 2018, the Council for the Development of Cambodia approved 137 Japanese investment projects in the Kingdom with a total capital of \$2.486 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Phnom Penh Post



the state level lockdowns. With different parts of the country under different sets of restrictions and consumer sentiment impacted due to the ferocity of the second wave, an evident dip in demand was witnessed by companies. 58% of the surveyed companies reported 'weak demand' as the biggest challenge they are facing under the current environment. This was followed by 'managing costs' (56%) and 'tight financial liquidity' (43%) that emerged as other significant issues companies have to deal with in the present situation.

This time it was not just demand in urban areas that was constrained; even the rural areas saw a compression in demand with 37% of the companies reporting a 'high impact' on their sales in rural markets. The weak demand situation impacted capacity utilization with 40% of the companies seeing utilization rates of less than 50% of their installed capacity.

While the impact of the second wave induced lockdowns on businesses is clearly visible, there is a silver lining on the horizon. With different states getting into the 'unlock' mode, there are immediate indications of improvement in economic activity.

Even as companies brace for improvement, the need for support from the government remains high. According to the feedback received in the survey, the MSME sector faced the maximum brunt and there is an immediate need for relief to this sector. This view was expressed by nearly 65% of the surveyed companies.

Companies have articulated a set of measures that they feel the government must take to avoid the panic and stress that got created during the last wave. The top 5 priorities that should form the core of our preparatory work for dealing with any subsequent waves include [1] ramping up investments in healthcare infrastructure in tier 2, tier 3 cities and in rural areas; [2] maintaining a sufficient pool of essential medicines for COVID-19 management; [3] continuing with newly created temporary facilities for COVID-19 management; [4] strengthening testing infrastructure across the country; and [5] setting up a national facility for vaccine manufacturing with government funding.

In addition to the above measures, the government must take all steps to scale up vaccination drives in the country. The only way we can win the war against COVID-19 and put this behind us is through mass vaccination. The importance being attached to vaccination by corporate India can be gauged from the fact that nearly two thirds of the surveyed companies have launched a vaccine drive for their employees.

FICCI Media Division

Covid Second Wave Impacted 58% Of Indian Businesses: FICCI

The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic that hit India during April-May 2021 impacted the functioning of businesses, which had just started moving on the path towards normalcy after the end of the first wave. To break the chain of transmission, unlike last year when the country went into a national lockdown, this time state governments prioritized micro-containment zones and localized lockdowns based on the evolving situation on the ground.

A nationwide survey of businesses conducted by FICCI and Dhruva Advisors shows that 58% of the companies saw a 'high impact' on their businesses due to the state level lockdowns. Another 38% reported 'moderate impact' on their operations due to

Iran Chamber, Kenya trade delegation explore avenues of mutual economic co-op



Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted a meeting with a Kenyan trade delegation on June 14 to explore ways for expanding economic cooperation between the two countries, especially in the agricultural sector.

The meeting was attended by ICCIMA Deputy Head for International Affairs Mohammadreza Karbasi, and Caroline Gichuki, the founder and CEO of a renowned Kenyan agricultural

company called Techfarm Travel Ltd.

Speaking in the meeting the two sides pointed to barter trade, using the capacities of the local banks, overseas agriculture, and participation in joint exhibitions as ways for expanding the level of trade between the two countries.

According to Karbasi: "The economies of Iran and Kenya are complementary. Agriculture is Kenya's most important economic sector, and its major tea and coffee products are known around the world," adding: "Overseas agriculture, the establishment of conversion industries and joint activities in the livestock and meat sector, are good investment opportunities for Iranian businessmen in this country."

Karbasi put the two countries' trade in 2020 at \$57 million, noting that Iran exported \$50 million worth of goods to Kenya while importing \$7 million from the country in the mentioned year.

According to the official, Iran can meet Kenya's needs in the fields of oil derivatives and bitumen, petrochemical products, health tourism, medicine, and food; Kenya, on the other hand, can meet the needs of the Iranian market in the field of cocoa, coffee, tea, grains, as well as food and livestock products.

Tehran Times

KCCI, Spanish Chamber of Commerce hold biz forum to mark President's Madrid visit

Members of the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce recently held their first in-person meeting since the COVID-19 outbreak on the occasion of President Moon Jae-in's state visit to Spain.

The South Korea-Spain Green and Digital Business Forum held in Madrid on June 14, was jointly organized with the state-run Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), and its opening was attended by President Moon Jae-in and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

Led by Doosan Infracore Chairman Park Yong-maan, who also chairs the Korean team in the Korea-Spain Economic Cooperation Council, and Spanish Chamber of Commerce President Jose Luis Bonet, the two groups mainly discussed ways to bolster cooperation in green growth, digital technology and startups.

Among the Spanish participants were Oskar Goitia, the chairman of the Spanish side of the Korea-Spain Economic Cooperation Council, Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism Reyes Maroto, Ambassador to Korea Juan Ignacio Morro and Confederation of Business President Antonio Garamendi.

Park, in his opening speech, stressed cooperation for new technologies and next growth engines that can better tackle climate change, noticeably green energy and ICT, and battery and high-tech materials. "Also needed is expanded cooperation among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups," he said, calling for support from their respective governments and larger companies.

The countries sought to hold a business forum in Seoul



last year to mark the then-planned visit of Spanish King Felipe VI. The forum was replaced with an online meeting after the king's trip was canceled due to the pandemic.

The bilateral economic cooperation council is the second-oldest of its kind among ones involving Korea. It will mark its 50th anniversary in 2022.

The Korea Times

Nepal business groups urge government not to slap fines on business community

Various umbrella organizations of the private business sector have urged the government not to slap fines on the business community who have failed to pay value-added taxes and excise duties regularly due to the prohibition order.

In a joint statement issued on June 7 by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Confederation of Nepalese Industries, and the Nepal Chamber of Commerce, they have stated that the country could rise by successfully dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the infection-caused economic crisis

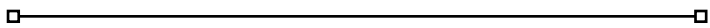
through cooperation between the government and private sector.

Hit hard by the prohibitory measures, businesspersons cannot make money to pay taxes, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, the private sector has urged those who have managed to run their business during the prohibition and those who can afford to help the government by paying taxes in time.

They have also demanded that the government ensures COVID-19 vaccines to the business community and workers while fully implementing a budget for the next fiscal year, 2021/22.

Khabarhub



PCCI commissions study on digital industry

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) has commissioned a study to be conducted with a university in Singapore to map the development of the Philippine digital economy.

The business group is working on an action plan for the digital economy, covering the roll out of 5G, artificial intelligence, and the cloud, PCCI Intellectual Property Committee Chairman Antonio L. Sayo said at an event on May 28.

The development of the plan will start with a white paper prepared by public policy researchers at the National University of Singapore.

“(It’s) essentially a benchmarking exercise,” Mr. Sayo said. “The idea is to have an indication as to where we are as regards to digital transformation, and to be presented and discussed at the PCCI board.”

The PCCI will present initial findings in panel discussions with its partners, including the Department of Trade and Industry. The final paper will be presented to government, business groups, and universities.

The PCCI in January launched a center for technology education and entrepreneurship in partnership with Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., with the intent of exploring artificial intelligence, robotics, coding, big data analysis, the Internet of Things, satellite internet connectivity, and blockchain.

Business World



Ceylon Chamber of Commerce conducts National SME Forum 2021

In an effort to support all players in the SME Ecosystem, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce has organized a National SME Forum in collaboration with public, private and Non-Governmental sector organizations engaged in SME Sector development. This virtual engagement initiated high level policy discussions with an aim to accelerate economic growth through creating a dynamic SME sector. The forum was held on June 28, 2021 via Zoom under the theme ‘Accelerating economic growth through creation of a dynamic SME sector’.

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce strongly believes

that the SME sector can make a significant contribution towards achieving the macro-economic targets placed for 2020-2025 under the National Policy Framework, “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour”.

The “Sri Lanka Economic Acceleration Framework 2025” formulated by the Chamber also identifies the SME sector as a strategic sector in the Sri Lankan economy and has proposed a series of actions for SME sector Development. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce has established the Centre for SMEs as the focal point for facilitation for all SME/Entrepreneurship Development initiatives of the Chamber in order to support the National Vision of creating a dynamic SME Sector.

The National SME Forum covered critical areas such as access to finance to invest in modernization, expansion and successful operation while addressing issues pertaining to demand and supply, facilitation of accessing suitable markets for products and services focussed on increasing exports and the use of digital marketing, promotion of new technology transfer and innovation, use of digital technology which can enhance performance and opportunities for SMEs, the importance of developing talent and skills to build capacity within SMEs as well as the role of chambers in regional SME development.

Ada Derana



Turkey's Treasury Ministry announces loan package for SMEs



Turkey's Treasury and Finance Ministry has revealed a plan for a new support loan package for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the country, whose turnover dropped by 25% in 2020.

The ministry, with the cooperation of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and the Credit Guarantee Fund (KGF), will provide loans, named Breath Credit, to SMEs.

Each SME, with an annual turnover below TL 1 million (\$118,371), will be eligible to receive up to TL 50,000 while SMEs with annual turnover below TL 10 million can benefit from the loan package of up to TL 200,000.

The annual interest rate of the 12-month loans will be 17.5%, with the option of a six-month payment-free period.

Loans would be guaranteed by KGF, according to the treasury's statement, with the package taking effect on June 1, 2021.

Last year, pandemic measures such as lockdowns and travel bans hit several economic activities.

Daily Sabah

Special Features

The Global Economy Is About to Become the Climate Economy

By Michael Ferrari, Managing Partner at Atlas Research Innovations, and Sinead O'Sullivan, Senior Fellow at MIT Sloan and MIT School of Computation

In the next 20 years, climate will move from being a sector of the economy to becoming the dominant force in macroeconomics. New forms of sustainability will disrupt virtually all industries: from manufacturing, the production and use of energy, food, fiber and material resources, to the expansion of transport options and consumer choices.

Many leaders suggest artificial intelligence will be the determining factor in the fate of the world in the coming years.

While there is an argument to be made in support of this idea of an AI-controlled destiny, we believe that it will be climate that will ultimately define the global economic winners and losers of the next geopolitical era. The application of AI will then be viewed as either an important enabler or a limiting factor with respect to how nations adapt to climate variability in the decades ahead.

No aspect of the emerging 21st century global economy is likely to escape the influence of climate and sustainability factors; what we call the new climate economy will be the defining factor for companies, governments and societies alike.

The Shift From Clean Tech to Climate Tech

What was once a narrow purview around clean tech has recently morphed into the all-encompassing term of climate tech, and unlike the boom and bust cycle that accompanied the clean energy frenzy of the late 2000s, climate tech appears to have a sustainable presence in the minds of long-term investors.

During the boom and bust clean tech cycle, the narrow focus on energy production led to massive capital outflows when the market lost its legs. Venture-backed startups and their investors lost billions in this space, and the period following the crash kept capital out of the sector for years.

Today, the cost of capital outlay in climate-related innovation is becoming cheaper than the cost of climate-related impact on developed economies. More than 215 corporations are reporting climate-related costs to their businesses, at a cumulative cost of trillions of dollars. Unlike clean tech, climate tech opportunities are spread across all industrial and commercial sectors, rather than focusing solely on the supply side of the energy and/or transportation matrix.

Climate VC Activity Is Accelerating

Over the last seven years, climate tech investment has grown at five times the venture capital market rate, with venture capital and corporate investment in this sector growing faster than venture capital as a whole in the early 2010s.

Beyond investing in deep technology such as renewable energy, per the earlier clean tech movement, today's climate



tech VCs are looking more broadly at agriculture and other food production, such as meatless burgers Beyond Meat; eco-friendly transportation, such as scooter startup Bird; and a wide variety of startups that can impact society's greenhouse gas emissions.

A number of recent early-stage investments into consumer and social tracking and sharing and optimizing personal climate-related contributions has also marked a technological shift into

the consumer mainstream.

The Rise of the Chief Sustainability Officer

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors are now becoming standard parlance in the financial services sphere. What was once viewed as a fringe boutique industry has worked its way onto the agenda of nearly every global financial institution and risk manager as both a source of strategic competitive advantage and as an investment screening factor for discretionary and quantitative investors.

We have seen a significant rise to prominence of the chief sustainability officer; as corporate sustainability is no longer the domain of generalists, the CSO is an increasingly important member of the C-suite that can guide a transition to this new economic reality.

In the same way that the winners of the digital race were those organizations and economies that became digital-first, so this is likely to be replicated across the climate space, and the role of the chief sustainability officer is soon likely to permeate all other business units.

The Physical Environment Is a Primary Driver

Corporations and analysts continue to underestimate the impact that climate-driven volatility exerts on earnings, overall financial performance and broader downstream economic activity.

Whereas some corporations are beginning to include climate-related volatility in their projections, such as defense contractor Raytheon, which reports that 11%-20% of its future global revenue could be affected by water risk, there is upward of a trillion-dollar difference in unexpected global economic impact of climate change and reported corporate financial risk.

The growth of the global economy is currently focused in geographical regions that experience the most adverse of the climate impacts through both short-term disasters and long-term climate change. China and India, the world's two fastest-growing economies, are ranked second and third, respectively, for the highest number of natural disasters after the United States.

However, unlike the U.S., China and India's rapid

Special Features

economic development is outpacing their already limited capacity to withstand the impact of major disasters, leaving them highly vulnerable to the highest health and economic threats from natural disasters.

Embedding Climate Risk Into Corporate Planning

Capturing opportunities within this climate-macro confluence needs to start with science and the data supporting the science. By using a combination of alternative and traditional data sources grounded in systems analysis and thinking, we can better understand the connections and risks associated with climate factors and material production, processing, physical flows and pricing as key drivers in order to predict directional macro performance.

For example, geographically indexing raw material exposures by sector and subsectors allows for early detection and signaling of climate-related cost changes.

Exploiting climate tech opportunities at the micro-level will require new sources of historical data, from meteorological data to reanalysis proxies. In turn, these can be used to back-test strategy formulation and to better characterize climate-induced financial and operational risk by quantifying its duration, magnitude and severity.

Supply chain mapping and network analysis will require the creation of a climate-first approach, with the forward-looking identification of physical supply derived from climate models.

Viewing the global economy through the new climate economy lens is a unique yet appropriate viewpoint to inform our view of the world, as we look to better anticipate and understand individual firm, market and economic behavior in the decades to come. Just as digital technology cemented long-standing winners and losers and ultimately created a new and more complex geopolitical order, we should expect climate to deliver similar opportunities.

Brink News

Product & Service Councils

Asian Council on Water, Energy, and Environment

The Rise in Demand for Sustainable Goods

More people than ever before are speaking out on behalf of the planet — not just with their voices and votes, but with their wallets as well. The individual consumer decisions that each of us makes, from the car we drive to the food we eat, may be mere drops in the bucket when it comes to solving the biggest ecological challenges, but together they add up to a groundswell of support for change — one that leaders from all sectors of society would be wise to embrace.

A new global analysis, commissioned by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and conducted across 54 nations by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), offers the latest evidence for this rising tide of public concern about the environment.

According to the report, the popularity of internet searches for sustainable goods around the world has increased by 71% in just five years. Even in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, that number has continued to grow. What's more, this welcome news

isn't limited to developed nations and advanced economies. The EIU report found a similar trend in many developing nations and emerging markets as well. Ecuador, for example, has seen a staggering 120% growth in consumer clicks for sustainable goods.

Waking Up to the Urgency

The public's shift toward green consumerism comes amid a recent rise in public discourse and activism concerning the environment. Since the EIU began its analysis in 2016, the global volume of Twitter conversations about nature-loss has increased by 65%, and over 159 million people have signed on to biodiversity-

related campaigns.

People are waking up to the urgency of the moment. They see one million species barreling toward extinction. They see forests, grasslands and other critical ecosystems vanishing at an alarming rate. And the symptoms of our ailing planet — rising seas, toxic pollution, out-of-control wildfires, new infectious diseases — are more than just images of some far-away problem splashed across our TV screens.

Regardless of where we live, we can feel the impacts of humanity's broken relationship with nature in our own communities and in our own daily lives.

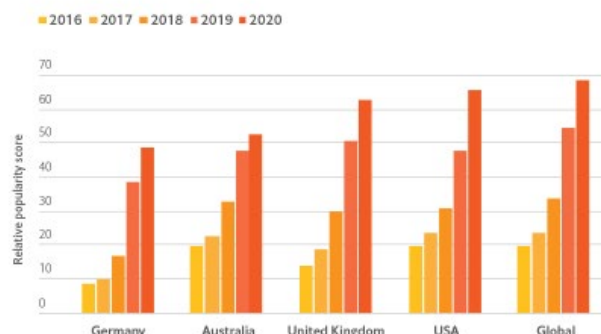
In this tragic saga, humanity is



Shopping sustainably?

The popularity of Google Searches for sustainable products in the 'shopping' category. All countries. English. Yearly average.

COMMISSIONED BY WWF



Source: The EIU, Google Trends

Product & Service Councils



both culprit and victim. And just to add one more layer of irony, we also happen to be the only actors capable of ensuring a happy ending — for people and nature. That's why this “eco-wakening” across the general public offers such promise. And yet, it's also important to understand that public awareness and engagement, while certainly essential, are not sufficient on their own to solve this century's biggest environmental challenges.

The Hurdles Consumers Face Going Green

Everyday citizens still face multiple hurdles in their quest to go green. Many simply don't know what Earth-friendly options are out there. Some assume, often incorrectly, that sustainable goods are of lower quality than their conventional alternatives. Others remain skeptical about the extent of these products' actual “greenness.” And even those who make good faith efforts to seek out such products often run into other barriers, like high costs and limited availability.

The reality is that people are ready and willing to embrace sustainability. But they need and expect companies and governments to do their part. This is how an issue like food safety eventually became something that Americans can by-and-large take for granted. Thanks to government regulation and private sector leadership, consumers walking the grocery aisles today don't worry if the items in their cart meet certain standards — it's just a given. When consumers can shop with similar confidence without checking for a “green label,” we'll know we've succeeded.

Savvy business leaders can already see which way the wind is blowing. What's more, they can see the profits to be reaped by those companies that are quickest to change course.

New Markets Are Opening Up

This surge in consumer demand for sustainable goods opens the door to new markets, particularly in the cosmetics, pharmaceutical, fashion and food industries. It also presents new opportunities for companies to build public trust and enhance their brand reputation — and improve their bottom line in the process.

For example, HP's sustainability activities helped increase the company's sales in 2019 by over \$1.6 billion. And HP is not alone: According to research conducted by NYU Stern's Center for Sustainable Business from 2013 to 2018, the number of products marketed as sustainable grew 5.6 times faster than products that were not.

We're not asking companies to go on this journey on their own. To address specific issues in their supply chains, there are stakeholder groups for just about every environmentally intensive commodity, including plastic, beef, palm oil and more. For those businesses without a sense of where to begin, there are several environmental science organizations, WWF included, who can serve as guides on this journey.

While some companies will always step up to be leaders in this space, we will never reach our sustainability-everywhere goal without leveling the playing field. And that's going to take a change in policy.

Governments Are Taking Notice

Governments are sitting up and taking notice. According to the EIU report, growing public awareness and pressure across the globe have helped to produce a wave of new laws and policies — one example being the surge in legislation restricting single-use or hard-to-recycle plastic items. As of 2019, 127 nations have enacted such laws.

Successes like these have given fresh momentum to the cause. Today, more than two million people are calling for a first-of-its-kind global treaty on marine plastic pollution. Will world leaders take up the gauntlet? They'll have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment on that issue and others when they gather later this year for the UN Climate Change Conference, which was scheduled to take place last year but was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The digital age has given individuals new and exciting tools to affect change on their own and demand change from their leaders. But one thing that hasn't changed is that, by and large, it's companies and governments that still operate the main levers of power. They can choose to stymie the change that people are clamoring for, or they can get onboard and help spur the innovation needed to ensure a clean, secure and prosperous future.

Brink News

Asian Council on Tourism

Old-fashioned tourism will never return

The current crisis has brought a large part of the world's travel industry to a halt, and the sector is slowly starting to wake up.

As in all sectors, many of those who work in it dream of a return to the world as it was: the same crowds, the same cheap plane fares, the same travelers coming from far and wide to crowd into their homes, the same visitors crammed into restaurants, museums, stadiums and theaters.

And yet, should we not also take



into account the lessons of the current crisis in order to not forget it before its consequences are felt even more terribly?

The current crisis teaches us, in particular, that travel of all kinds — especially international travel — will have to be infinitely more regulated in order to avoid the spread of pandemics in the long term, to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and to avoid harming the protection of our heritage and natural areas.

For example, it would be



reasonable not to increase business travel, not to pile up in low-cost planes, not to see any more low-cost housing on the sea in the Venetian lagoon, nor millions of tourists on Thai beaches or in the streets and temples of Kyoto.

Coming from Asia or America to Europe will therefore become more difficult. Conversely, coming to Asia from the rest of the world, for the simple pleasure of tourism, will necessarily be limited.

Certainly, tourism, as madly as it is practiced today, is not the main factor in global warming, but it is one; it is not the main factor in the destruction of nature, but it is one; it is not the main factor in the spread of pandemics, but it is one; it is not the main factor in the reduction of biodiversity, but it is one.

And if we do not admit it, all that we will have gained by more reasonable behavior will be lost by this kind of drift. More generally, there is no point in fighting global warming with one hand if we continue to make it worse with the other.

Even if many people will refuse to admit it for a long time to come, we must have the courage to recognize that old-fashioned tourism is over. And all countries -- especially Japan, for which it is very important -- will have to take this into account.

Many countries and companies in the travel and tourism sectors have begun to understand this. And behavior will change, one way or another.

Some countries or cities will assume that tourism is reserved for the richest people, who will be able to pay high prices for plane tickets and afford the limited -- and therefore expensive -- number of hotel rooms offered by countries or cities that want to protect their heritage and reserve it for the rich.

Others, more democratic, will set up lottery systems or quotas to define the number of people who can visit each year.

The tiny kingdom of Bhutan

seems to have chosen the first strategy. In France, the Louvre will choose the second; this will eventually have an impact on the growth of the number of foreign tourists in Paris and even in France.

For the moment, Asian countries do not seem to have chosen yet. Except that China is starting to build replicas of European sites, to show them to their tourists, thus reducing the trips to domestic cities. And again, they will either have to be reserved for random people, or for very rich people. All in all, if it does not change, tourism will in the future be reserved for those who are served by fortune: that of money or that of fate.

Finally, others will understand that the future of the tourism industry is no longer in the growth of the number of visitors, as it was conceived until now, massive and anonymous, but in the considerable improvement of its impact on the environment and on nature.

Many hotel companies already understand this and are beginning to totally revise their real estate holdings and practices in order to reduce their ecological impact. This will be extended to other sectors of activity of a particular dimension of tourism, which certain cities and certain companies have always practiced: hospitality. That is to say, around everything that goes from welcoming, to attention, to empathy, to helping the well-being of those we receive.

Hospitality is not just about natural gifts. As Japanese culture so wonderfully demonstrates, hospitality requires very specific techniques, often refined over thousands of years, which will soon be needed in many other fields than tourism, and which could open up new perspectives for this threatened industry.

For example, corporate headquarters and hospitals would have much to gain from using such hospitality skills. Companies may find ways to retain their employees, who are increasingly distanced by teleworking. Here, the quality of the welcome at the workplace will play an important role in the loyalty to a company. Head offices will have to offer employees a very warm welcome, showing the employer's respect for their staff and doing everything to make them want to work there.

Hospitals all over the world could also do a better job of improving their hotel dimension by making even greater use than some of them already do of specific hotel-like skills, both for patients and nursing staff as well as for accompanying families.

And we know how important the quality of the reception area, and the hotel dimension of a place of care, is when it comes to treatment. To this, we could add the huge future market for dependency in aging countries, which is already the case in Japan and will soon be the case in China, Europe and the rest of the world.

The global tourism industry will find new, exciting, profitable and socially useful markets.

Nikkei Asia

Asian Council on Health and Education

The state of education – one year into COVID

*By Andreas Schleicher, Director, OECD
Directorate for Education and Skills*



In an unprecedented education crisis like the one caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it is difficult to derive insights from the past. But it helps to look outwards to how other education systems are responding to similar challenges. To support this, the OECD has collected comparative education statistics to track developments throughout the pandemic through a series of Special Surveys.

The results from the latest Special Survey show that some countries were able to keep schools open and safe even in difficult pandemic situations. Social distancing and hygiene practices proved to be the most widely used measures to

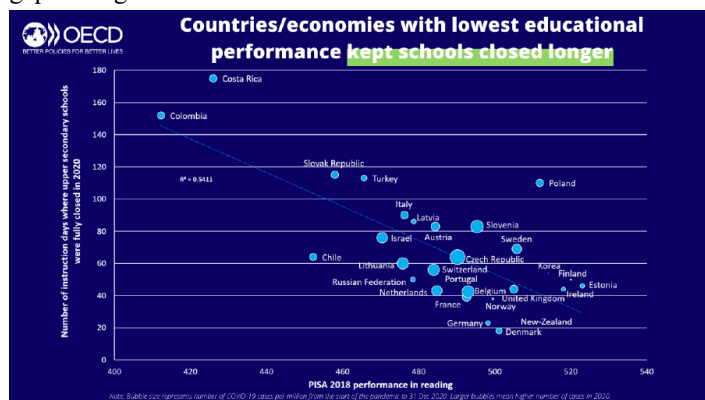
Product & Service Councils

prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but they imposed significant capacity constraints on schools and required education systems to make difficult choices about the allocation of educational opportunity. The vaccination of teachers has also been part of national strategies, with 19 out of the 30 education systems with comparable data implementing national measures prioritising teachers' vaccination. However, the limited initial supply of vaccines, and competing public health objectives make the prioritisation of vaccination a difficult balancing act.

School closures

It is noteworthy that infection rates in the population appear unrelated to the number of days in which schools were closed. In other words, countries with similar infection rates made different policy choices when it comes to school closures, whether motivated by educational objectives, by the health infrastructure or by other public policy objectives.

What is concerning, however, is that the countries with the lowest educational performance tended to see the greatest number of instructional days lost. In fact, the performance of 15-year-olds on the PISA 2018 reading test explains 53% of the variation across countries in the number of instructional days lost in 2020 in upper secondary schools. In other words, education systems with already poorer learning outcomes in 2018 saw more learning opportunity lost in 2020. This means that the COVID crisis did not just amplify educational inequalities within countries, but also the performance gap among countries.

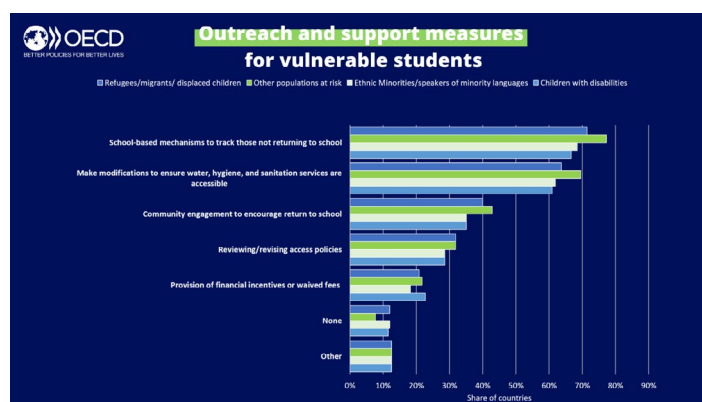


Mitigating the impact of shutting schools

Where school closures were needed, the Special Survey shows that many countries made major efforts to mitigate their impact for learners, families and educators, often with particular attention to those in the most marginalised groups. Where school capacity was limited because of social distancing, most countries prioritised young children and students from disadvantaged backgrounds for learning in-person, reflecting that the social context of learning is most important for these groups, while digital alternatives are least effective for them. 71% of countries with comparable data provided remedial measures to reduce learning gaps at the primary level, 64% did so at the lower secondary and 58% at the upper secondary level of education. About half of the countries introduced specific measures focused on disadvantaged students, while about 30% targeted measures at immigrant, refugee, ethnic minority or indigenous groups. The question is,

why did we need a pandemic to make these things happen?

Significant efforts were made to ensure reliability and predictability of services for students and parents, and to ensure that all students have a regular and dedicated contact, even when schools were closed. Many countries put in place new channels to facilitate communication between students, families, teachers and school or local authorities. Countries have also relied on a range of approaches to ensure inclusiveness in distance education. This included flexible and self-paced digital platforms as well as agreements with mobile communications operators and internet firms to enhance access, particularly at the primary level of education.



Local capacity was key for a safe opening of schools. Success often depended on combining transparent and well-communicated criteria for service operability, with flexibility to implement them at the frontline. The latter often included local decisions as to when to implement measures of social distancing, hygiene, quarantine or the closures of classes or schools.

With reduced instruction time, it was essential to prioritise curriculum content to avoid teachers and students becoming overburdened. Sometimes core subjects like reading or mathematics were given greater emphasis. When it comes to learning at school, priority was often given to the learning of new content over the rehearsal of material, to the preparation and review of material learned at distance, and to the motivation and development of effective learning strategies and social learning.

The pandemic also complicated the administration of national examinations and assessments. To a varying degree, education systems changed the calendar, content and mode of examinations and assessments. The variation in the extent to which countries deviated from their assessment and examination plans relates both to the pandemic context and to how important these tests were in their respective education systems. Countries that could draw on multiple modes of assessment in pre-pandemic times found it easier to substitute examinations with other ways to recognise student learning.

Teaching and learning in the digital environment

During school closures, digital resources became the lifeline for education and the pandemic pushed teachers and students to quickly adapt to teach and learn on line. Virtually all countries have rapidly enhanced digital learning opportunities for both students and teachers and encouraged new forms of

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teacher collaboration. The responses from the Special Survey show consistent patterns across countries: Online platforms were extensively used at all levels of education, but particularly so at the secondary level. Mobile phones were more common at the secondary level and radio at the upper secondary level. Take-home packages, television and other distance learning solutions were more common at the primary level.

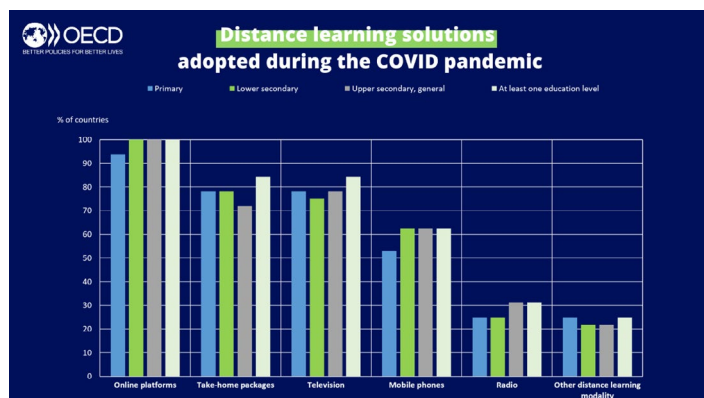


Chart showing the different distance learning solutions adopted during the COVID pandemic

Not least, the transition to remote instruction and the subsequent re-opening of schools had a profound impact on teachers' work. The crisis required many of them to acquire new skills and prepare materials suited to virtual learning environments. In some cases, it also added new responsibilities to their work, such as the co-ordination of support and resources for their students, increased interaction with parents, the organisation of remedial classes or the implementation of new administrative, health and safety procedures in schools. In some contexts, teachers' absences further limited capacity and placed constraints on schools' ability to reduce class sizes or implement different hybrid learning models. The Special Survey shows how these new demands on teachers and their colleagues have moved some countries to change their staffing and recruitment practices.

The transition to online or hybrid teacher professional learning has been an additional challenge for many teachers who were not familiar with online learning formats. Teacher engagement in online professional development was limited prior to the pandemic and teachers were less likely than other professionals to learn by keeping up to date with new products and services. The Special Survey shows how most countries made major efforts to support teachers' learning on line during the pandemic, for instance by providing ICT access and connectivity to teachers or supporting ICT-related teacher professional learning to build teachers' digital competence.

Building education systems for young people's future, not our past

Of course, all of this costs money. In the 2019/20 school year, most countries were able to mobilise additional resources for their extra efforts during the pandemic, and the estimations by countries suggest that many countries will be able to raise additional funds also in the 2020/21 school year. However, the

long-term economic outlook is far more challenging. Now is the time for countries to build on the lessons of the pandemic to reconfigure the people, spaces, time and technology to devise more effective and efficient educational environments.

In one way, the crisis has revealed the enormous potential for innovation that is dormant in many education systems, which often remain dominated by hierarchical structures geared towards rewarding compliance. It will be important to create a more level playing field for innovation in schools. Governments can help strengthen professional autonomy and a collaborative culture where great ideas are refined and shared. Governments can also help with funding, and can offer incentives that raise the profile of, and demand for, what works. But governments alone can only do so much. Silicon Valley works because governments created the conditions for innovation, not because governments do the innovating. Similarly, governments cannot innovate in the classroom; but they can help by opening up systems so that there is an evidence-based innovation-friendly climate where transformative ideas can bloom. That means encouraging innovation within the system but also making it open to creative ideas from outside.

To mobilise support for innovation, resilience and change, particularly in the uncertainty created by the pandemic, education systems need to become better at communicating the need and building support for change. Investing in capacity development and change-management skills will be critical; and it is vital that teachers become active agents for change, not just in implementing technological and social innovations, but in designing them too. That means also that education systems need to become better at identifying key agents of change and champion them; and to find more effective ways of scaling and disseminating innovations. It is crucial that the many good experiences being learnt during the pandemic are not lost when things return to 'normal', but provide inspiration for the further development of education. That is also about finding better ways to recognise, reward and celebrate success, to do whatever is possible to make it easier for innovators to take risks and encourage the emergence of new ideas.

OECD Education and Skills Today

Asian Council on Food and Agriculture

5 Ways to Transform Our Food System to Benefit People and the Planet

Food is essential for our survival, a fundamental requirement of life and the provider of strength, vitality and energy. It is also the keeper of our cultural traditions and indispensable to our social lives — think of any celebration, and it will involve food.

However, our relationship with food is dangerously imbalanced. We produce enough food but nearly one in 10 people still don't have enough to eat, and three billion cannot afford a

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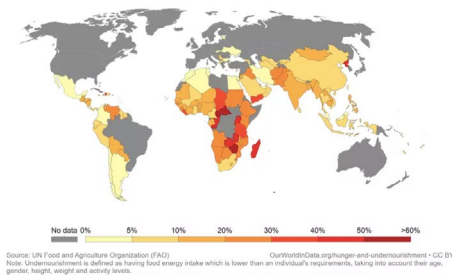


healthy diet. At the same time, we waste one-third of all food produced along with the natural resources that went into its production.

Our food and agricultural systems stretch planetary boundaries beyond their limits. By valuing quantity over quality and driving farmers to produce monocrops for low prices, we use the natural resources needed for sustained production and degrade the land, leading to climate change and extreme weather events.

As the coronavirus crisis unfolded, we started to understand how fragile our food systems are. We saw news stories of food destroyed, milk dumped and crops rotting in the fields, while consumers faced empty shelves. Our complicated global supply chains couldn't adapt fast enough to our changing realities.

Share of the population that are undernourished, 2017
Share of individuals who have a habitual energy intake lower than their requirements.



To mend our damaged relationship with food, there are critical questions we need to answer: How do we produce sufficient food that's healthy for both the people who produce it and the people who eat it? How do we ensure our food systems are fair, resilient and equitable? How can we feed our growing global population and protect our planet for generations to come?

We have a choice: We can continue to grow our food systems in a linear, exploitative and extractive way; or we can move to a system that promotes biodiversity, regeneration, nutritious food,

equity and healthy people.

We believe the decision is clear. We must choose to work with the planet — not against it — for the benefit of people and the planet by following these principles:

Harness the Regenerative Power of Our Earth

This is critical to overcoming the biggest challenges of our time: a degrading environment, loss of biodiversity and climate change. Regenerative agriculture leads to healthy soil, capable of producing high quality, nutrient-dense food. It also improves rather than degrades the land and supports productive farms and healthy communities and economies. This helps safeguard farmers' livelihoods so they can grow the food we need now and in the future.

Build Stronger Local and Circular Food Systems

Building stronger local and circular food systems helps to keep valuable natural resources, minerals and nutrients in the loop. Circular agribusinesses not only provide excellent environmental solutions, they also create jobs and reduce countries' dependency on imports.

Wastewater, for example, can be treated to extract important finite minerals like phosphates. Food loss and waste can be composted so valuable nutrients return to the soil instead of being thrown away. And organic farm waste can be used for bioenergy to power homes and agribusinesses. New, nature-based technologies, such as the use of black soldier flies to compost waste, can generate multiple useful products including compost, fertilizer and animal feed.

Give Farmers a Voice and Support Their Planet-Positive Choices

As the world's population continues to grow, people will depend upon farmers for food — more than ever before. We must empower farmers to drive solutions and be at the forefront of a global regenerative revolution by making them an integral part of policy discussions. They can help build the system of products and services that are locally relevant and reduce dependency on patented and/or chemical inputs.

Move From Low Cost to True Cost

Paradoxically, cheap food is expensive for people and the planet. It keeps us locked into an unsustainable food system that costs the global economy significant amounts of money. The current price of food does not factor in the health bill generated by unhealthy diets or the cost of land degradation and biodiversity loss.

1/4 TO 1/3 OF ALL FOOD PRODUCED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION IS LOST OR WASTED



Furthermore, low wages for farmers make agriculture an unpredictable and often unsafe sector. To get back on track, we need greater consumer awareness and public policies that value nutritious diets, a healthy environment and farmers who practice regenerative agriculture.

Foster Radical Collaboration

Though we're hopeful for the future, we are quickly running out of time. We urgently need to remove the barriers that prevent us from transforming the way we produce and consume food. This involves changing mindsets, trying new things and learning fast.

We don't yet know all the answers, but we do know that business-as-usual is the problem. We must change course and do it now. This is only possible through collaboration between farmers, consumers, funders, governments, businesses and NGOs.

Together, we can work toward a food system that not only feeds us but also celebrates life — one that nurtures people, adds color and flavor to our plates and palates and, most importantly, ensures a future for ourselves on this planet.

Brink News

CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council

Has the Pandemic Set Female Leadership Back?



The global coronavirus pandemic has been hard on everyone, but perhaps no segment has been hit harder than working women.

About 2.3 million women have exited the U.S. labor force since the pandemic began, compared with about 1.8 million men. Many were driven out by layoffs in food service, health care and hospitality — sectors that employ a majority of women and that have been most affected by the economic slowdown. Others left their jobs voluntarily, forced to stay home and care for children suddenly unable to attend school or daycare.

As a result, female participation in the workforce has dropped to 57%, a level not seen since 1988. The situation is dire enough that U.S. President Joe Biden called it “a national emergency.” With schools reopening and vaccines becoming more widely available, there is light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, but questions remain about whether working women will recover from such a deep setback.

“Where does all of this leave women who aspire to become leaders, or who have assumed leadership roles in their organizations?” Wharton Dean Erika James asked during a livestreamed faculty discussion.

Wharton professors Janice Bellace, Corrine Low and Nancy Rothbard said the labor statistics are alarming and reflect the need for better policies around affordable, accessible child care. Women still bear the brunt of child-rearing despite their decades of advancement in the workplace.

“This is really serious because they left the labor force. It’s not because they’re unemployed. They left,” Bellace said about women who gave up their jobs to stay home with children.

The exodus could negatively affect all working women because it sends a message that female employees aren’t reliable.

“That’s the last message we want to get across. We have to get across the message that this was temporary, we hope. But that also means we have to look at child care in this country,” said Bellace, a professor emeritus of business ethics and legal studies.

American families and companies have been trying to solve the child care conundrum with limited success since the 1970s. Bellace noted that they need help from the federal government to formulate a uniform policy, calling the issue the “unfinished business” of society. “It really does depend on a governmental response. That’s what most other countries have done,” she said.

What Women Bring to the Table

The loss of women in the workplace also has reverberating effects for businesses that benefit from maintaining a gender and diversity balance. Both research and real-world experience have shown that women bring much to the table, including different perspectives, different managerial styles and different ways of collaborating.

Low, an assistant professor of business economics and public policy, said research has found that women are more fruitful negotiators than men because they don’t engage in as much brinkmanship, working instead for better outcomes for everyone. She said society must stop defining leadership based on qualities associated with white men.

“Real leadership is in the outcomes you achieve,” said Low.

Rothbard, a management professor, voiced concern not just for the women who left the workforce during the pandemic, but also those who remained. She said women in senior leadership roles do a lot of the “care work of bringing people together.” That kind of community building is harder and more stressful when done remotely. It can also be invisible,

which means those senior women may not be recognized or compensated for it.

In addition, senior female executives are often put in charge when a company is in crisis — known as the “glass cliff” phenomenon — when the risk of failure is highest.

“There are so few women in these roles that there’s a spotlight on them, so it makes the pressure more intense,” Rothbard said.

The Generation Gap Is Closing

In addition to their varied expertise, the professors also represented three generational views on the enduring struggles facing women in the workplace.

Bellace said she’s pleased with the cultural changes that she has seen over the years. Younger men no longer assume that every female co-worker is a secretary, and they are more willing to accept women as leaders and authority figures. Traits long associated with women, such as empathy and coalition building, are now lauded in men.

“Women don’t have to ‘act like men’ to be successful,” she said.

Rothbard agreed that workplace culture has evolved, but she noted that some implicit biases and gender-role expectations are deeply rooted. “Women can’t just ‘act like men.’ Because when they do, there is a backlash,” she said. Women must walk a finer line than men in balancing power with compassion, she added, pointing to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and German Chancellor Angela Merkel as positive examples.

Low, who is the youngest of the professors, said she avoids the well-meaning advice given to female students about their tone or word choice.

“I focus on telling them they have a right to take up space,” she said. “Let’s stop telling young women they have to be different, and let’s start telling society [that instead].”

Beyond the Pandemic

Women who return to the workforce when the pandemic is over will face additional challenges, whether stepping back into their old roles or going after new ones. The professors said companies need to mitigate those challenges by paying

attention to the training and development of female employees, accommodating their roles as primary caregivers at home and being mindful of burnout.

James recalled a term she heard recently in conversation: change fatigue. That's an apt description for what people have been going through during the pandemic, she said.

"You have to monitor the

capacity that the workforce has for change, particularly under the pressure that we're facing now," she said.

The professors encouraged women to find mentors and build strong support networks. But they put the onus on companies to remember the value that women bring to the workplace — along with the sacrifices they have made during the pandemic — and to act accordingly.

Firms must close the gap between intention and practice when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

"My message to companies is this is not going to be costless, ... but it works from an equity perspective," Low said. "You're going to have to make actual trade-offs. Feeling like you are pro-diversity is not enough."

Brink News

Young Entrepreneurs Group Asia Pacific

**Nepal's business community has
always encouraged youngsters**



Udeep Shrestha, heir to the well-known Panchakanya Group, is a member of a new generation of Nepali business people taking over traditional, family-owned businesses and turning them into major corporate houses. Equipped with the right education, the young generation is adapting quickly to the globalized world and making every effort to put Nepal on the international map for trade, business and industry.

Shrestha, who now leads the decades-old multi-industry conglomerate, is also involved in facilitating and promoting entrepreneurship in Nepal. Sunny Mahat of ApEx caught up with him to talk about the country's current economic situation and opportunities for entrepreneurs.

How is the Panchakanya Group adapting to the changing times and the economic volatility brought about by the pandemic?

The past two years have been tough for most businesses, right around the world. At Panchakanya, we have taken most of our business activities online. We have also adopted digital documentation within the company and our dealer network, as far as practicable.

Similarly, we have reworked our minimum inventory level, receivable policy and cash flow cycle to make them as lean as possible.

Covid-19 is being seen as a threat to Nepali businesses. Do you also identify possible opportunities it might have created?

Yes, I guess every challenge brings with it an opportunity. The online space has now become the platform to be. With people being compelled to embrace mobile payments and more online buying, studying customer behavior and perception has opened countless opportunities in this arena. The past two years have been tough, but they have also led to a rapid adoption of e-commerce.

Similarly, with lower interest rates and an e-trading platform, the stock market has become more vibrant.

Do you think, after all these years, Nepali businesses can still blame 'political instability' for their failures or should businesses see it as just another threat?

Political instability is not something new in Nepal; it has been around for decades. As a result, I believe most businesses have already adjusted to the always-looming political uncertainty. Political instability may not be the only reason for business failure, but it is a reason that undermines and restricts the growth of most companies. It also discourages new investments. It may not be the primary reason a business fails but it is definitely the main reason many businesses may not at all start.

As the new NYEF chair, what are your plans to foster entrepreneurship among youngsters?

At NYEF, we have been utilizing the lockdown to enhance learning among our members and young entrepreneurs.

Organizing these online learning sessions across our 10 chapters has allowed us to reach entrepreneurs around the country with valuable content.

NYEF, as the national host, is also currently organizing the Entrepreneur's World Cup (EWC). The EWC is a global competition for startups with a cash prize of \$500,000. NYEF is also closely working with ILO and the Ministry of Industry in developing the much-needed startup policy that will be a guideline for the use of the government's recently declared challenge fund for subsidized loans for startups.

Further, we are working on developing an entrepreneurs' portal. The online portal will have information every entrepreneur needs regarding registering, managing and growing a company. We feel this will be a good resource center for Nepali entrepreneurs.

It is also NYEF's intent to be the voice for youth entrepreneurs in the country. To achieve the same, NYEF along with its chapters have been consistently communicating with all three levels of the government to address the challenges faced by startups and young entrepreneurs.

As a young businessperson yourself, do you think Nepal's business community is accommodating and inviting for young people?

I think Nepal's business community has always been inviting and encouraging to the youths. It is the bureaucracy, political uncertainty, challenges in access to finance and unclear policies and regulations that discourage the youth from coming back and doing business in Nepal.

It is important to understand that startups and new businesses are vital to the business ecosystem and key drivers of economic growth and sustainability.

Annapurna Express

Investment & Joint Ventures

Alibaba preps new Philippines data centre amid \$1B APAC investment

Alibaba Cloud plans to launch its first data centre in the Philippines by the end of this year, as the Chinese vendor pledges US\$1 billion in funding over three years to help boost tech and start-up talent across Asia Pacific (APAC).

The proposed Philippines data centre will offer local businesses a variety of products and services, including the company's elastic compute service (ECS), database, global network solution, content delivery network (CDN) and storage services.

Alibaba Cloud said the investment was the latest in its growing commitment to the country, focusing on the banking, fintech, retail, logistics and education sectors, among others.

Meanwhile, in Malaysia, Alibaba Cloud plans to build its first international innovation centre. In collaboration with local partner Handsprofit, the company plans to offer a one-stop innovation enablement platform for Malaysian small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), startups and developers.

The company said that various cloud technology and business leadership training would be offered through the platform, as well as the nurturing of an

ecosystem for venture capital networking.

At the same time, the company is in the midst of launching its third data centre in Indonesia, serving customers with offerings across database, security, network, machine learning and data analytics services. Alibaba Cloud opened its second data centre in the country in early 2019.

According to Alibaba Cloud, the additional facility will allow the company to better support local businesses interested in adopting cloud technology and advance Indonesia's push for a digital society.

Alibaba Cloud now operates 75 availability zones in 24 regions around the world.

Channel Asia

Ford and SK Innovation to form BlueOvalSK, commits to battery manufacturing



Ford will be partnering with South Korean petroleum refining company SK Innovation to form BlueOvalSK. Under a memorandum of understanding (MoU), both companies aim to produce battery cells and array modules, starting mid-decade — with the potential to expand.

According to Ford, the creation of the joint venture is subject to definitive agreements, regulatory approvals, and other conditions.

Next-gen cells and arrays produced by the BlueOvalSK will be used to power several future Ford battery electric vehicles. With Ford's new ally in battery development and production, the company is poised to gain momentum in the growing EV segment.

This year, Ford announced its commitment to invest at least US\$22 billion through 2025 to deliver connected, all-electric vehicles, building on its areas of strength, starting with EV versions of

its most popular nameplates: Mustang Mach-E, E-Transit, and F-150 Lightning.

The automaker is well-equipped to back its longer-term battery plans that will support its current and future EV offerings.

Ford is building on nearly two decades of battery expertise which will be matched by SK Innovation's decades-long experience in batteries. The South Korean energy conglomerate has pioneered the development of mid- to large-sized EV batteries since 1991 and has expanded its battery operations globally since 2010. SK Innovation also specializes in the development and commercialization of high-nickel NCM battery technology.

SK Innovation has a spotless health and safety record and has not registered a single EV battery-related fire, reported Ford.

Ford expects the annual energy demand for its EV offerings in North America to rise by 140 gigawatt-hours (GWh) while the company expects the global energy demand of its electrified vehicles to inflate by 240GWh in 2030.

Through BlueOvalSK, Ford plans to lead the electric vehicle revolution by preparing the transition to solid-state batteries as the company believes it shows great promise and has more benefits that favor Ford and its customers.

Carmudi

Blockchain Platform Fantom to Modernize the Technological Infrastructure of Uzbekistan

Blockchain platform Fantom has entered into a partnership with Elyar Ganiev and the AG Mentors Group, who will facilitate bringing Fantom blockchain applications to the Uzbekistan Government IT infrastructure.

Elyar Ganiev – former Deputy Prime Minister and former Minister of Foreign Economic Affairs, Investments, and Trade in the Government of Uzbekistan and founder of AG Mentors – offers Fantom vast knowledge of Uzbekistan markets and



has an established track record working with global institutions and enterprises. This partnership coincides with an ongoing initiative for digital transformation in Uzbekistan. In a widely lauded decree issued late last year, Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev set forth a comprehensive agenda to integrate digital

Investment & Joint Ventures

technologies into government services and the economic sector. This “Strategy for Digital Uzbekistan” includes introducing a digital ID card and significant investment in IT services and education. This ambitious plan aims to eliminate the digital divide

and radically modernize public services in Uzbekistan by 2030.

Drawing on the experience running successful e-government pilot programs throughout Central and South Asia, Fantom will seek to support Uzbekistan’s digital

transformation with tailored solutions for supply chain, ERP/MIS, Central Bank Digital Currency, and more.

Fantom Foundation

STT targets Indonesian data centre market with Triputra



Bruno Lopez (STT GDC)

Singapore-headquartered data centre service provider ST Telemedia Global Data Centres (STT GDC) has marked its first foray into the Indonesian data centre market thanks to a new partnership with Triputra Group.

STT GDC and Triputra, an

Indonesian conglomerate, have teamed up with global investment company Temasek in a new joint venture to build the companies’ first data centre campus in the Greenland International Industrial Centre, located in Kota Deltamas, Cikarang, Bekasi, on the eastern fringe of Jakarta.

The new data centre campus will support the development of multiple buildings and up to 72 megawatts of critical IT capacity. Construction of the first phase is expected to commence in the coming months and is anticipated to be completed by Q1, 2023.

“This joint venture marks our strategic entry into the Indonesia data centre market and is an important step for STT GDC to reinforce its position as a leading data centre player in Asia Pacific,” said STT GDC president and group CEO

Bruno Lopez. “We are pleased to have Triputra and Temasek as our partners, both stalwarts with deep market expertise in their respective fields.

The partnership sees the Singaporean company achieve greater portfolio diversity and strengthen its Asian data centre network to now include the top three most populous countries in Asia: China, India and Indonesia, as well as strategic locations of Singapore, Seoul and Bangkok.

From the perspective of Arif Rachmat, Triputra Group director, the deal comes as Indonesia’s demand for digital and cloud services grows exponentially, representing a perfect time for the company to get into the data centre game.

Channel Asia

TSMC mulls US packaging plant

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC) is considering building an advanced IC packaging plant in the US following a massive investment to set up a wafer fab in Arizona, Nikkei Asia reported.

TSMC was considering the plant in response to “Washington’s desire to bring more of the tech supply chain onto home turf,” the report said.

TSMC increasingly faces the need to expand in the US, which accounts for about 62% of its total sales, Nikkei Asia said, citing three sources who declined to be named.

The potential US plant would be equipped with the latest 3D stacking



technologies to arrange chips with different functions in one package, it said.

TSMC last year announced that it would invest US\$12 billion to establish a wafer plant in Arizona, the company’s first new fab outside Taiwan in more than two decades. The facility is under construction.

The plant is to use the chipmaker’s 5-nanometer process, its latest technology, which has been used for mass production at its Taiwan fabs since the second quarter of last year. TSMC is also developing 3 and

2-nanometer processes, with commercial production using the new technology to start next year.

The Arizona facility would make chips for Apple Inc’s newest generation of iPhones and Mac computers. In April, TSMC chief executive officer C.C. Wei said that construction at the plant was on schedule. Production at the facility is to start in 2024.

TSMC had acquired an additional plot in the US that could be used for expansion in the country, depending on client demand, operations and cost efficiency, Wei said.

For the Arizona plant, “the most certain part is the initial capacity of 20,000 wafers per month,” Nikkei Asia said, quoting one of the sources. “TSMC surely has further expansion blueprints.”

Taipei Times

Russia-Turkey trade turnover jumps 22.5% in Jan-April

Trade turnover between Russia and Turkey grew by 22.5% on an annual basis during January-April of this year, reaching \$9.13 billion (TL 78 billion), according to the data released by the Russian Federal Customs Service on June 9.

In the said period, exports from Russia to Turkey increased by 21.1% to \$7.19 billion while sales from Turkey to Russia increased by 27.8% to reach \$1.94 billion, the data showed.



Turkey's share in Russia's total trade turnover rose from 4% to 4.2% last year. European Union states constitute the largest share in Russia's foreign trade with 35.4% of the trade turnover in January-April. It was followed by Asia-

Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries with 34.1%, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries with 12.5% and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries with 9.3%.

In the January-April period, Russian's overall foreign trade surplus was revealed as \$41.2 billion, 8.4% down in comparison with the same period of 2020.

The data showed that in the reporting period, exports of goods gained 11.3% year-on-year to \$129.5 billion while the country's imports soared by 23.7% to \$88.3 billion, bringing Russia's foreign trade turnover to \$217.8 billion.

Daily Sabah

Biden pushes Belt and Road rival 'Blue Dot' with Japan and Australia



U.S. President Joe Biden's administration, along with the governments of Japan and Australia, is reviving an infrastructure initiative that would provide emerging markets an alternative to China's Belt and Road initiative.

After a prolonged period of inactivity, the Blue Dot Network -- first announced during President Donald Trump's administration -- kicked off talks among stakeholders in Paris on June 7. The meeting and the launch of an executive consultation group was convened by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and funded by Washington and Canberra.

The initiative, which would certify projects meeting such standards as transparency and sustainability, is meant to galvanize the private sector to invest in infrastructure development in emerging markets. This approach has been hailed

as a counter to the Belt and Road, which is characterized by heavy central planning from Beijing.

"The Blue Dot Network will be a globally recognized symbol of market-driven, transparent and sustainable infrastructure projects," the U.S. State Department said in a statement, welcoming the consultation group's inaugural meeting.

Derek Grossman, senior defense analyst at the RAND Corporation, said Australia, Japan, and the U.S. "cannot possibly match China's BRI dollar-for-dollar," which explains why the initiative focuses on certification and advisory instead of direct funding.

As such he worries that the network "falls far short of effectively 'competing' against China and frankly may come across as not only unimpressive, but even petty in the eyes of BRI recipients," referring to the Belt and Road Initiative by its acronym.

But Matthew Goodman, Daniel Runde and Jonathan Hillman, experts at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, argued that the U.S. has unique strengths, including trillions of dollars of pension and insurance funds looking for the long-term returns that infrastructure investment can bring.

The Blue Dot Network "could provide a high-standard certification to give investors confidence and move one step closer to infrastructure becoming an asset class," they argued in a 2020 commentary.

The Blue Dot Network was first

announced in 2019 by the U.S., Japan and Australia at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok. Wilbur Ross, the U.S. commerce secretary at the time, called the initiative "a multilateral approach to fostering sustainable economic growth by promoting excellence in infrastructure development and supporting alternatives to predatory lending."

Matthew Pottinger, Trump's deputy national security adviser and a key architect of the administration's China policy, said getting a "blue dot" -- a symbol of planet earth -- would be "like getting a Michelin-star rating for your restaurant."

The U.S. has been eager to get India -- the only member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue not part of the Blue Dot Network -- on board. New Delhi is already seen as an opponent of China's infrastructure push, having refused to participate in the Belt and Road Forum both in 2017 and 2019.

The initiative will use infrastructure development principles set by the Group of 20 and the Group of Seven rich nations as a foundation for its standards, while the OECD will provide technical and operational input to the global certification process and review framework.

Goodman and Runde at CSIS expect the certification process to be costly, as "it must be rigorous enough to persuade private-sector investors to put their money into riskier places."

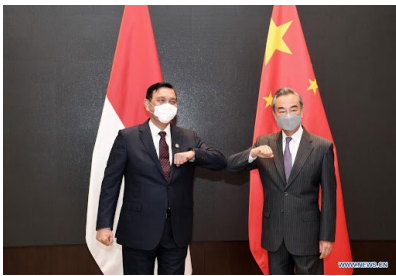
The creation of such a set of standards will have to involve stakeholders

Economic Cooperation

ranging from builders to financiers and will require intensive discussions and negotiations, they wrote in a commentary on the initiative last year, saying the process would likely take a couple of years.

Nikkei Asia

Indonesia holds inaugural dialogue with China



Indonesia has asked China for technical assistance to kick-start the production of Covid-19 vaccine so that it could become a regional production hub, as the two countries pledged to improve bilateral relations during their inaugural high-level dialogue in China.

The dialogue is a new format to better coordinate the various forms of cooperation under their comprehensive strategic partnership, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said in an online briefing from China.

The in-person meeting on June 5, held in Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou province, was co-chaired by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Pandjaitan, who is President Joko Widodo's point man for cooperation with China.

Ms. Retno said: "I stressed the importance of continuing our health and vaccine cooperation. I asked Foreign Minister Wang Yi to send a (technical) team to discuss the cooperation in detail.

"Indonesia has expressed it is ready to become a regional production hub of vaccines."

A statement on the Chinese foreign ministry website on June 6 said Beijing will encourage more Chinese vaccine manufacturers to carry out clinical trials in

Indonesia, support the country in building a regional vaccine production centre, and jointly promote the equitable distribution of vaccines worldwide.

Having announced support for the waiver of intellectual property rights on Covid-19 vaccines, China will promote the transfer of technologies by its vaccine companies to other developing nations and carry out joint production to expand vaccine accessibility and affordability, the statement said.

Indonesia, the worst-hit country in South-east Asia by the pandemic, began its vaccination drive in its 34 provinces in mid-January. The country is relying on China's Sinovac for the first tens of millions of vaccine shots before it receives more

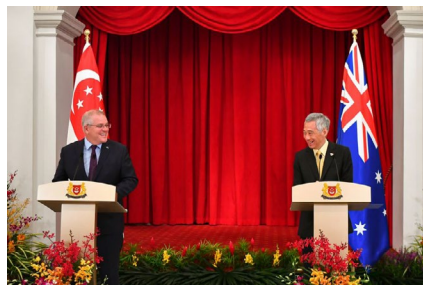
vaccines from Britain's AstraZeneca in the later months.

At the inaugural talks, Mr. Wang also said both sides should set a long-term goal of building a China-Indonesia community with a shared future, focus on political security, trade and investment, people-to-people and cultural exchanges, maritime cooperation, and anti-epidemic and public health cooperation, Xinhua news agency reported.

Both countries also signed two memorandums of understanding on establishing the high-level dialogue cooperation mechanism and strengthening maritime cooperation, Xinhua reported.

Straits Times

Singapore and Australia agree to work towards a travel bubble, with students to pilot arrangement



Singapore and Australia will work towards an air travel bubble and both nations will lay the groundwork for resuming two-way travel in a safe and calibrated manner, said the prime ministers of both countries on June 10.

Both prime ministers expressed their hope that Singapore students in Australia would be the first to get the opportunity to travel from this arrangement so that they can continue their studies, which have been disrupted by Covid-19 travel restrictions. They also said that such a move involving students could be a good opportunity to test the systems, before widening such travel arrangements.

They were speaking to reporters after Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong met his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison at

the Istana for the sixth Australia-Singapore Annual Leaders' Meeting.

Officials from both sides are now at work discussing the air travel bubble and this includes talk about mutually recognising health and vaccination certificates, as well as preparing the pre-conditions and infrastructure for such an arrangement, said Mr. Lee.

Vaccination and Covid-19 transmission rates will also be part of discussions pertaining to the air travel bubble, and PM Lee noted that both countries are making good and steady progress in their national vaccination programmes.

Australia now has a one-way "travel bubble" with New Zealand, allowing New Zealanders to visit without quarantine, though the scheme has been suspended a number of times in response to coronavirus outbreaks.

The June 10 meeting was the first in-person meeting between PM Lee and Mr. Morrison in more than a year. Under the Singapore-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), the prime ministers of both countries meet annually, but their last meeting was held virtually in March last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. Lee said that progress has been made on the CSP's pillars of economics and trade, defence and foreign affairs, science and innovation, people-to-people relations as well as the digital economy, which was

Economic Cooperation

added as a fifth pillar last year.

During the recent meeting, the two countries also signed several

important bilateral agreements, including a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on healthcare and health

technologies.

Straits Times

South Korea to give \$700 million development loan to Bangladesh between 2021-2025



South Korea has decided to provide a \$700 million development cooperation loan to Bangladesh between 2021 and 2025.

South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh, Lee Jang-keun, shared the decision with Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Fatima Yasmin at the ODA Projects Review Meeting held virtually on June 15, according to a statement of the embassy.

The two governments have been discussing this plan since last year and, upon the completion of necessary domestic procedures, will sign a Framework Agreement, which contains detailed conditions and the list of potential projects to be considered.

At the meeting, the Korean Embassy and Bangladesh ERD reviewed a number of other ongoing and new development assistance projects between the two governments, including those under implementation through Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

Bangladesh is a priority development partner of South Korea and the second-largest recipient of Korea's EDCF loan.

Korea has provided a \$1.24 billion Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) loan and \$172 million in grants through KOICA since 1991 in various sectors, including public administration, vocational training and education,

transport, ICT-based communication, public administration, water management, and public health.

At the meeting, the South Korean embassy introduced Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP), a platform for development cooperation, aiming to share knowledge with development partner countries and develop a solid foundation for the expansion of economic and political cooperation.

The embassy recommended the ERD to consider ways to improve the efficiency of development cooperation, including the facilitation of customs clearance and tax exemption on grant equipment and items in accordance with the Framework Agreement for grant aid between the two governments.

Officials from the ERD, Korea EXIM Bank Bangladesh, KOICA Bangladesh, Korea Development Institute also took part in the meeting.

The Daily Star

South Korea lists Taiwan as one of its priority destinations for travel bubble

South Korea has started preliminary discussions with Taiwan and Singapore about the launch of travel bubbles, reports said June 9.

The government plans to allow groups of fully vaccinated South Koreans to travel overseas beginning in July, according to a report by the Korea Times.

After a Taiwan-South Korea travel bubble agreement is signed, Taiwanese can travel to the northeast Asian country without 14-day quarantine restrictions, and vice versa. Thailand, Guam, and Saipan are also on South Korea's priority list for travel talks.

Airlines and tourism organizations have been lobbying for the lifting of



COVID-19 travel restrictions since South Korea launched a vaccination campaign. The government plan forecasts a maximum of 200 travelers per flight, with one or two flights a week, CNA reported.

If things go according to plan, South Korea's overseas travel market could reach 50% of its 2019 level. However, tourists under the travel bubble plan will have to stay in groups, present evidence of their vaccination, undergo a PCR test upon their arrival, and report any symptoms if they occur during the journey.

Taiwan News



CACCI Conference to be held virtually on November 2, 2021

Recycling robot could help solve soft plastic waste crisis



University of Sydney researchers create a robot that sorts soft plastics. (University of Sydney)

Despite an improvement in plastic recycling in recent years, landfill is a growing issue. Soft plastics like cling wrap and plastic bags are a major contributor to the problem, with 94% going to landfill in 2016-17.

Soft plastics lack adequate recycling methods as they easily entangle in waste separation machinery, leading to mechanical failure and contamination of other recyclable materials such as paper. Because of this problem, current recycling methods rely on the manual sorting of soft plastics, an often repetitive and unsafe task.

Working alongside industry partners as part of a federal government Cooperative Research Centre Project grant, researchers from the Centre for Internet of Things (IoT) and Telecommunications at the University of Sydney are developing a unique method to increase recycling of soft plastics - by creating a smart, automated robotic system that uses robotics and AI to sort recyclable waste.

The team includes Professor Branka Vucetic, Professor Yonghui Li, Associate Professor Wanli Ouyang, Dr Wanchun Liu and Senior Technical Officer Dawei Tan from the School of Electrical and Information Engineering.

"The recycling robotic automation system will use artificial intelligence and computer vision to learn how to identify different forms of recycling waste, effectively learning how to 'see' and 'sort' waste, to create separate waste streams and maintain soft plastics' purity so they can

be recycled," said IoT expert, Professor Branka Vucetic.

"Soft plastics are a big contributor to landfill and have long been a challenge for the circular economy and waste management sector, as they have lacked an adequate and safe sorting method. Using the latest IoT techniques, we have created a custom robot to solve this issue," said Professor Yonghui Li.

The researchers are working with waste management companies, IQRenew and CurbCycle, technology developers Licella, Mike Ritchie and Associates, and Resource Recovery Design to develop the system.

It will be integrated into IQ Renew's material recovery facility as part of CurbCycle's soft plastic recovery program, an Australian initiative that involves the household collection of recyclables that are segregated into bags prior to placing them into their kerbside recycling bin.

"Not only does our project divert household soft plastics from going to landfill; by creating a solution for the collection and sorting of waste with our industry and research partners, we're also creating a sustainable supply chain that

takes rubbish from households to end markets," said Associate Professor Wanli Ouyang.

"The robot will identify 'CurbyTagged' bags and differentiate sources of plastic, separating soft plastics from the fully co-mingled recyclables," he said.

After being separated from other waste, the soft plastics will be used for various purposes, including advanced recycling into oils and other valuable chemicals using patented Catalytic Hydrothermal Reactor technology (Cat-HTR™) created by Licella Holdings. Licella was founded by Professor Thomas Maschmeyer from the Faculty of Science alongside Licella CEO, Dr Len Humphreys, and has been supported by the University of Sydney for 14 years.

"This highly innovative materials handling process can help extend the range of the Cat-HTR conversion technology to now include increasingly challenging waste streams, highlighting the benefit of close industrial and academic collaboration," said Professor Maschmeyer.

EurekAlert

New invention helps Taiwan's elderly with dementia find their way home

Statistics show over 280,000 of Taiwan's elderly aged 65 and above have dementia, with one out of 13 elderly people suffering from the disease. Dementia sufferers gradually lose their sense of orientation and judgment, and eventually have trouble finding their way home. Dementia has therefore become one of the biggest causes of the disappearance of the elderly.

When it comes to caring for someone with dementia, the IDB (Industrial Development Bureau) of Taiwan's MoEA (Ministry of Economic Affairs) has facilitated a new startup, called OPEN-LiFE, which leverages Bluetooth positioning technology to develop the so-called PingAmulet D+ card. The card can prevent the elderly from getting lost or going missing. At the same time, the IDB

also co-works with local governments such as the Pingtung county government, where they set up a community safety net and a trial field in Xishi village.

The PingAmulet D+ card uses low-power Bluetooth positioning technology and has a battery life of 9-12 months so no frequent charging is required. The one-touch SOS emergency button can help the elderly get assistance when they feel lost or in an emergency.

Most importantly, to reduce the elderly's unpleasant feelings of being spied on when wearing the PingAmulet D+ card, the invention looks like a lucky charm that they can get from local temples. With this elderly-friendly design, they are more willing to wear it for a long time for their own safety.

By deploying beacon sensors, the village has succeeded in constructing an electronics community safety net, which can real-time monitor the whereabouts of the elderly. When an elderly person accidentally leaves the safe zone, the system

Technology



Many governments and healthcare institutions have used OPEN-LiFE's positioning devices to prevent the elderly from getting lost, and to track COVID-19 home quarantine persons

will automatically send an alarm to his/her family members, record the last place of the appearance, and help family members and police officers quickly locate the area. On average, the system has helped reduce the search time by about one-third. Xishi village currently has 52% of the elderly

aged 60 and above. Over 83% of those with dementia have used the PingAmulet D+ card's positioning service, 90% of whom are satisfied with the service.

OPEN-LiFE continues to focus on the development of new product designs, with an aim to expand user coverage and create service applications. It can ensure all age groups from the elderly to students and patients can live in a safe and secure social environment. For example, the product design is in various forms such as keyrings and bracelets. The positioning service has also been introduced to schools to ensure the safety of students. They are also available for people under COVID-19 home quarantine to help the government real-time monitor the whereabouts of quarantined

persons. In the future, the company plans to add physiological measurements to the invention to measure a person's physical activity.

The positioning service for the elderly has been expanding coverage from Pingtung in southern Taiwan to other cities and counties such as Yunlin, Taitung, and Taipei. It has also been shipped overseas to Singapore, Hong Kong, and other Southeast Asian countries. The governments and medical institutions of these Asian countries have purchased OPEN-LiFE's positioning bracelets and cards to real-time monitor home quarantine persons, hospital patients, and medical equipment at hospitals.

Smart City Taiwan

Policy Updates

Australia

NSW government to introduce paid miscarriage and stillbirth leave in public sector

Parents in the NSW public sector who suffer a miscarriage or stillbirth will be provided with one week of bereavement leave, in a landmark policy set to be included in the NSW budget.

The bereavement policy, first reported by The Australian, will also extend to mothers who give birth prematurely, who will receive paid time off up until the date their child would have reached full term. Male employees affected by a spouse's miscarriage or stillbirth will also be eligible for the same benefits, whether or not their spouse works in the NSW public sector.

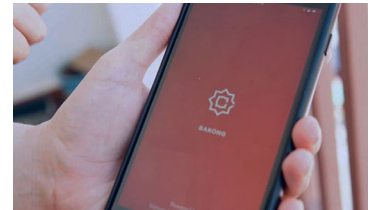
The policy will be the first of its kind in Australia, and will apply to part-time and full-time workers in the NSW public sector.

In total, five days of paid leave will be granted to parents who suffer a miscarriage or stillbirth. It's also been reported that Perrotet is in talks with some private sector companies to encourage them to introduce similar bereavement leave for their employees in NSW.

The NSW government policy comes months after New Zealand granted three days' paid bereavement leave to parents after a miscarriage or stillbirth, becoming one of the first countries in the world to do so.

According to The Australian, the NSW government policy has not yet been given to cabinet for final approval, but has been given the tick of approval by the government's Expenditure Review Committee.

Women's Agenda



potentials, resources and capabilities in the public and private sectors to orient the development and process of the digital revolution in Cambodia on a solid foundation of complete peace, territorial integrity, national unity and political stability, as well as the economic and social development that Cambodia has achieved more than three decades.

Cambodia has set out a vision titled "Building a vibrant digital economy and society by laying the foundations for promoting digital adoption and evolution in all sectors of society, the state, the people and the business community."

This vision encapsulates the aim of accelerating new economic growth and the promotion of social welfare through the post-pandemic "new normal". Building the digital economy as a new source of economic growth and an ecosystem that increases productivity and economic efficiency is the road to improving the well-being of the people of Cambodia.

Khmer Times

Cambodia

Cambodia's digital economic and society policy for 2021-2035 launched

The Kingdom has officially announced the implementation of its "Digital Economy and Social Policy Framework of Cambodia 2021-2035" policy. It identifies the digital sector as a new model of economic growth responsive and resilient to changes in economic structure, development and international trade.

The policy has been prepared in accordance with the actual needs,

Georgia

Georgian parliament passes amendments to Law on Information Security



Georgian parliament has passed amendments to the Law on Information Security with its third hearing.

The approved amendments mean three subjects of the critical information system will be divided into three categories:

First category of subjects may include all state bodies and institutions, legal entities under public law and state-owned enterprises. The strictest regulations apply to the first category of subjects. The LEPL Operational-Technical Agency of the State Security Service will be able to access the information assets, information systems and infrastructure of any such institution (Presidential Administration, Tbilisi City Hall, Central Election Commission, etc.).

The second category of subjects include electronic communications, such as telecommunication companies, Internet providers. These companies will also be under the control of the Operative-Technical Agency (OTA) of the State Security Service (SSS) of Georgia.

The third category of entities include legal entities under private law, such as banks, financial institutions. The new law applies loyal regulations to them, which means that the third category entities will be supervised by the LEPL Digital Governance Agency of the Ministry of Justice.

British Ambassador to Georgia Mark Cleyton said this is a strong foundation on which Georgia can build future cyber security.

Agenda.ge

Hong Kong

Hong Kong gov't to relax social distancing rules, ease quarantine for vaccinated arrivals

Hong Kong has announced a significant easing of its coronavirus rules, including a cut in compulsory quarantine periods for travellers, as the city passed its 14th day without any local infections.

Restaurants where all staff have received one dose of vaccine will be allowed to operate at 75% of capacity provided customers use the LeaveHomeSafe tracing app.

Restaurants in which all members of staff have been fully vaccinated – and with customers having received at least one dose – will be allowed to operate at full capacity, with up to 12 people per table. They will also be allowed to host banquets of up to 180 people as long as two-thirds of attendees have been vaccinated.

Outdoor group gatherings are still limited to no more than four people, but venues hosting religious gatherings, weddings, and shareholder meetings can be filled up to 50% capacity. If two-thirds of attendees have received at least one dose, they can operate at 100% of capacity.

The government will also relax strict quarantine measures for Hong Kong residents and other arriving travellers.

Quarantine for Hong Kong residents arriving from high-risk or medium-risk nations or from Taiwan will be reduced to seven days, followed by seven days of self-monitoring, if they have been fully vaccinated, have a negative Covid-19 test result, and had had a positive Covid-19 antibody result within the past three months.

They will have to take two coronavirus tests during the seven-day quarantine period, and three other tests on the 12th, 16th, and 19th day after arrival.

Non-residents from high-risk or medium risk nations, or from Taiwan, will be allowed to enter the city if fully vaccinated. They will then have to complete a seven-day compulsory quarantine if they have a positive Covid-19 antibody test result conducted within the past three



months.

The eased rules will apply to countries including Britain and Italy, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and the United States. The new rules could be implemented from June 30. The government is looking into providing Covid-19 antibody tests at Hong Kong International Airport for incoming travellers.

Hong Kong Free Press

India

India's new e-commerce rules could jolt foreign, local players

New Indian e-commerce rules will raise costs for all online retailers but particularly Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart as they may have to review their business structures, senior industry sources told Reuters.

India's Ministry of Consumer Affairs outlined plans on June 21 which include limiting "flash sales" by online retailers, reining in a private label push, compelling them to appoint compliance officers and impose a "fall-back liability" if a seller is negligent.

The new rules are expected to have an impact across the board in an e-retail market India forecasts will be worth \$200 billion by 2026, with players including from Tata's BigBasket, Reliance Industries' JioMart and Softbank-backed Snapdeal to market leaders Amazon and Flipkart.

The companies have until July 6 to respond to the proposals, after which time they may be reviewed further or implemented.

One aspect of the proposed new rules which is likely to have a particular impact is one which gives the customer "suggestions of alternatives to ensure a fair opportunity for domestic goods" if a retailer is showing imported goods for sale.

Policy Updates

"The concept is about promotion of local goods. It's good for Made-in-India products, but not for the platforms," said Salman Waris, a partner at TechLegis Advocates. Non-compliance with the rules, if implemented, could be punishable with prison terms, and fines of at least 25,000 Indian rupees under India's consumer law, Waris added.

The Indian government notification detailing the rules said that they were being issued after complaints of "widespread cheating and unfair trade practices being observed in the e-commerce ecosystem." It did not name any company.

Reuters

Japan

Japan proposes four-day working week to improve work-life balance

The Japanese government has unveiled its annual economic policy guidelines, which include new recommendations that companies permit their staff to opt to work four days a week instead of the typical five.

The coronavirus pandemic has already brought huge changes to the way that Japanese corporations — many of which are still highly rigid and traditional — go about their business.

Political leaders now hope to convince management that flexible working hours, remote working, growing interconnectedness and a host of other developments can be beneficial if they remain in place even after the end of the health crisis.

The government said in the outline of its campaign that, with a four-day working week, companies would be able to retain capable and experienced staff who might otherwise have to leave if they are trying to raise a family or take care of elderly relatives.

A four-day workweek would also encourage more people to gain additional educational qualifications or even take on side jobs in addition to their regular employment, according to the government.

Most importantly, authorities hope that an extra day off every week would

encourage people to go out and spend, thereby boosting the economy.

It is also anticipated that young people will have more time to meet, marry and have children, going some way to solving the worsening problem of a falling birth rate, an increasingly older national demographic and a contracting population.

DW

New Zealand

New Zealand's adoption laws under review, public consultation announced



New Zealand's 66-year-old adoption laws, set up to favour two-parent, heterosexual families and ignoring whāngai Māori adoption, are up for reform.

Justice Minister Kris Faafoi on June 18 announced the long-awaited review, including seeking public views on options for change to the adoption laws, such as the Adoption Act 1955.

The underlying principle of the current Adoption Act was a "clean break", which severed the ties between the child and their birth parents. At the time it was generally considered children were best raised in two-parent, heterosexual families.

"Illegitimate" children were seen as shameful and women were forced or encouraged to give up their children without any knowledge as to where they were going and to whom. Adoptions were generally "closed" meaning the child had no information on their birth family and whānau.

Adoption was rife at the time, and about 90,000 babies were taken from their mothers and given to strangers between 1950 and 1980.

While practices have advanced, the legislation is seen to undermine and discriminate against all parties, particularly the child in question.

In 2016, the Human Rights Review Tribunal also found that stopping certain people from being able to adopt based on their marital status, age and gender was discriminatory.

"Given societal changes since this time, we now recognise a broad range of family relationships and diverse family make-ups," Faafoi said. "Most adoptions today in Aotearoa New Zealand are 'open' adoptions where the child, their birth family and whānau and their adoptive family and whānau have some form of ongoing relationship following the adoption."

The Ministry of Justice has released the discussion document Adoption in Aotearoa New Zealand to assist people in submitting the review. Public consultation runs until August 31, alongside targeted engagement with specific communities, including those affected by adoption.

The review sought feedback on six issues in particular, including what is adoption and who is involved, cultural aspects of adoption (including whāngai), how the adoption process works in New Zealand and offshore, the impacts of adoption, and how the adoption process works where a child is born by surrogacy.

A second round of consultation will be undertaken in May and June 2022 to report back on feedback and seek the public's views on the Government's proposals for reform.

New Zealand Herald

Philippines

Philippines extends ban on travelers from India, 6 other countries up to June 30

The Philippine government has extended restrictions on travelers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, United Arab Emirates, and Oman up to June 30, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque announced.

In a statement on June 20, Roque said restrictions on the seven countries would continue to be imposed as part of efforts to ensure "strict border control" and prevent cases of the COVID-19 Delta variant from spreading in the Philippines.

Policy Updates

He said returning Filipinos covered by repatriation programs of both the government and their respecting manning or recruitment agencies, which were cleared by the Bureau of Quarantine, will still be able to enter the Philippines. "They can enter the country, subject to testing and quarantine protocols," Roque said.

The current national policy mandates a 10-day facility quarantine and swabbing on the seventh day from arrival. Returning Filipinos also need to complete four more days of quarantine in their homes after leaving the facilities.

Travel restrictions on India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal have been in place since April 29, and May 15 for the UAE and Oman. They were supposed to last only up to June 15, prior to the government's latest decision.

Rappler

Taiwan

Taiwan's pandemic subsidy for households with children open to applications from June 15

Households eligible for the new NT\$10,000 (US\$345) COVID-19 subsidy began online applications from June 15, with the government doling out the money from June 18, CNA reported.

The subsidy was put forth by the Cabinet to reduce the pandemic burden on households with children or with young adults who have a disability and are in junior high, senior high, or their first three



years of a five-year college.

The subsidy, which is part of a new relief package, will benefit about 2.5 million children. For households with children under two years of age, the Ministry of Health and Welfare will be responsible for distributing the money.

The Ministry of Education said that to avoid crowds, there are two ways to claim the money before Sept. 30 without paying any processing fees. The first is to apply online, while the second is to use an ATM.

The online method became available at 10 a.m. on June 15. The required information includes the guardian's ID card number and bank account information as well as the relevant child's National Health Insurance card number.

After verification, the NT\$10,000 will be remitted to the account the next day, though payouts only began on June 18.

Guardians who opt for the ATM route can go to any Cathay United Bank, CTBC Bank, and Taishin Bank ATM, insert their debit card, and simply key in their child's National Health Insurance card number as well as their own ID card number to receive payment.

Taiwan News

Vietnam

Vietnam introduces nationwide code of conduct for social media

Vietnam introduced national guidelines on social media behaviour on June 18 which encourage people to post positive content about the Southeast Asian country and require state employees to report "conflicting information" to their superiors.

The code prohibits posts which violate the law and "affect the interests of the state" and applies to state organisations, social media companies, and all their users in Vietnam.

"Social media users are encouraged to promote the beauty of Vietnam's scenery, people and culture, and spread good stories about good people," reads the code, which was contained in a decision from the information ministry and dated June 17.

It was not clear to what extent the decision was legally binding, or how it would be enforced.

The new code requires social media providers in Vietnam to "deal with users in accordance with Vietnamese law" when requested by authorities to remove content from their platforms.

It encourages social media users to create accounts using their real identities, share information from official sources, and avoid posting content which violates the law, contains bad language, or advertises illegal services.

Reuters