

AT G20 SUMMIT, PM MODI CALLS FOR GLOBAL INDEX FOR POST-COVID WORLD

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'Spirit of trusteeship towards planet Earth will inspire us for a healthy and holistic lifestyle,' says PM Modi at the G20 summit, being hosted by Saudi Arabia

NEW DELHI: India on Saturday called for multi-skilling and reskilling the work force of the world to help people cope with the aftermath of the covid-19 pandemic that has seen businesses close down leaving many without jobs in countries across the world.

In his speech at the opening session of the [G20 summit](#), Modi also called for greater transparency in governance systems, which he said will inspire citizens to deal with shared challenges and enhance their confidence.

Saturday was the first day of the two-day summit, which was hosted by Saudi Arabia and centered around the theme "Realizing Opportunities of 21st Century for All." Modi joined the Saudi monarch King Salman, US President Donald Trump, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and leaders of other G20 nations and the European Union besides officials heading international organizations.

"The agenda of the summit is spread out over two days with two sessions focused on overcoming the pandemic, economic recovery and restoring jobs, and building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future. There are also side events planned on the two days on pandemic preparedness and on safeguarding the planet," an Indian foreign ministry statement said.

In his speech, Prime Minister Modi "called for a new global index for the post-corona world that comprises four key elements – creation of a vast talent pool; ensuring that technology reaches all segments of the society; transparency in systems of governance; and dealing with mother Earth with a spirit of trusteeship."

"Based on this, the G20 can lay the foundation of a new world," Modi said.

Modi "underscored that in the past few decades, while there has been an emphasis on capital and finance, the time has come to focus on multi-skilling and re-skilling to create a vast human talent pool. This would not only enhance dignity of citizens but would make our citizens more resilient to face crises. He also said that any assessment of new technology should be based on its impact on ease of living and quality of life," the statement said.

Modi's remarks assume significance against the backdrop of projections by institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that global growth was expected to slow considerably due to the pandemic and the "Great Lockdown" imposed by countries across the world ie shuttering businesses, offices, schools and other institutions to control the spread of the disease.

The IMF in its October World Economic Outlook projected global growth in 2020 to clock minus 4.4%. "Following the contraction in 2020 and recovery in 2021, the level of global GDP in 2021 is expected to be a modest 0.6 % above that of 2019. The growth projections imply wide negative output gaps and elevated unemployment rates this year and in 2021 across both advanced and emerging market economies," the IMF said.

"The covid-19 recession will affect small and medium enterprises (SMEs) particularly hard. These firms typically are more vulnerable than their larger counterparts, reflecting, among other factors, their limited buffers and access to credit," it added later.

Calling for "greater transparency in governance systems which will inspire our citizens to deal with shared challenges and enhance their confidence," Modi also stressed on the principle of sustainability while dealing with the environment and nature, the statement said.

Modi emphasised the sustainable use of resources for a holistic and healthy lifestyle which could be measured by the per capita carbon footprint. Modi had in the past too advocated the idea of a lifestyle that keeps the carbon foot print at the individual level low. India has committed to relying on non-fossil fuels for 40% of its electricity needs by 2030. Modi said that mother earth should be dealt with a 'spirit of trusteeship'. His administration is also pursuing a gas and renewable energy based cleaner economy. Modi also emphasised that technology should reach all segments of society.

The 15th G20 Leaders' Summit is to continue on Sunday, culminating in the adoption of the Leaders' Declaration and with Saudi Arabia passing on the presidency to Italy.

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