

Joint B20 Statement

Digitalization for All: Towards an Inclusive Interconnected World

The remarkable development of the digital economy has created unprecedented opportunities for growth and inclusiveness within and between countries. In our increasingly interconnected world, digitalization drives social and economic inclusion. It gives people and organizations of any size access to a global marketplace and repository of information. To the benefit of all economic sectors and consumers, it deepens and broadens trading patterns, takes productivity to a higher level, and scales up services. It allows customizing production, facilitates new forms of collaboration, accelerates access to knowledge, inspires innovation and entrepreneurship, and fosters competition. The Internet gives SMEs and firms in developing countries enhanced scalability and better access to markets, financing, labor, skills, as well as new services and products, increasing their productivity and reach. Digitalization improves product benefits, boosts consumer welfare, and facilitates both participation and equality. It is a critical cross-sectoral and cross-cutting means for achieving the Connect 2020 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda – from growth, trade, and employment to health, education, energy access, infrastructure, agriculture, food security, and overall societal welfare: digital technologies are crucial catalysts of progress.

While digitalization is already significantly contributing to socioeconomic development, barriers to leveraging its full inclusiveness potential persist. By tackling existing impediments, further imbalances in implementing and applying digital technologies can be prevented.

An obvious obstacle still requiring further attention is access to the Internet. The lack of adequate and affordable Internet access is a major issue relating to development and inclusiveness in low-income countries, hindering the potential of the digital economy and increasing the risk of digital divides. But also in industrialized countries, insufficient broadband coverage diminishes economic potential. Affordable and high-quality broadband coverage is a precondition for the effective use of digital technologies, for example, in the areas of manufacturing, health care, and services. Individual households and SMEs are particularly affected by access barriers such as low availability of broadband or high costs, even more so in remote areas. To reach the goal of "Internet access for all", G20 members have to set ambitious national targets for broadband coverage and make them operative through investment-conducive policies and public-private partnerships in remote or less developed regions.

While ubiquitous ICT infrastructure is an absolute must, by itself it is not enough to increase inclusiveness and growth to the benefit of all. Governments need to enable use cases in areas that will stimulate additional broadband penetration and create positive socioeconomic impact – for instance e-transportation, e-education, e-health, e-agriculture, and e-government. Policies and regulations in vertical sectors should be assessed to make them digitalization-ready. Potential regulatory roadblocks stemming from incumbent, predigital rules and policies should be removed. Governments should not just look at how to eliminate barriers but also at how to incentivize positive action, accelerating digitalization in vertical sectors. This requires cooperation across policy silos and national borders. Multistakeholder exchanges with the private sector and users can help to inform target-oriented policies.

Without adequate and continuing capacity and skills building, innovation and the use of locally relevant contents, services, and business models will be impeded, diminishing the potential of the digital economy. Digital technologies will continuously lead to rapidly shifting skill requirements and demands. Therefore, concepts for life-long learning, professional development, and the possibility of requalification should be at the center of labor and education policies. Everyone should have the opportunity to adapt to shifting

demands and reskill at any point in their life. A lack of digital literacy is not only a barrier for individuals – it also reduces economic potential.

To better prepare business and people for the digital economy, governments have to work together with the private sector to understand current and future skill needs. Curricula in schools, universities, vocational training, requalification programs, and continuing education should be regularly adjusted accordingly. All people – including girls and women – should be enabled to excel in the digital economy. Equally, companies – especially SMEs – are often unaware of digital solutions for their business. Creating awareness of use and business cases, which demonstrate the benefits of implementing new, inclusive digital technologies, can help overcome this barrier. Governments should support businesses in increasing knowledge exchange and fostering expertise on the application of digital technologies, for instance through innovation hubs or competence centers.

In a world where services, infrastructure, public administration, and households are increasingly interconnected, cybersecurity is a critical issue. Not only do cyberthreats create economic damage. Clearly, if there is lack of confidence in the safety and security of digital technologies, the adoption of new technologies – such as autonomous driving, digital health care or augmented intelligence – will falter even if they offer substantial benefits. As cyberrisks are mostly transfrontier, international cooperation among governments and private stakeholders is essential to effectively ensure security and safety in cyberspace while enhancing interoperability and manageability. Global coordination – for instance for common standards in a baseline framework – is not only indispensable for effectively tackling existing risks, but also to avoid the fragmentation of cyberspace through incompatible approaches.

The enablement of cross-border data flows is just as important to preserving the open, global, and interoperable nature of the Internet. A high level of privacy and data protection is an enabler of the digital economy. To effectively provide benefits, it has to be designed in ways that do not impede innovative business models and global interoperability. G20 members should commit to refrain from digital protectionism and should seek to find compatible standards for data protection on a voluntary basis.

As digitalization transcends borders, international cooperation becomes more and more important. With digitalization being a cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issue that touches upon all G20 topics, policy-makers can come a long way in reaching their goal of inclusive globalization to the benefit of all if they show commitment to future-oriented policies. Jointly addressing Internet access, an enabling regulatory environment, digital literacy and skills, as well as improved cooperation for cybersecurity and cross-border data flows is a vital starting point.

Signatories

Timothy Adams

Co-Chair B20 Financing Growth & Infrastructure Taskforce
CEO & President Institute of International Finance

Mary Andringa

Co-Chair B20 Small and Medium Enterprises Cross-thematic Group
Chair of the Board Vermeer Corporation

Oliver Bäte

Chair B20 Financing Growth & Infrastructure Taskforce
CEO Allianz SE

Perrin Beatty

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President & CEO Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Sabine Bendiek

Co-Chair B20 Digitalization Taskforce
CEO Microsoft Germany

Erol Bilecik

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President Turkish Industry & Business Association (TÜSİAD)

Vincenzo Boccia

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President Confindustria

Kurt Bock

Chair B20 Energy, Climate & Resource Efficiency Taskforce
CEO BASF SE

Robson Braga de Andrade

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President National Confederation of Industry of Brazil (CNI)

Gerhard F. Braun

Chair B20 Employment & Education Taskforce
Vice-President Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA)

Antonio Brufau Niubó

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
Chairman Repsol

Andrey Bugrov

Co-Chair B20 Responsible Business Conduct & Anti-Corruption Cross-thematic Group
Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors, Senior Vice-President MMC NORILSK NICKEL

Hans-Paul Bürkner

Co-Chair B20 Digitalization Taskforce
Chairman The Boston Consulting Group

John Cryan

Co-Chair B20 Financing Growth & Infrastructure Taskforce
CEO Deutsche Bank AG

Elmar Degenhart

Co-Chair B20 Energy, Climate & Resource Efficiency Taskforce
CEO Continental AG

John W.H. Denton

Co-Chair B20 Financing Growth & Infrastructure Taskforce
Partner & CEO Corrs Chambers Westgarth, First Vice-Chairman International Chamber of Commerce

Thomas J. Donohue

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President & CEO U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Xabier Etxeberria

Co-Chair B20 Energy, Climate & Resource Efficiency Taskforce
CEO Gamesa Corporación Tecnológica

Daniel Funes de Rioja

Co-Chair B20 Employment & Education Taskforce
President International Organization of Employers

Pierre Gattaz

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President Movement of the Enterprises of France (MEDEF)

Pierre Goguet

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President CCI France

José Manuel González-Páramo

Co-Chair B20 Financing Growth & Infrastructure Taskforce
Member of the Executive Board BBVA S.A.

Klaus Helmrich

Chair B20 Digitalization Taskforce
Member of the Managing Board Siemens AG

Jürgen Heraeus

B20 Chairman

Rifat Hisarcıkloğlu

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB)

Timotheus Höttges

Co-Chair B20 Digitalization Taskforce
CEO Deutsche Telekom AG

David Iakobachvili

Co-Chair B20 Employment & Education Taskforce
President Orion Heritage Co. Ltd.

Bertram Kawlath

Co-Chair B20 Small and Medium Enterprises Cross-thematic Group
Managing Partner Schubert & Salzer GmbH

Dieter Kempf

Member B20 Executive Committee
President Federation of German Industries (BDI)

Erol Kiresepi

Co-Chair B20 Employment & Education Taskforce
Chairman & CEO Santa Farma Pharmaceuticals

Ingo Kramer

Member B20 Executive Committee
President Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA)

Corinne Lagache

Co-Chair B20 Responsible Business Conduct & Anti-Corruption Cross-thematic Group
Chief Compliance Officer SAFRAN Group

Monique Leroux

Co-Chair B20 Small and Medium Enterprises Cross-thematic Group
President International Co-operative Alliance, Chair of the Board Investissement Québec

Jack Ma

Co-Chair B20 Trade & Investment Taskforce
Executive Chairman Alibaba Group

Lynette Magasa

Co-Chair B20 Small and Medium Enterprises Cross-thematic Group
CEO Boniswa Corporate Solutions

Jorge Mandelbaum

Co-Chair B20 Responsible Business Conduct & Anti-Corruption Cross-thematic Group
President Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC)

Emma Marcegaglia

Chair B20 Trade & Investment Taskforce
Chair of the Board Eni S.p.A., President BusinessEurope

Mthunzi Mdwaba

Co-Chair B20 Employment & Education Taskforce
Regional Vice-President (Africa) International Organization of Employers

Sunil Bharti Mittal

Co-Chair B20 Trade & Investment Taskforce
Chairman Bharti Enterprises, Chairman International Chamber of Commerce

Klaus Moosmayer

Chair B20 Responsible Business Conduct & Anti-Corruption Cross-thematic Group
Anti-Corruption Chair BIAC, Chief Compliance Officer Siemens AG

Pierre Nanterme

Co-Chair B20 Digitalization Taskforce
Chairman & CEO Accenture

Peder Holk Nielsen

Co-Chair B20 Energy, Climate & Resource Efficiency Taskforce
CEO & President Novozymes A/S

André Oliveira

Co-Chair B20 Responsible Business Conduct & Anti-Corruption Cross-thematic Group
Legal Director BASF South America

Dany Qian

Co-Chair B20 Energy, Climate & Resource Efficiency Taskforce
Vice-President JinkoSolar

Peter Robinson

Co-Chair B20 Employment & Education Taskforce
President & CEO United States Council for International Business

Klaus Rosenfeld

Co-Chair B20 Digitalization Taskforce
CEO Schaeffler AG

Eric Schweitzer

Member B20 Executive Committee
President Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK)

Alexander N. Shokhin

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
President Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP)

Francesco Starace

Co-Chair B20 Energy, Climate & Resource Efficiency Taskforce
CEO & General Manager Enel Group

Rudolf Staudigl

Chair B20 Small and Medium Enterprises Cross-thematic Group
CEO & President Wacker Chemie AG

Rajeev Suri

Co-Chair B20 Digitalization Taskforce
CEO & President NOKIA

Axel Weber

Co-Chair B20 Financing Growth & Infrastructure Taskforce
Chairman of the Board of Directors UBS Group AG

Innes Willox

Member B20 Business Advocacy Caucus
Chief Executive Australian Industry Group (AiG)