

Interview with Dr. Stormy-Annika Mildner, B20 Sherpa



At the G20 Summit in Hamburg, July 7-8, 2017, the leaders of the most powerful economies will get together to agree on a roadmap to “shape an interconnected world”. This is at least the goal of the German G20 Presidency. The B20 has developed recommendations for the G20. B20 Sherpa Stormy-Annika Mildner believes that these recommendations would be good guidelines in order to “build resilience, to improve sustainability, and to assume responsibility”.

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The B20 Presidency rotates every year with the G20 Presidency. How does the B20 Germany Presidency differ from, and in how far has it ensured continuity with, past presidencies?

The B20, as with the G20, does not maintain a standing secretariat. As a result, ensuring a smooth transition process as well as continuity and coherence are particularly important. In late summer of 2016, we conducted a survey among prior B20 members and leading business associations in the G20 countries in order to arrive at the issue areas that B20 Germany should focus on. Overall, they reflect the evolution of both the B20 and the G20 process. Thus, our five taskforces, two cross-thematic groups (CTGs), and one initiative reflect the continuity of past presidencies, with the “Trade and Investment” Taskforce, “Financing Growth and Infrastructure” Taskforce, “Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises” Cross-Thematic Group, and the “Responsible Business Conduct and Anti-Corruption” Cross-Thematic Group. The “Energy, Climate and Resource Efficiency” Taskforce, as well as the “Digitalization” Taskforce and “Health” Initiative reflect changes in the wider G20 program and extend our past focus areas. The “Health Initiative” addresses issues ranging from pandemic preparedness to innovation in healthcare. The private sector has also engaged with the wider G20 community and local stakeholders in advancing the “Compact with Africa”, which was initiated by Germany’s G20 Presidency. The G20 has broadened its portfolio and so must the B20. This is a broad portfolio. We can neither solve today’s challenges nor realize the vast opportunities alone. We need international cooperation.

The G20 is often subject to criticism, and protestors are once again expected at this year’s summit in Hamburg in July. What steps has the B20 taken to ensure accountability and transparency?

Every year, the head of state of the respective G20 presidency nominates representatives of civil society to form the seven engagement groups, of which B20 is one of. As such, the engagement groups are given a mandate to aid the G20 by providing their expertise in a consolidated manner. In this, the B20 has taken several steps to be as transparent and open as possible. The main tool for this has been our website. On our website, you will find an overview of our members and activities. A regular newsletter and conference reports summarize our events and activities. We continuously publish comprehensive reports of the main events that we have organized or co-hosted, such as the first B20 Conference in December of last year and our B20 Summit in May. Finally, as the main product of our work, the B20 policy papers are accessible to everyone on our website. We believe that transparency and openness are vital to ensuring the kind of dialogue that the B20 has a mandate to pursue, both with the G20 leaders as well as with the wider public.

At the B20 Summit in May, the B20 handed its policy recommendations over to German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel. How has the B20 continued its engagement with its most important topics following the summit?

With the handover of our policy recommendations to Chancellor Merkel, the work of the B20 was far from over. In the lead-up to the G20 summit in July, we have redoubled our advocacy efforts to engage with the wider public and the G20 decision-makers on the twenty policy recommendations we developed. Moreover, other notable events closely followed the B20 Germany Summit. On May 18, B20

B20 Germany

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hosted the first B20 Health Conference in Berlin. Developed under the theme of “Resilient Health Systems – Shaping the Future of Health Care Together”, the Health Conference included the handover of the policy recommendations developed by the B20 Health Initiative to the G20 Health Ministers. We, the business community, have the responsibility to engage with policymakers and other civil society stakeholders to ensure the maintenance of an open, resilient, and future-oriented international system. Nowhere is this more evident than in our vibrant B20 community, which will continue its engagement – before, and after the G20 summit.