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FOR THE MEETINGS AND EVENTS INDUSTRY

THE ROADS AHEAD



A dramatic landscape of a Faroe island. In the foreground, a steep, rocky cliff with visible horizontal geological strata slopes down towards a sandy beach. A winding road is visible on the cliffside. In the middle ground, a body of water, possibly a fjord or a bay, reflects the light from a cloudy sky. The background shows more rugged, snow-dusted hills under a heavy, overcast sky with patches of sunlight breaking through. The overall mood is majestic and serene.

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Let's Meet in Zagreb, Again!

Truly unexpected and challenging, the Covid-19 crisis has caused different degrees of disruptions, postponements and even cancellations of many meetings and events globally.

Staying safe and healthy, being responsible in all our actions and projects is one of everyone's top priorities right now.

Zagreb has been preparing for the days ahead looking to upgrade the local meetings & events infrastructure, as well as to boost competence and skills of meetings & events industry creative teams. In place of the old "normal", an innovative approach to meetings and incentives is taking place.

In this current climate, Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, the Central European city with Mediterranean flair, is safely opening up for business again.

The rich culture and history, legends and stories, the old and the contemporary are all on display as you stroll down the streets of Zagreb, and are also presented in more than 50 different sightseeing tours, many of which are interactive.

The venues range from some of the most beautiful historic buildings in the romantic city core to business hotels downtown. For outdoor meetings or activities, you can always choose one of

many elegant urban parks or picturesque downtown squares and pedestrian zones centrally located. Zagreb has the "sea" – Jarun Lake recreation area with great sports and picknick facilities, or one can opt for Mt. Medvednica – the green "lungs" of the city.

Memorable incentives are guaranteed.

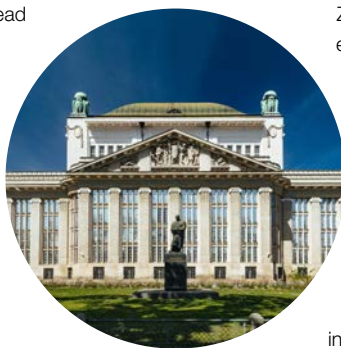
Zagreb offers a great variety of gastronomic experiences ranging from typical local to international dishes. They can be enjoyed in restaurants, but also from small vendors offering street food during numerous festivals all year round.

The Zagreb surroundings showcase unspoilt nature with tranquil landscapes, romantic medieval castles and legends, wine roads, spas, hiking and cycling trails, golf experiences and many more. Less than a 2 hour drive is the Adriatic coast, ideal for a memorable

incentive or a pre or post tour. In the vicinity, there is also the world famous Plitvice Lakes National Park, which is included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Whenever you plan your next event, think about Zagreb – the safe and vibrant Central European metropolis, where a captivating city atmosphere and doing business are a perfect match.

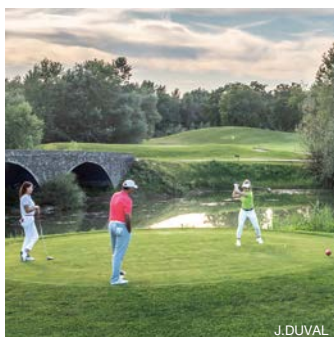
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CROATIA
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New normal opens up new worlds for Messe München

The Bavarian state government decided to allow trade fairs to be held again from 1 September – naturally subject to certain conditions. Several events started on this date, the Search Marketing Expo – SMX at the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München and FABRIC DAYS at the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München were run by using two different formats that demonstrated how it is possible to hold trade fairs and events even in these difficult times.

Since June, the ICM has established two studios for virtual or hybrid event formats, which were successfully implemented for example with the completely digitally organized IFAT impact or with the hybrid product launch of the new IAA.

The SMX Munich utilized the new opportunities offered at the ICM as well and was successfully held as a hybrid event for the first time. Sandra Finlay, the organizer of SMX: "The event spread out

across six large halls at the ICM so that we could easily and safely implement the applicable hygiene and security guidelines for everyone. The fact that participants could also take part digitally thanks to the technical capabilities at the ICM was of course ideal."



If you are considering organizing an event at one of the four locations of Messe München, the central sales team will be happy to advise you on all classic, digital as well as hybrid event formats. In addition, the White Paper "Stream your business to the whole world" published on the website of Messe München Locations offers you a professional overview of the most important lessons learned by Messe München on digital events.

For more information about the locations of Messe München visit www.messe-muenchen.de/locations



Taiwan Fighting the Good Fight

Taiwan launches online exhibition services to minimize Covid-19 impact

Taiwan shares pandemic control methods

Amid the human and economic toll inflicted by Covid-19, Taiwan's successful response to the pandemic stands out as a model for the way forward. While most countries continue to struggle with fresh outbreaks, Taiwan has managed to flatten the curve.

Taiwan has responded on both humanitarian grounds and as a member of the global community. To that end, Taitra, Taiwan's foremost nonprofit trade promotion organization, established an Anti-Covid-19 Pavilion website that details Taiwan's prevention measures and experience with the pandemic, plus provides access to more than 2,000 industries, manufacturers and medical institutions related to pandemic prevention. The Pavilion serves as a one-stop global resource to help fight the pandemic

Find more information at www.anticovid19tw.org

Taiwan trade shows integrate online services

Taiwan has also quickly taken action to maintain interaction with people around the world via the internet. To provide the latest information about Taiwan international trade shows, Taiwan launched a series of integrated online services, including online 2D/VR exhibitions, pre-show online sourcing meetings, trade show webinars, and new product launches—all to meet exhibitor demands for international marketing and buyer procurement needs.

Online services are also offered to exhibitors participating in this year's 19 trade shows: Taipei Cycle, TaiSPO, Taipei Ampa,

AutoTronics Taipei, Taiwan Motorcycle, AGExpo, Giftionery & Culture Creative Taipei, iMTduo, Computex Taipei, Taiwan Beauty, Medical Taiwan, Food Taipei, Foodtech Taipei, Bio/Pharmatech Taiwan, Taipei Pack, Taiwan Horeca, and Halal Taiwan.

Find more information at cloudcdn.taiwantradeshow.com.tw/tts-online/tts-11-en.html

Join interactive ICCA Congress 'Road to Kaohsiung' programme

Now, nearly seven months since the first Covid-19 case emerged, Taiwan life has mostly reverted to normal, with bars, stores, entertainment venues, and restaurants all open for business, with the requisite precautions.

The stable situation in Taiwan highlights Kaohsiung's qualifications to hold the first Icca hybrid congress in November. This year's Icca Congress is being transformed into a multiplatform experience with 800 attendees, 30 sessions, 40 speakers, 80 associations, and a 6-week congress programme.

In response to the new normal, the Icca Congress in Kaohsiung will establish the Kaohsiung Protocol, a framework identifying major trends and key strategies which will enable the international meetings industry to thrive, now and into the future. Together with Icca, Taiwan will redesign the future of global events.

For more information please visit www.meettaiwan.com



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Where Did **THE ROAD** GO?

THINGS HAVE certainly changed around us. The pandemic blew carefully-planned and beautifully-modelled roadmaps, and almost all the roads we knew vanished. Business events just disappeared, and many businesses plunged into the abyss, and we all did what we could to help our customers. Somehow, we have all suffered wounds and scars while fighting for the survival of our businesses in various markets and sectors.

Suddenly governments controlled our destiny and economies ground to a halt everywhere. Lockdowns forced us into virtual lives, and new channels emerged. There is a new road being built, but it looks different. Today we are hacking our way to a new and more virtual road. We are living in an era-defining shift, and the future of work is nomadic. Who needs to be anchored to a location, let alone an office? Emotional connections are hard to replicate virtually. Eyes are more powerful than screens, but at the moment, face-to-face (F2F) is replaced by screen-to-screen (S2S).

At the same time, we are learning new words and expressions, for example, workcations instead of vacations or staycations. Hybrid is here to stay.

Engagement strategy. How to build new ecosystems. Key passion indicators. Pivot. Redesigning and redefining space. Time for repositioning. A new reality. Reskill. Rethink. Change behaviours. Make learning as a superpower. Zoom. Engagement strategy. Virtual meeting designer. And the topic in many boardrooms: Agile and customers. Monetise analytics and exclusive content.

Community building is also on the top of the agenda. It is interesting to listen to the rise of engagement strategies. Some of the proposals: Think about how to create chance encounters and unexpected discoveries, especially online. Use live-streaming which is kicking into high gear cross, for example, in Asia. Create community groups on social platforms like Facebook; their power is coming to the fore during the pandemic. Also, produce entertainment-type of content and use TV-production techniques. And a question I have heard often the past months is “How can we build a community pre- and postevent?”

There are several new skills we need to learn today, and many new opportunities and professions are

emerging when the map is redrawn. As the Berber nomad Said Zaki says: “Everything is an opportunity.”

During the year, I have experienced a lot of webinar fatigue. It is certainly something that will be improved in the future. On the other hand, accessing engaging webinars from different continents, countries, regions and cities has never been easier. It has been rewarding to take part in a diversity of perspectives on how the pandemic is handled in various sectors of business events.

In one of all the webinars I have attended stated a young man: “Covid-19 is no longer a disruptor. It is an accelerator helping organisations and businesses to make a sustainable paradigm shift.” Do you agree?



PHOTO Magnus Malmberg

Swedish-Indonesian **ATTI SOENARSO** has worked as a journalist for close to 40 years. She has worked for Scandinavia's largest daily newspaper, was TV4's first travel editor, has written for many Swedish travel magazines and has had several international clients. She has travelled the length and breadth of the world and written about destinations, people and meetings.



A New Global Passport

MOBILITY HIERARCHY EMERGES

CORONAVIRUS-related travel restrictions are beginning to lift in some countries after many months of uncertainty. The resumption of international cross-border travel may appear to be a signal that things are slowly returning to normal.

The latest research from the Henley Passport Index, based on data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), shows the pandemic has completely upended the seemingly unshakeable hierarchy of global mobility that has dominated the last few decades. And more change will still come.

The Henley Passport Index is the original and most authoritative ranking of all the world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa. The index includes 199 passports and 227 travel destinations, giving users the most extensive and reliable information about their global access and mobility. With historical data spanning 15 years and regularly updated expert analysis on the latest shifts in passport power, the index is an invaluable resource

for global citizens and the standard reference tool for government policy in this field.

But more change will still come. At the beginning of the year, for instance, the US passport was ranked in the sixth position on the Henley Passport Index, and Americans could travel hassle-free to 185 destinations around the world.

Since then, that number has dropped dramatically by over 100, with US passport holders currently able to access fewer than 75 destinations, with the most popular tourist and business centres notably excluded. As criticism of the country's pandemic response continues to mount, and with the US presidential election just weeks away, the precipitous decline of US passport power and American travel freedom is seen as a clear indication of its altered status in the eyes of the international community.

Other significant changes in the once-solid global mobility hierarchy paint an equally vivid picture of the chaos caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the beginning of 2020,

the Singapore passport was ranked second globally, with passport holders able to access an unprecedented 190 destinations globally. However, under the current travel restrictions, Singaporeans can travel to fewer than 80 destinations around the world.

Those countries whose coronavirus responses have been criticised for being inadequate have taken the greatest knock when it comes to the travel freedom of their citizens. Brazilian passport holders were able to access 170 destinations without acquiring a visa in advance in January. Currently, approximately only 70 destinations are accessible.

The decline in mobility and passport power for countries such as India and Russia have been less dramatic, but indicative of an overall shift. Russian citizens had access to 119 destinations before the Covid-19 outbreak but can currently travel to fewer than 50. At the beginning of the year, Indian passport holders could travel to 61 destinations without a visa, but due to virus-related restrictions, they currently have access to fewer than 30.

Without taking the various pandemic-related travel bans and restrictions into account, Japan continues to hold the number one spot on the Henley Passport Index, with a visa-free/visa-on-arrival score of 191. Singapore remains in second place, with a score of 190. Germany and South Korea are tied third, each with a score of 189. EU member states continue to

While Covid-19 has shifted attention away from issues such as Brexit and the US's controversial migration policies, experts point out that their probable impact has not lessened. Robert McNeil, Deputy Director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, says that even though the pandemic has exploded the concept of 'business as

availed themselves of similar options in countries ranging from Canada to Malta. Recent estimates suggest that interest in investment migration programs has jumped five-fold from 2019 through mid-2020."

Greg Lindsay, Director of Applied Research at New Cities, points to the rise of so-called "digital nomads" as another sign of adaptation to crisis and uncertainty, particularly regarding the results of the upcoming US election.

"After the pandemic hit, overnight the world's knowledge workers became temporary professional nomads, and the disparity between national responses threw into stark relief the comparative advantages of alternative citizenship, especially for Americans suddenly locked out of much of the world."

Dr Juerg Steffen, CEO of Henley & Partners, says there is no question that the volatility of 2020 has boosted the appeal of investment migration for an increasingly wide range of people, from an increasingly wide array of countries.

"Fascinatingly, we have seen unprecedented interest in residence- and citizenship-by-investment programs from citizens of developed economies, particularly the US. There was a startling 238 per cent increase in enquiries from Americans between January and mid-September 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. The events of this year have demonstrated that we cannot predict the future. Still, for those high-net-worth investors who want to ensure they are well prepared for the next major disruption, alternative residence or citizenship is increasingly seen as an indispensable asset and a vital hedge against ongoing volatility."

"For citizens of wealthy and democratic countries travel freedom is something that has been taken for granted for decades"

perform best overall, with countries from the bloc taking up most of the spots in the index's top ten.

Commenting on the pandemic's impact on global mobility, Dr Christian H Kaelin, Chairman of Henley & Partners and the inventor of the passport index concept, says recent developments represent an era-defining shift:

"For citizens of wealthy and democratic countries such as Canada, the UK, the US, and Western European nations, travel freedom is something that has been taken for granted for decades. The pandemic has abruptly changed this. And with the significant loss of access and privilege has come to a reevaluation.

"As countries around the world battle to manage a new category of risk, there's been a shift away from travel freedom being regarded as the prerogative of nationals with once-powerful passports, towards a realisation that it is now a necessary luxury for those wishing to access first-class education, business opportunities, and quality healthcare for themselves and their families."

usual', a dramatic Brexit finale still looms on the horizon.

"Whatever the final form of the UK's departure from the EU, it is likely to affect migration. After the 2016 referendum, the depreciation of the pound reduced the UK's attractiveness to EU workers, something that may recur if Brexit rattles financial markets further. Meanwhile, increased restrictions on EU migrants' access to the UK labour market are set to be implemented as new rules under the 2020 immigration bill. It seems inevitable these will lead to a fall in EU migration to the UK."

Dr Parag Khanna, founder and managing partner of Future Map, says that increasingly restrictive migration policies have encouraged many people to seek out a Plan B, in the form of a second residence or even a change of nationality.

"Even before the pandemic, Brexit had pushed British professionals to seek German, French, Spanish, and other EU nationalities based on lineage, or to pursue residency leading to citizenship in countries such as Portugal. Americans have

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World's First AI University

IN ABU DHABI WELCOMES ITS FIRST STUDENTS

ADMISSIONS are more than doubled for the inaugural academic year at Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI) due to worldwide demand. The University is the world's first graduate-level, research-based artificial intelligence (AI) university, is preparing to welcome its first international cohort of students in early 2021.

Launched as an open invitation from Abu Dhabi to the world to unleash AI's full potential, MBZUAI says it has extended admission offers to 101 students from 31 countries for the first academic year commencing in January. Initial plans were to accept 50 students in the first year, but due to the impressive number of applications received, the decision was made to extend admissions offers to more students.

Of these students, 82 have been offered admissions in the university's MSc programs in Computer Vision and in Machine Learning, while 19 have been selected for MBZUAI's PhD programs in the same fields.

Students in the first cohort come from across the world. Twentyone per cent come from the UAE, 13 per cent from other parts of the Middle East, 38 per cent from Asia, 21 per cent from Africa, and nearly ten per cent from the Americas and Europe.

There will also be a strong female representation in MBZUAI's first academic year with women comprising 30 per cent of admitted students. Over 23 per cent of female students who have received offers from the

university are Emirati, while 13 per cent come from India and ten per cent from Syria.

Admitted students have received education at some of the world's leading universities, including prestigious institutions such as the National University of Singapore, University of Melbourne, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Purdue University, University of York, University of Minnesota, Queen's University of Belfast, Arizona State University, and Khalifa University in the UAE.

Professor Sir Michael Brady, interim president, Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence, says:

"The university received applications from some exceptionally talented graduate students from nearly one hundred countries, all of whom have compelling stories.

"This incredibly diverse first cohort will truly bring the world to MBZUAI, creating a multicultural campus that celebrates diversity and international collaboration. Our hope from the very beginning was for the university to inspire the development of AI on a global scale. With students from around the world, all of whom come from different backgrounds and industries. This is a solid start to realising the full potential of AI for positive progress around the world."

Salem Almarri is one of the students who will join the PhD Computer Vision program next year.

"As an Emirati, it is essential for me to develop world-class solutions for the UAE, to make my mark on

the AI sector. AI will give humanity a chance to develop a new world based on better solutions. MBZUAI will contribute towards this by bridging the gap between research, government, and the private sector. Also, empowering graduates to become expert consultants who can provide the UAE with the means to gain more growth in the future development of AI and machine learning."

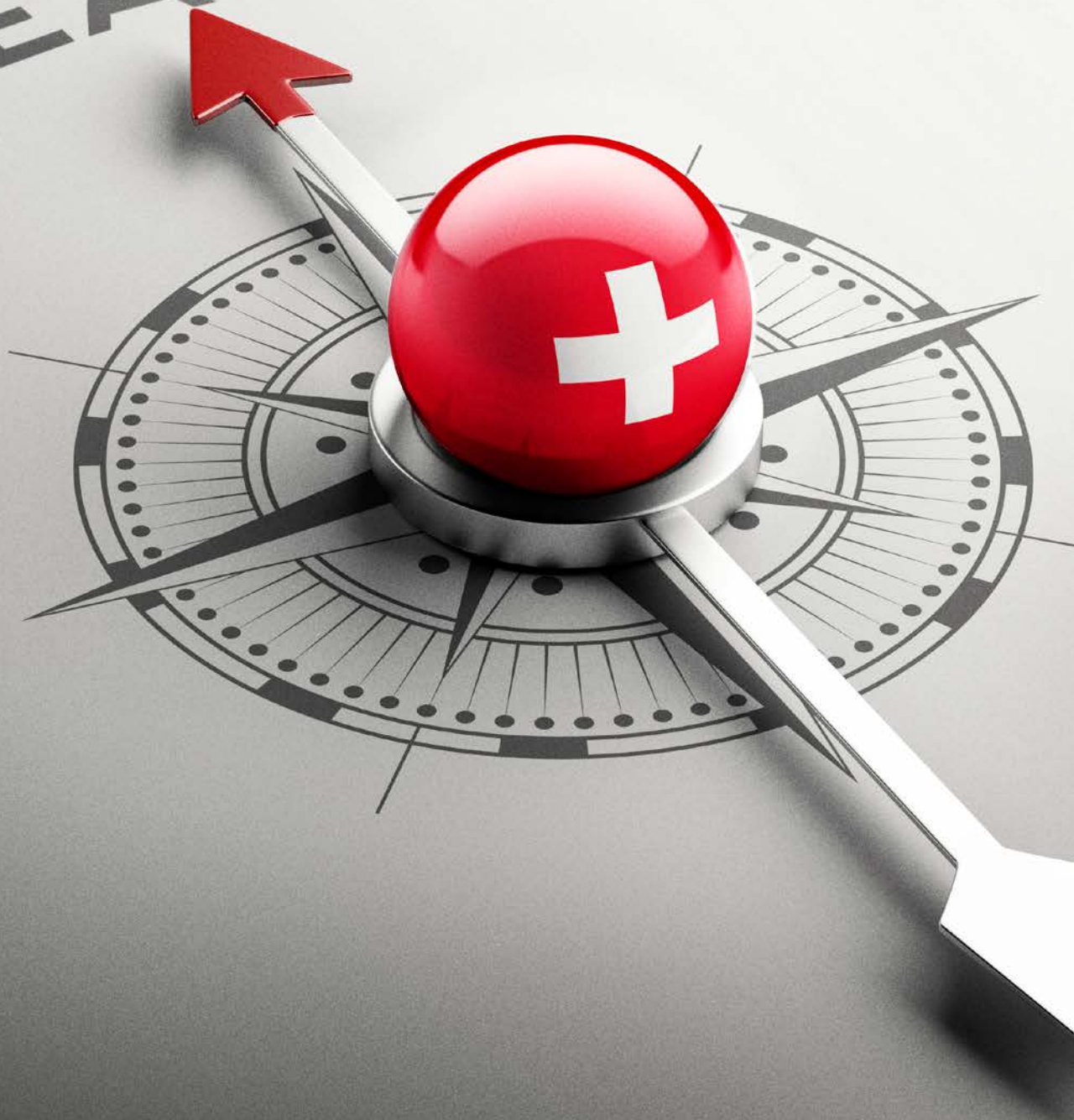
Kevin Michael Toner, from Ireland, will join the MSc Computer Vision program:

"Today, artificial intelligence is redefining the future of every industry and impacting human lives in an unprecedented way. As demand for specialised AI education increases globally, joining a world-class university like MBZUAI will help expand my horizons and connect me to an international network of AI industry experts."

With the first admissions cycle completed, the university has recently started accepting applications for the autumn 2021 cohort.

Located in Masdar City in Abu Dhabi, the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence campus features futuristic classrooms and research laboratories, an AI-specialised knowledge centre, and recreational facilities. Launched in October 2019, the university aims to empower students, businesses and governments to advance artificial intelligence as a global force for positive progress.

CREATIVE-



Switzerland Ranked AS MOST INNOVATIVE COUNTRY IN NEW UN REPORT

SWITZERLAND is the world's most-innovative country followed by Sweden, the United States of America (U.S.), the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (U.K.) according to the 2019 edition of the *Global Innovation Index (GII)*.

The report also identifies regional leaders India, South Africa, Chile, Israel and Singapore, with China, Vietnam and Rwanda topping their income groups. India has risen most in the rankings since 2018, jumping five places to fifty-second most innovative country.

The annual index, which has been published for the last 12 years by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and several partners, is designed to help policymakers better understand innovation activity, which WIPO describes as a "main driver of economic and social development".

Overall, this year's Index finds that, despite the global economic slowdown, innovation is "blossoming", particularly in Asia, but trade disruptions and protectionism are putting this at risk. It also notes that planning for innovation is critical for success:

"The Index shows us that countries that prioritise innovation in their policies have seen significant increases in their rankings. The rise in the *GII* by economic powerhouses like China and India has transformed the geography of innovation, and this reflects deliberate policy action to promote innovation," says WIPO Director General, Francis Gurry.

Key findings of the Index include concerns that public expenditure on research and development, a significant element in basic and "blue-sky" study, which are crucial for future

“Innovation inputs and outputs are still concentrated in very few economies”

innovations, is stagnating, mainly in high-income countries. The report also notes that, unless it is contained, increased economic protectionism will lead to a slowdown of growth in innovation productivity.

This year, the authors of the report have focused on the future of medical innovation, with a separate health-care section, which looks at how Artificial Intelligence (AI), genomics, and mobile-phone-based health applications, will transform the delivery of healthcare.

The Global Innovation Index is a leading benchmarking tool for business executives, policymakers and others seeking insight into the state of innovation around the world. Innovation is rated in the report by using 80 indicators, from the level of Research and Development investment, for example, to mobile-phone app creation and high-tech exports.

For the first time, the Global Innovation Index launch is being hosted by the Government of India, which uses the innovation index in creative ways to strengthen its policy framework for innovation at both the national and regional levels.

“The 2019 launch of the Global Innovation Index in India is a significant event and a recognition of

the Government of India’s commitment to innovation in recent years. The GII is a useful tool for governments to map out their strategies to foster innovation,” says Minister of Commerce and Industry & Railways Piyush Goyal.

The Global Innovation Index 2019 key findings

- The global landscape of science, innovation, and technology has undergone important shifts over the last decades. Middle-income economies, especially in Asia, are increasingly contributing to worldwide research and development (R&D) and international patenting rates via WIPO’s International Patent System.
- The GII 2019 shows that public R&D expenditures, particularly in some high-income economies, are growing slowly or not at all. This raises concerns given the public sector’s central role in funding basic R&D and blue-sky research, which are vital to future innovations.
- Increased protectionism poses risks. If left uncontained, it will lead to a slowdown of growth in innovation productivity and diffusion across the globe.

- Innovation inputs and outputs are still concentrated in very few economies. Divides also persist in how effectively economies obtain a return on their innovation investments. Some economies achieve more with less.
- Most top science and technology clusters are in the U.S., China, and Germany, while Brazil, India, Iran, the Russian Federation, and Turkey also feature in the top 100 list. The top five clusters: Tokyo-Yokohama (Japan); Shenzhen-Hong Kong, China (China); Seoul (Republic of Korea); Beijing (China); San Jose-San Francisco (U.S.).

“While the Global Innovation Index ranks economies according to their innovation capacity and performance, it also provides valuable insights into the dynamics of global innovation. It highlights economies that excel in innovation and those that are more successful in translating investments in innovation inputs into innovation outputs. Lessons from these innovation leaders provide useful guidance on innovation policy for others,” says Soumitra Dutta, Former Dean and Professor of Management at Cornell University, a GII copublisher.

“The Index is a useful tool for governments to map out their strategies to foster innovation”

Northern America

The U.S. reaches the GII top three thanks to better performance and improved GII data coverage. The U.S. maintains its status as a global leader in the quality of credit and investment markets and boasts R&D-intensive global companies, as well as top-quality scientific publications and universities. It ranks first worldwide in the quality of innovation. The U.S. is also home to the greatest number of top 100 science and technology clusters in the world, with a total of 26.

Canada moves up to the 17th position, also thanks to a more precise assessment of its human capital and research system. High scores in quality of universities and scientific publications make Canada the tenth global economy in the quality of innovation.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Since 2012, Sub-Saharan Africa has had more economies outperforming relatively well on innovation compared to their level of economic development than any other region. This year these include Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda, and Mozambique.

South Africa (63) takes the top spot among all economies in the

region, followed by Kenya (77) and Mauritius (82).

South Africa benefits from a relatively sophisticated credit and investment market, as evidenced by indicators such as domestic credit to the private sector and market capitalization. Other strong indicators include IP payments and quality of publications.

This year **Rwanda** makes significant progress and ranks 94th, up to five from 2018. It is the top economy in the low-income group and shows a strong performance in capital formation, ease of getting credit, firms offering formal training, and high-technology imports.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Progress in innovation performance remains slow in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the GII shows that the region's innovation potential remains mostly untapped despite incremental improvements and encouraging initiatives.

The top three economies in this region are Chile (51), followed by Costa Rica (55), and Mexico (56).

Chile maintains its rank in institutional variables and registers improvements in education-related

variables, with improved performance found in patents, utility models, and mobile-app creation.

Thanks to its role in global trade, **Mexico** remains strong in trade-related variables such as high-tech imports and exports and creative goods exports.

Brazil, the region's largest economy, is ranked 66th globally this year. Areas of comparative strengths include essential variables such as R&D expenditures and R&D-intensive global firms and quality of scientific publications and universities. It is also the only country in the region hosting science and technology clusters in the top 100 worldwide.

Central and Southern Asia

India maintains its top place in the Central and Southern Asia region as the 52nd ranked economy this year. From 81 in 2015, India's 29-place move up the GII represents the biggest jump by any major economy. Thanks to its high-quality scientific publications and universities, India remains second among middle-income economies in the quality of innovation. It maintains top ranks in several essential indicators such as productivity growth and exports of

services related to information and communication technologies. This year India reaches the 15th spot in global companies' R&D expenditures. It also features in the GII ranking on the world's top science and technology clusters, with Bengaluru, Mumbai and New Delhi included in the global top 100 clusters.

The **Islamic Republic of Iran** is the second most innovative country in the region and the third economy worldwide in science and engineering

dismissal, electricity output, and state of cluster development.

South East Asia, East Asia, and Oceania

Singapore (8), the Republic of Korea (11), and Hong Kong, China (13) are the three top-ranked economies in South East Asia, East Asia, and the Oceania region. China is number 14 following a rapid rise up the ranks of the Global Innovation Index in recent years.

most R&D-related indicators, as well as tertiary enrolment and number of researchers. Republic of Korea keeps its first spot in the world in national patent applications, industrial designs, and high-technology exports, relative to gross domestic product (GDP).

Vietnam (42, up three from GII 2018) and the **Philippines** (54, up 19 from 2018) make important progress this year. While some changes to the GII model explain some of the Philippines' leap, newly available metrics give a more thorough assessment of its innovative performance, which itself shows signs of progress. Both economies improve in most of the Global Innovation Index areas and gain top ranks in high-technology imports and exports.

Europe

Twelve of the top 20 Global Innovation Index' economies are in Europe.

Switzerland tops the Index for the ninth consecutive year. Its solid, strong performance translates to excellent innovation outcomes including patent applications, IP receipts and high-tech manufacturing products.

Sweden is the second-ranked economy worldwide in the Global Innovation Index 2019, thanks to its developed infrastructure, an innovative business sector and outputs from knowledge and technology. The country makes essential improvements in innovation outcomes and maintains a top position in patent applications filed via WIPO's Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), relative to gross domestic product.

About the Global Innovation Index

The core of the GII Report consists of a ranking of world economies' innovation capabilities and results. Recognising the key role of innovation as a

“The annual index is designed to help policymakers better understand innovation activity”

graduates as a proportion of the total population. It confirms its relatively strong performance in variables such as capital formation, patent applications, scientific and technical publications, productivity growth, high-technology manufactures, trademarks and industrial designs.

Northern Africa and Western Asia

Israel (10), **Cyprus** (28), and the **United Arab Emirates** (36) are the top three economies in this region.

Thanks to its innovative business sector and eminent research and development system, **Israel** produces high-quality innovation outcomes, including exports of services related to information and communication technologies and mobile applications.

The United Arab Emirates is in the top ten in the number of incoming tertiary students, R&D expenditures financed by the business sector, research talent in business enterprises, as well as cost of redundancy

China continues its upward rise in the Index and firmly establishes itself as a world innovation leader. The country maintains its first place in quality of innovation among middle-income economies for the seventh consecutive year. Also, the nation achieves top ranks in patents, industrial designs and trademarks by origin, as well as high-technology and creative goods exports. With 18 of the top 100 science and technology clusters, China is second only to the U.S. in this measurement.

Partly due to improved data coverage, **Singapore** moves to the eighth spot this year. It maintains leadership in institution-related indicators while becoming a world leader in, knowledge-intensive employment, and strategic alliances deals.

The Republic of Korea gains one position from last year, moving closer to the top ten. It becomes world leader in human capital and research, maintaining high ranks in

“Increased economic protectionism will lead to a slowdown of growth in innovation productivity”

driver of economic growth and prosperity, and the need for a broad vision of innovation applicable to developed and emerging economies, the GII includes indicators that go beyond the traditional measures of innovation, such as the level of research and development.

The GII is concerned primarily with improving the journey towards a better way to measure and understand innovation and with identifying targeted policies and good practices that foster innovation. The Index creates an environment in which innovation factors are under continual evaluation, including the following features:

129 countries/economy profiles, including data, ranks, and strengths and weaknesses.

80 data tables for indicators from over 30 international public and private sources, of which 57 are hard data, 18 composite indicators, and five survey questions.

A transparent and replicable computation methodology. Including 90 per cent confidence intervals for each index ranking (GII, output and input subindices) and an analysis of factors affecting year-on-year changes in rankings.

The GII 2019 is calculated as the average of two subindices. The Innovation Input Sub-Index gauges elements of the national economy which embody innovative activities grouped in five pillars: (1) Institutions, (2) Human capital and research, (3) Infrastructure, (4) Market sophistication, and (5) Business sophistication. The Innovation Output Sub-Index captures actual evidence of innovation results, divided into two pillars: (6) Knowledge and technology outputs and (7) Creative outputs.

For the ninth consecutive year, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission audited the Global Innovation Index calculations.

Top 20 in global ranking

- 1.** Switzerland (Number 1 in 2018)
- 2.** Sweden (3)
- 3.** United States of America (6)
- 4.** The Netherlands (2)
- 5.** United Kingdom (4)
- 6.** Finland (7)
- 7.** Denmark (8)
- 8.** Singapore (5)
- 9.** Germany (9)
- 10.** Israel (11)
- 11.** Korea, Republic of (12)
- 12.** Ireland (10)
- 13.** Hong Kong (China) (14)
- 14.** China (17)
- 15.** Japan (13)
- 16.** France (16)
- 17.** Canada (18)
- 18.** Luxemburg (15)
- 19.** Norway (19)
- 20.** Iceland (23)



One Year to Expo 2020 Dubai:

UAE READY TO RECONNECT THE WORLD

WITH ONE YEAR to go until Expo 2020 Dubai opens on 1 October 2021, organisers are committed to convening the global community in a spirit of collaboration and innovation to build a strong, sustainable future for everyone.

Releasing new images that show the advanced state of readiness across the site, Expo 2020 is fully prepared to host a global celebration of humanity's resilience, creativity, culture and innovation, a tribute to the strength of society, its ability to innovate, and pursuit of optimism in the face of adversity.

"Our leadership has spared no effort, guided us, and provided all resources to ensure that our World Expo will be a true expression of the UAE's values, reflecting its ambition to build a better future for us, the region and the world, a future of which coming generations will be proud," says Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation, and Director General of Expo 2020 Dubai Bureau.

"Our World Expo has a mission to inspire hope. In the coming weeks, we will begin to share new details and ideas about space, health and wellness, travel and connectivity and other subjects that sit at the heart of this Expo. We hope that people will join us to achieve our objectives to bring the world together and put humanity and the planet on the right path towards dignity for all."

Progress on the Expo site has continued at pace, with more than 210 million work hours completed to date. The work in 2020 has focused on landscaping and fit-out of Expo-owned buildings. Also, the construction of the Country Pavilions will be finalised by the end of the year.

The first World Expo in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region will run from 1 October 2021 until 31 March 2022. It will bring together over 190 countries to explore new ideas, form new connections and collectively tackle some of the greatest global challenges of our time.

Expo 2020 Dubai will bring together millions of people and the most outstanding innovations from around the globe, helping to shape a better world under the theme "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future".

"The six months will be an opportunity to be part of an unparalleled event and we are extending a warm Emirati welcome to the world," says Reem Al Hashimy.

Also, Expo 2020 will be an endless journey of discovery. Visitors will have access to the latest innovations and breakthroughs, with participants, including nations, multilateral organisations, businesses and educational institutions, coming together to highlight real-life solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

"Expo 2020's subthemes of opportunity, mobility and sustainability will inspire visitors to make

a conscious effort to think and live differently and give them renewed optimism that, through collaboration, it is possible to make a lasting change to the world," says Reem Al Hashimy.

The location for Dubai Expo 2020 will be near Al Maktoum International Airport in Dubai South.

About World Expos. In 1851 the Crystal Palace was the centrepiece of London's Great Exhibition, the first World Expo. It celebrated the human-made industrial wonders of a rapidly changing world. Architecture, contents and a theme, 'Industry of All Nations', were combined to create a big idea of nations meeting nations in shared technological and commercial progress.

In more recent years, participants in World Expos, including governments, international organisations and companies, have gathered to find solutions to universal challenges and to promote their achievements, products, ideas, innovations. And also, their national brand, and their nations as destinations for tourism, trade and investment.

World Expos are held under the auspices of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), the intergovernmental organisation responsible for overseeing and regulating international exhibitions ('Expos') and for fostering their core values of education, innovation and cooperation. Today, four types of Expos are organised under the BIE's auspices: World Expos, Specialised Expos, Horticultural Expos and the Triennale di Milano.



Why a Proposed Horn of Africa Bloc **COULD DESTABILISE THE LARGER REGION**

TEXT

Ingo Henneberg, Sören Stapel

RELATIONS in the Horn of Africa are complex and complicated. They are characterised by deeply ingrained rivalries between Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia in a conflict-ridden region. For decades, it has been known for civil war, conflict, and poor economic development.

Somalia is a textbook example of state collapse and the most fragile state in the world. During the 1990s, the state had disintegrated to the degree that the basic conditions and responsibilities of its government no longer functioned properly.

Eritrea and Ethiopia were at war for years. Ethiopia and Somalia also share a history of violent confrontation. One example of that ongoing

conflict is the struggle to control the Ogaden region.

But when Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed made his historic visit to Eritrea in 2018, the state of conflict between the two countries came to an end. Abiy Ahmed was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.

This peace deal started a dynamic which was followed by the revolution in Sudan and a recent peace deal in South Sudan.

And then on January 27, 2020, the leaders of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, President Isaias Afwerki, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo, held their third trilateral

“The new regional bloc will have a hard time building a reputation vis-a-vis the authority”

meeting. They proposed to form a new regional bloc, which has been referred to as the “Horn of Africa Cooperation”.

This new bloc would be an addition to their memberships in the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Eastern Africa Standby Force as well as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

The new bloc bears the risk of alienating the other countries in the East African region. It might also undermine the security efforts of other regional organisations. These include the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union, and the Eastern Africa Standby Force.

Thus, the promises and pitfalls of this new bloc could shape the regional architecture and cause new political challenges in the region.

In our recently published paper on the proposed bloc, we assess the factors that led to the proposal for a new regional bloc in the Horn of Africa. We discuss the potential outcomes given the complex security challenges, political tensions among the neighbours, and institutional environment in the region. We argue that security challenges in the Horn

of Africa and domestic concerns are core motivations for creating cooperation.

Regional cooperation addresses several key issues, including cross-border trade, and sustainable environment. It is also key to tackling peace and security threats.

A regional body dedicated to peace and security issues could help to address conflicts between the three states in the proposed of Horn of Africa Cooperation. It could also help them manage domestic security threats.

From an economic perspective, it is not clear how the three states could strengthen their economic ties. This is because a significant amount of trade in the region is small scale, local, informal, and sometimes illegal. In terms of trade, there is limited complementarity between the three states.

As the most advanced country in the bloc, landlocked Ethiopia has the interest to strengthen transportation links and access to the sea. This would be a pathway to the world market.

When it comes to Somalia, the country has neither a reliable economic base to export goods nor the financial resources to import them. In the case of Eritrea and Ethiopia, the

recently concluded conflict between the two countries means that economic ties have to be reestablished.

Nevertheless, closer cooperation in the Horn of Africa bears the potential to strengthen economic and trade relations between all three states.

The creation of a new regional bloc is also an opportunity for its leaders to show activity and success on the regional stage. Putting the Horn of Africa Cooperation proposal on the table could deflect from domestic challenges in the three countries, such as Ethiopia's current political crisis. With national elections in Ethiopia and Somalia approaching, Ahmed and Farmajo need to gain support for reelection.

In Eritrea, the authoritarian ruler Afwerki has reportedly pushed for the creation of the Horn of Africa regional bloc presumably as an opportunity to boost Eritrea's reputation regionally. It is also a chance to sideline the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which he has boycotted for several years due to its stance on basic principles of good governance and the influence of Kenya.

Once established, the Horn of Africa Cooperation would become a direct competitor of the

“A regional body dedicated to peace and security issues could help to address conflicts between the three states in the proposed of Horn of Africa Cooperation”

Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which is comprised of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. Its efforts to manage conflicts in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan have been relatively successful in recent years.

However, it lacks an economic integration perspective. It also suffers from ineffective governance structures and insufficient resources. The Horn of Africa Cooperation proposal could be an attempt to push for reform within the organisation.

But the new regional bloc will have a hard time building a reputation vis-a-vis the authority. The Horn of Africa Cooperation could also affect the East Africa Standby Force's and more importantly, the African Union's security efforts in the region through the African Peace and Security Architecture.

The cooperation also stands to alienate regional partners who face the potential loss of strategic influence in the region. Initial reactions from Kenya and Djibouti were frosty. Djibouti is a direct neighbour of all three states, and a potential candidate to join the new bloc.

Yet, Djibouti is home to the Intergovernmental Authority on

Development. It also hosts the US Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. Moreover, the Addis Ababa–Djibouti Railway is currently Ethiopia's only access to the sea, and Ethiopian business generates significant revenue for Djibouti's ports. Therefore, transport links through Eritrea or Somalia could undermine Djibouti's position as an economic and logistical hub.

For regional powerhouse Kenya, closer cooperation between the three neighbours could result in diminished influence in the region. As the dominating actor in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Kenya's influence in the Horn would be affected by a competing Horn of Africa Cooperation.

Additionally, Kenya's transport-link project with Ethiopia and South Sudan could be threatened by the new cooperation. Therefore, it's no surprise that the Horn of Africa Cooperation has been branded “anti-IGAD”.

Written by Ingo Henneberg and Sören Stapel, University of Freiburg, Germany. First published September 2020 by The Conversation.

The Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD): The vision is to be the premier Regional Economic Community for achieving peace and sustainable development in the region. IGAD's mission is to promote regional cooperation and integration to add value to Member States' efforts to attain peace, security and prosperity.



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Economics and the Sustainability Agenda **WILL INFLUENCE THE DEMAND FOR HYBRID EVENTS**

TEXT

Rod Kamleshwaran

BUSINESSES AROUND the world are trying to figure out how they can return from the immense damage inflicted by Covid-19. In an environment where a vaccine is yet to be found, there is extreme uncertainty, making planning very difficult. The shadow of the pandemic will remain even after the vaccine. Consumer behaviour will continue to change.

In the Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition industry responses will vary. Operations will resume with new protocols. Reactions will range from building retrofit works and technology upgrades to staff reskilling and redesign of processes for agility and resilience. There will be accelerated digital adoption.

Signals of increased demand will likely come suddenly and in clusters. It will require an aggressive ramp-up. Business events venues have a history of slow delivery on technology. Venues that act with urgency on digital initiatives are likely to gain a competitive advantage. Virtual event technology is only one aspect of the digital playbook for these venues.

Technology will be central to every interaction, from marketing and selling to planning and hosting the event. It will facilitate regulatory compliance and enhance the customer experience. Some solutions will even offer revenue growth opportunities. Some of the digital solutions expected from venues include:

- Remote selling and virtual venue tours. Planner access to a virtual version of function rooms with seating configurations, lighting, etcetera.
- Contactless registration and tracing via mobiles and kiosks.
- Live analytics via beacons and mobiles. Venue navigation, heat-maps and crowd management tools to influence visitor journey and social distancing.

industry is in digital infancy. It will take time to optimise it.

Economics and the sustainability agenda will also influence the demand for the hybrid. Venues that offer all three options, in-person event, hybrid event, and virtual event, will likely have the edge over rivals. Once venues invest in technology for hybrid events, they will have the technology infrastructure to offer to those who want it for virtual-only meetings.

Content is key. But delivery is also important. Delivering a professional quality virtual webcasting or live-stream event requires a studio set up with broadcast technology. It needs professional staging and production crew.

The initial cost of virtual events can be high with issues monetising it. But as virtual events mature the cost of access and pervasiveness will improve. The virtual experience may be enhanced with immersive virtual reality, augmented reality, holographic teleconferencing, gamification, and more.

Oslofjord Convention Centre in Norway is one of the early adopters in this space offering hybrid event options well before Covid-19. It boasts a 360-degree broadcast TV studio, 120m LED screen, advanced AV, lighting and in-house production crew. It can support up to 3,000 live streams and 10,000 viewers. Also, Sands Expo and Convention Centre in Singapore has launched a hybrid event broadcast studio with live-streaming capabilities including 3D stage and holograms seen as a first for the meetings industry.

To keep up during Covid-19, companies have moved fast. Speed will continue to be of the essence. Along with our optimism for a vaccine, we have to be conscious of the downside risk that effective vaccination may not be achieved until late 2021. Can we afford to wait? Urgent action is not without blind spots and unknowns, but the price of waiting may be far greater.

By Rod Kamleshwaran, Gaining Edge.

“Technology will be central to every interaction, from marketing and selling to planning and hosting the event”

- Virtual event solutions. Software plus broadcast studios, and tech crew for prerecorded events and live streaming.

Physical interaction remains powerful. Virtual event technology is not new, yet in-person events have remained endemic. But a digital shift is now inevitable.

Virtual events will not overtake in-person events. Virtual events are peaking in a Covid world. But once Covid passes, a modest share will opt for virtual-only mode. The vast majority will return as in-person or hybrid events where virtual complement physical. But a major delay in a vaccine could swing more events to virtual-only mode. Virtual and hybrid events extend the audience reach and content offer.

Ticketed events like sports and entertainment have good experience with hybrid events. But the Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition

Almost all of us have participated in a virtual event when joining an online webinar or video conference. But these are short single sessions.

As we progress to full or multi-day conferences and exhibitions, the level of complexity rises. These are built around a live, complex agenda with keynotes, breakouts, displays, and more. They include real-time content, on-demand content, networking, 3D virtual booths, and more. Virtual event software offering this experience for conventions is limited, and even more, limited for exhibitions.

Engaging with a virtual audience is not easy. The audience has a limited attention span and varying levels of interest. They expect to see more than a speaker's face and a powerpoint. They expect a quality simulation of the live event, akin to a TV show production. Virtual event software on its own is often not enough.

The Kaohsiung Protocol

IDENTIFIES TRENDS AND KEY STRATEGIES

THIS YEAR, the ICCA Congress transforms into a hybrid experience.

With 800 attendees, 30 sessions, 40 speakers, 80 associations, and a six weeklong congress programme ICCA are reimagining the future of global events.

As part of the interactive congress *Road to Kaohsiung* programme, Taiwan invites the global ICCA community to connect and explore new ideas, formats and technologies.

The Kaohsiung Protocol is a framework identifying significant trends and key strategies which will enable the international meetings industry to thrive, now and into the future. You can join a live event at a regional hub on 1–3 November. The hub locations are Cape Town, Kuching, Latin America, Luxembourg, Malaga, North America and Riyadh.

In the first half of the year, Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) postponed or cancelled its trade shows considering the health and safety of exhibitors and visitors, as well as following the Central Epidemic Prevention Policy.

To provide the latest information about Taiwan International Trade Shows to domestic and international exhibitors and buyers, TAITRA launched a series of integrated online services. It is including Online 2D/VR Exhibition, Preshow Online Sourcing Meetings, Taiwan Trade Shows Webinars, TTS Insights Online Series (in Chinese). Online New Product Launches to meet exhibitors' demand

for international marketing and buyers' procurement needs.

The exhibition organiser offers exhibitors participating in this year's 19 trade shows online services. Exhibitors that have used the service are, for example, Taipei Cycle, Autotronics Taipei, AG Expo, Computex Taipei, Medical Taiwan, Foodtech Taipei, Bio/Pharmatech Taiwan, Taipei Pack and Taiwan Horeca.

Amid the human and economic toll inflicted by Covid-19, Taiwan's response to the pandemic stands out as a model for the way forward. While most countries, including some of the world's biggest economies with vastly greater resources at their disposal, continue to struggle with fresh outbreaks, Taiwan has managed to flatten the curve.

"Taiwan has responded on both humanitarian grounds and as a member of the global community. To that end, TAITRA has established the 'Anti-Covid-19 Pavilion,' an online platform that integrates more than 2,000 industries, manufacturers and medical institutions related to pandemic prevention," says Walter Yeh, TAITRA's President and CEO. "The Pavilion provides one-stop medical resources to the world for helping fight this pandemic."

Taiwan's government achieved early success in limiting the outbreak within its shores with a range of proactive measures, including educating the public and implementing stringent protocols around quarantining, testing and treating its population.

While some companies are intensifying efforts to produce safety equipment, such as face masks and personal protective equipment (PPE), others are offering a variety of technological solutions. These include thermal imaging devices to detect fevers, robots to assist healthcare professionals. These testing kits expedite results and harnessing cloud technology to deliver solutions such as telemedicine and remote learning tools, which are proving invaluable at a time when most of the world's population is under lockdown.

Now, nearly eight months since the first case emerged in Taiwan, life has mostly reverted to normal, with bars, stores, restaurants and professional sport all open for business, albeit with the requisite precautions.

There are three key lessons to take from Taiwan's experience and replicate them for an effective response, according to Walter Yeh. These are contact-tracing, testing and quarantine or isolation-treatment.

"Effective execution of these measures hinges on effective leadership and strong public health infrastructure. Taiwan is ready and open to provide insights into epidemic prevention. Other nations could learn from Taiwan's success, and together, we can make this happen," says Walter Yeh.



Business Meetings MIGHT MOVE TO A MORE HYBRID SET-UP

TEXT

Busi Lethole

AS CHAIR of the global steering committee of the Radisson Hotel Group, which includes over a thousand hotels worldwide, Federico J González must have his hands full, especially at this time when the hospitality industry is in the doldrums globally. The marketer and author, who's the President and CEO of Radisson Hospitality, tells us more about how hotels will change permanently.

What is your forecast for the hotel economy and your group as a whole?

"I believe that hotel operations will change permanently. We have all had to adapt and act together as a global community for the health and safety of our neighbours, families and friends. Operations have and will continue to change as we continue to apply the Radisson Hotels Safety Protocol and recommendations of the World Health Organization and local health authorities. These will change hotel operations such as

check-in, F&B outlets, gyms, spas and more concerning social distancing, maximum capacity for common spaces and increased disinfection and cleaning. There will be a heightened awareness around safety.

"That will be the most important deciding factor for travellers which needs to be at the front of mind operationally. The Radisson Hotel Group is one of the largest hotel groups in the world. For us, it's imperative to ensure a common high standard of hygiene, safety and sanitation that is standardised and implemented across the globe and validated by a third-party like SGS (global inspection, verification, testing and certification company)."

What about the tourism industry in general and the new thinking that will revive it?

"There are so many countries, companies and airlines that rely on travel, tourism and the hospitality industry.

“Covid-19 has brought out the best in many people around the world”

Many airlines and hotels are encouraging guests to start travelling again to reignite the travel industry and its future recovery. There is a strong appetite for travel, and it's great to see hotels reopen and people travelling again.

“Looking ahead, health and safety will continue to be the most important deciding factor when booking a holiday. We are seeing people take smaller trips where they can get in their car, a train or a plane for a short journey. They want to ensure they will feel safe before getting on a long-haul flight. Given the economic climate post-Covid-19, many people may not be able to travel as much, which means they will either look to take smaller mini-breaks, invest in one holiday or spend the time discovering their own country.

“The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology within businesses, small or large, and we all had to learn how to work from home full-time from one day to the other, so I believe the way people meet will also change. There will always be a need for physical meetings and interactions. Still, business meetings might move to a more hybrid set-up, maybe with smaller teams getting together

in one location and connecting with the others via videoconference.”

What are the opportunities/trends coming out of this crisis?

“Our whole world has been greatly impacted and the expansive global scale of Covid-19 is unprecedented. We have seen positive news coming from Asia and Europe with the reopening of some of our hotels and we will see further hotels start to open up as restrictions are lifted.

“I feel there is a real opportunity for brands to stand by and clearly communicate their brand values and positioning to consumers. Consumers need to believe in your brand, in your health and safety commitment and that you will deliver on your promises.”

What is your strategy for ‘doomsday’ should the worst happen?

“Before Covid-19, we had a strong crisis management process and flexible cost model in place. Of course, no one could have predicted the global scale of this pandemic and the daily changes to our business, the world and life. With our global scale of over 1,100 hotels in operation and another 300 in the pipeline across the world, we had a global macro viewpoint of the pandemic and the different

responses. We also have the full support of our shareholders for any financial needs until the expected end of the crisis.”

What lessons do you think are there in it for all of us?

“Covid-19 has brought out the best in many people around the world. It has been uplifting to see communities come together in support of key workers and medical professionals, rallying around each other. We have seen this, especially in the hospitality industry, which has been one of the most affected.

“I hope that we don't forget this remarkable resilience, commitment, integrity and, most importantly, kindness and generosity towards the local communities where we operate and live in.”

Written by Busi Lethole, Forbes Africa



Geneva International Association Forum

A GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING

EARLIER THIS YEAR, The *Geneva International Association Forum* (GIAF) was launched by the Association World Foundation, in collaboration with the Geneva Convention Bureau and Congrex Switzerland.

The two-day event brings together representatives of international and European associations, nonprofit organisations, federations, professional societies, NGO's and universities. Its primary goal is to establish an annual global leading platform for knowledge sharing in one of the world's flagship host destinations for associations, Geneva. Kai Troll is the President of Association World and spokesperson of GIAF:

"The Covid-19 pandemic remains highly active and unpredictable. We have carefully analysed the situation and worked closely with all relevant stakeholders and partners to consider a range of possibilities. We can therefore inform that due to the given latest rise in numbers in the Geneva

area especially, we have decided to move GIAF to 5–6 November 2020.

"Whilst most delegates are Geneva-based attendees, or from the area, the health and safety of our association's peers and friends as well as of our speakers is the utmost importance. People should feel comfortable to attend a public event such as GIAF. Given the developments, we couldn't guarantee that, and a timely decision is therefore necessary. Running GIAF virtually would theoretically be an option. However, our philosophy has always been that GIAF shall be the, or one of the very first events, to bring back association friends and colleagues together again."

The congress in November will be a hybrid event, and people from outside Switzerland can join from wherever they are.

The *Geneva International Association Forum* is promoting a #RiskFreeRegistration, and

according to that motto, they have offered all registries who are unable to join the event a full refund and have communicated that to each individual in a personal message.

"We offer a programme, which will remain as much as possible, perhaps with slight adjustments here and there, if necessary. Together with our hospitality partner, the Intercontinental Geneva, we go beyond the standard measures and procedures to ensure your health and safety at the congress. In our mind, each attending will make a positive difference to other association peers. Benefitting from a valuable exchange, sharing our experiences and learnings, establish new partnership and hopefully creating more of an association community that remains aligned. Each and everyone attending will make GIAF complete," says Kai Troll.



Coronavirus Pandemic WILL NOT BE A PARADIGM SHIFT IN HOSPITALITY

TEXT Jill Menze

ALTHOUGH THE ONSET of the Covid-19 pandemic brought travel and hospitality to a near standstill, hospitality and nightclub legend Ian Schrager (Studio 54, New York) believe it is only a matter of time before things return to normal.

Specifically, a return to the “same normal,” not a “new normal,” Ian Schrager explains, speaking during the *Boutique Lifestyle Leaders Association Digital Summit* in September.

“It’s just a question of when. There may be certain adjustments that need to be made, but I don’t believe in paradigm shifts. I don’t think all the pundits know what they’re talking about because there is no precedent, no frame of reference,” he says.

“In the history of humanity, I don’t think there’s been one event dating back to biblical times that have changed things. We always go right back to the way we were, except that we make certain evolved adjustments. I’m certain that it will happen again.”

Ian Schrager says technology represents a new frontier for hospitality companies as they look toward rebuilding following the crisis.

“Technology is making an impact in the lifestyle business in the same way entertainment and design has in the past,” he says, referencing the boutique hotel concept he and his partner Steve Rubell helped pioneer.

“Technology has to be done with intelligence, not contrived.

Technology that’s smart and either makes your stay cheaper or easier. If it doesn’t fit one of those two criteria, there’s no reason for technology for technology’s sake,” says Ian Schrager.

He believes that, because of the pandemic, people will be more likely to embrace new technologies. Travellers were resistant to automated check-in at hotels at first, for example, but because of heightened hygiene concerns brought on by Covid-19, they will now want touchless solutions. He cites the technology powering digital check-in and check-out as a solution that’s useful, “not like some of the contrived technology things like mood boards in the lobby that doesn’t do anything to improve the stay”.

The future, Ian Schrager believes, is “invisible check-in and invisible checkout,” which will make the hotel experience more seamless in a similar way to how the concepts of hotels, residences and offices have blurred at properties.

“The difficult thing about technology is that in this country, the big companies don’t cooperate. The United States is the country that invests in technology but can’t use it because everything is so competitive. It’s quite frustrating.”

As travellers begin booking rooms again, hoteliers will need to be sensitive to health and wellbeing concerns; however, Schrager doesn’t believe

every aspect of the hotel experience has to change fundamentally. Buffets, for example, might evolve into a format more similar to automats. Ian Schrager says scaled-back housekeeping services, to prevent cleaners from interacting with guests during a stay, make sense from a health perspective.

“It is money-saving. I wonder if a lot of people will be doing it for that reason rather than health concerns.”

Asked about the future of business travel and meetings and events, Ian Schrager says the shift to working remotely does not sound the death knell for meetings in the hotel business.

“I’ve been hearing the death knell when they invented faxes, and when they invented cellphones, and when they invented the internet. Things are going to be changing somewhat because of the new work-from-home technology, and we have to respond to that, but it’s not the end of business travel.”

Ian Schrager made the decision to close his Public hotel in New York City amid the pandemic.

“It is the first time in my whole career I’ve ever shut anything down. I am not enthusiastic about opening until people feel safe travelling again. I’m convinced we’ll return to normal, and the normalcy will be something we’re quite comfortable with.”

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Dubai Association Centre

PROVIDES STRONG PLATFORM FOR RECOVERY AND GROWTH

DUBAI ASSOCIATION Centre (DAC) has supported its associations through the challenges posed by the global Covid-19 pandemic. DAC now has 69 licensed associations following the opening of the centre's new headquarters in One Central, Dubai World Trade Centre, with more lining up to join over the coming months.

The centre is poised to see a substantial uplift in newly licensed associations through the rest of 2020, having supported its registered associations through the global Covid-19 pandemic. And with the challenges faced globally putting a renewed spotlight on the need for knowledge sharing and collaboration, DAC's ability to bolster the contribution being made by associations in key professions and sectors to the development of the city's knowledge economy is set to be more important than ever before.

Established in 2014 as a joint initiative between the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) and Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), DAC now has a total of 69 licensed associations from different industries. Newly joined associations in 2020 include: The International Chamber of Commerce UAE Chapter, Arab Association of Surgical & Medical Aesthetics,

Sharia Professionals Association and International Council of Museums UAE Chapter.

A further eight associations are already set to join by the end of 2020, with ongoing conversations with more prospective members. Interest has continued to grow following the successful second edition of the Dubai Association Conference that took place in December 2019, and the inauguration of DAC's new headquarters in One Central, Dubai World Trade Centre. The new DAC headquarters aims to offer registered associations a fresh new space from which they can service members across the region, ensuring access to ecosystems that can support their growth and success. The platform also offers associations the opportunity for networking and knowledge-sharing, to further boost progression across industries and create a positive social impact.

Issam Kazim, Chief Executive Officer of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing:

"At DAC, we recognise that associations play a significant role as catalysts for knowledge transfer and industry growth and we would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newly licensed associations and look forward to seeing them benefit

from and contribute to the numerous opportunities Dubai has to offer as a global knowledge and business events hub. We look forward to building relationships with more associations, both from around the world and those already with a presence in Dubai. Also, to give them a better understanding of the benefits of registering with DAC."

Among DAC's initiatives over recent months has been a series of virtual round tables, providing updates on Dubai and the UAE's efforts to fight Covid-19. The impact of the global pandemic on the association sector and how associations can deal with the disruption caused, and testimonials from DAC-registered associations on their experiences and efforts.

Another round table provided an update on the reopening of various economic sectors in Dubai, including the travel and tourism sector, and a panel debate on how associations had been navigating the new norm. Participants included: David Macadam, CEO, The Middle East Council of Shopping Centres & Retailers (MECS+R); Alaa Al Boali, Director, Middle East Facility Management (MEFMA), Dr Yasser Farahat, Secretary-General, Arab Association of Urology and Mohammed Bin

“We have seen the association community in Dubai come together to tackle new challenges”

Sulaiman, Senior Manager Business Relations, Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Over the coming months, DAC is set to continue with efforts to support both its current registered associations and outreach to associations and organisations both already present in Dubai and around the world that may be considering joining. The centre is also highlighting thought leadership in the association's space through a series of specially commissioned videos featuring insights from experts based both in Dubai and around the world.

“Associations around the world have shown resilience as they responded to the changing needs of their members in the wake of Covid-19. We have seen the association community in Dubai come together to tackle new challenges, share knowledge and become more efficient as they shift activities to digital channels,” says Hassan Al Hashemi, Vice President of International Relations at Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

“The ability of the Dubai Association Centre to grow its membership during difficult circumstances is a testament to Dubai's reputation as a preferred hub for international and

professional associations. We are closely watching economic developments and their impact on the emirate's association sector and exploring new ways that we can support DAC members and help them prepare for a post-Covid-recovery.”

The opening of DAC's new headquarters in DWTC's One Central development at the end of 2019 was another critical step in fostering a strong association community in the city and providing registered associations with an environment which allows them to deliver the best possible service to their regional members and giving them access to vital networks that support their growth.

“Existing and newly registered associations continue to take advantage of the enabling platform that DAC offers. Dubai World Trade Centre facilitates through its modern facilities and well-established business and knowledge ecosystem, and the growing interest from associations around the world is a further testament to Dubai's enduring appeal as an international business destination,” says Mahir Julfar, Executive Vice President, Venue Services Management, Dubai World Trade Centre.

The Dubai Association Centre was formed to support and license

regional and international associations in setting up their presence in Dubai. DAC functions as a platform for dialogue and education for associations interested in exploring opportunities in the Middle East Region. Through this initiative, the entity aims to contribute towards building an association community that drives the knowledge economy in the United Arab Emirates and the wider region.



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Focus on Helping Customers

LOWER CARBON FOOTPRINT

SANDS EXPO and Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, is now a carbon neutral venue. The integrated resort invests in carbon neutrality to transform events at one of Asia's most sustainable venues. This autumn the centre gears up for pilot events involving up to 250 persons. One hundred per cent of the gas and electricity consumed in the convention centre is carbon neutral.

The convention centre has become the first carbon-neutral business events venue in Singapore, giving another boost to the centre's capability to host innovative and sustainably-driven events.

As Sands Expo gears up for a gradual reopening, clients can conduct meetings and conferences that are 100 per cent carbon neutral and at no additional cost. Already a LEED-Platinum and ISO20121-certified venue, the centre's carbon neutral status is a step towards Singapore's transition to a low-carbon economy.

Kevin Teng, Executive Director of Sustainability, Marina Bay Sands:

"Being carbon neutral allows us to raise the bar for sustainable events and demonstrate our commitment to managing our environmental footprint effectively with our partners. Together with our resource-efficient

infrastructure and customisable meeting solutions, our carbon neutral venue adds another dimension to our suite of sustainable event solutions.

"From 2012, we have reduced our carbon footprint by 33 per cent, and we will continue to explore industry-leading methods further to decouple our carbon footprint from our business growth."

Since its early days, Marina Bay Sands has invested in energy-efficient infrastructure to reduce its carbon footprint. For example, its S\$25 million Intelligent Building Management System has helped save over 7.4 million kWh of energy annually since 2012. Submetered floors at the integrated resort's (IR) business events venue also allow event organisers effectively track energy usage across specific areas.

Marina Bay Sands' latest investment in Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) and carbon offsets covers 100 per cent of the carbon emissions generated from the meeting venue's gas and electricity consumption. The RECs are being purchased from Sembcorp Solar (Sembcorp), as part of the IR's commitment supporting the development of renewable energy in Singapore. Each REC represents the environmental benefits of one

megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity generated from a renewable energy source.

From 2019 to 2022, Marina Bay Sands is committed to purchasing an annual average of approximately 25,000 RECs, based on IR's yearly energy consumption levels over the last five years. It corresponds to electricity generated by various solar rooftop projects in Singapore which have been developed, installed, owned and operated by Sembcorp.

Jen Tan, Senior Vice President, Head of Solar (Singapore & SEA), Sembcorp Industries, says:

"Our focus is to help customers lower their carbon footprint. Our engagement with Marina Bay Sands is a good example of our commitment to helping businesses meet their green energy needs and their sustainability targets. Carbon-neutral venues are a growing trend to promote environmental sustainability in the meetings industry. We are delighted to be able to extend such green options to Marina Bay Sands and its customers."

Since 2013, Marina Bay Sands has been enhancing clients' sustainable meeting experiences through the Sands ECO360 green meetings programme, ranging from sustainable advisory services, comprehensive

waste management initiatives to post-event impact statements. Over the years, its sustainable meetings programme has won several accolades including the UFI Sustainable Development Award in 2015.

The integrated resort (IR) is also offsetting its carbon footprint through the purchase of carbon credits to fund certified projects that reduce carbon emissions, such as wind energy projects.

be equipped with teleconferencing capabilities, as virtual conferences become the norm in the current age of travel restrictions.

New prototypes being developed and tested for the resumption of safe tradeshows, such as meeting pods and exhibition booths with plexiglass guards, will be tested out at Travel Revive, a new event taking place at Marina Bay Sands in November.

According to Ong Wee Min, Vice-

As with the rest of the Integrated Resort, Sands Expo, which is already certified SG Clean as well as by Bureau Veritas, will enjoy enhanced hygiene protocols. In addition to more regular disinfection measures, all audio-visual equipment will be cleaned and sanitised after each use.

Electrostatic sprayers will also disinfect meeting services spaces including the business centre, podiums, waiting areas, halls and lobbies.

The F&B team has also redesigned the way food will be served to delegates. All meeting buffets will be transformed into set lunches instead of self-service, to minimise physical interactions and social mingling.

“Having an operationally safe venue and sanitised operations will be the baseline moving forward for all venues hosting business events. It is the collaborative partnership that we have with our clients, partners and stakeholders that will enable us to cocreate new experiences for our respective client communities and truly set us apart. Together, we will reimagine the future, just like how we redefined business events experiences in the last ten years together,” says Ong Wee Min.

“Clients can conduct meetings and conferences that are 100 per cent carbon neutral and at no additional cost”

The IR is working towards welcoming business events of up to 250 attendees upon obtaining the necessary approvals from the Singapore Government. These pilot events must demonstrate the ability to implement Safe Management Measures to ensure the health and safety of the delegates in attendance. One of the pilot events taking place under this arrangement is the Singapore International Energy Week Conference 2020.

Apart from being a carbon neutral venue, events held at Sands Expo will be reimaged for a safer delegate experience. Each event will feature reduced capacities and measures to adhere to safe distancing requirements, from onsite registration processes, event queue management systems to redesigned event set-ups.

Theatre-style set-ups will observe government guidelines on capacity and prevailing safe distancing rules. Banquet table capacity will be reduced, with the distance between tables doubled. Meeting rooms will

President of Conventions & Exhibitions, Marina Bay Sands, business events is currently experiencing an accelerated digital transformation.

“Traditional event set-ups no longer serve the needs of event planners in this new environment. Digitisation, the flexibility of venue spaces as well as health and safety protocols will be event planners’ key priorities following the resumption of the industry. Marina Bay Sands is investing in the future and has further expanded our in-house capabilities to meet the demands of the evolving landscape.”

It includes its new state-of-the-art Hybrid Broadcast Studio, adding to its suite of first-to-market lighting, video, sound and logistics equipment.

“We will continue to introduce technological innovation to the business event industry by offering AR, VR, XR and holographic telepresence capabilities for the Hybrid Broadcast Studio to create a unified experience for both in-person and virtual audiences,” says Ong Wee Min.

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Drivers OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY

TEXT

Rohit Talwar

THE ECONOMIC recovery has been a central topic for our latest book *After-shocks and Opportunities – Scenarios for a Post-Pandemic Future*, the associated Launch Summit, and our regular Sunday evening webinars. What's clear is that the picture could differ significantly from nation to nation. Across the book chapters and webinars, there has been a lot of discussion about the overall shape and nature of the economic recovery, the underlying factors that could play the most significant influencing role for different countries, and the scenarios that could result. Here we provide a short overview of each of these elements.

The shape of the recovery The decline in GDP has been predicted to reach up to six per cent globally. And with a fall of up to 40 per cent in the worst-hit nations, and contractions of 10–30 per cent in the more developed economies. Many government leaders around the world have argued passionately that the bounceback will be just as strong with a V-shaped recovery curve. Others suggest that the period at the bottom of the curve

could last longer, giving rise to a U-shaped recovery curve.

Some are suggesting that the downturn could be longer and deeper, turning into an elongated U- or L-shaped curve, the latter having no recovery path for the foreseeable future. The most common view is that many countries could be looking at an initial bounce-back, followed by a decline. Then potentially a series rises and declines until there is eventually enough commitment, momentum, and government support to sustain the rise back out, giving a potential w, ww, or www shaped recovery.

Baseline scenarios The opening chapter of the book examines four possible methods for how these factors could come together and how different economies could evolve as a result in the next two, three years. The four scenarios could play out globally and at a national level, with other countries being in each plan at the same time:

- The Long Goodbye (poorly contained pandemic, deep and prolonged downturn)

- The VIP Economy (poorly contained pandemic, vibrant economic rebound)
- Safe but Hungry (eradication of the pandemic, deep and prolonged downturn)
- Inclusive Abundance (eradication of the pandemic, vibrant economic rebound)

The critical underlying forces identified as having the most relevance in determining the possible paths to recovery include:

Consumer spending In the relatively near term as the lockdown lifts, we will get a sense of the scale of the spending recovery and how long it might last. What's critical here is that while many have had their incomes savaged, across different countries somewhere between 30–70 per cent of people haven't had their incomes affected at all and their behaviour will be key. Many will be tempted in by retailers offering deep discounting in summer sales to make up for lost revenues in the lockdown. If the resulting initial burst of activity is followed by sustained consumer spending, this

could drive business confidence and accelerate the path out of the downturn. However, any signs of nervousness could spread rapidly and have a dampening effect.

Employment The extent to which furloughed jobs are reinstated or turn into redundancies is critical here alongside the return to work of those made redundant during a lockdown. In April, the International Labor

save are both being monitored closely. Savings levels have indeed risen in several places. Many governments and central banks have looked at the idea of negative interest rates as a way of positively discouraging savings and influencing citizens to spend instead. This drives associated concerns over the potential for inflation and people being left with no financial security blanket.

their jobs and the new opportunities emerging.

Business budgets The level of business spending and investment as we come out of lockdown will be central as it is in every economic downturn. The recovery is very reliant on optimistic businesses that are willing to commit to investments, maintain operating budgets, and continue hiring. The risk is that lower expense budgets and delayed investments in both 2020 and 2021 will have serious knock-on effects across the economy. A natural reaction for firms seeing declining order books is to put a brake on their spending, which then ripples through their supply chains. A key factor here will also be the access to capital and in particular bank lending. Any reluctance to lend could have a noticeable and rapid dampening effect on economic recovery.

“The extent to which the wealthiest nations and donors might collaborate to support those in most need will have a crucial bearing”

Organization estimated that lost working hours worldwide equated to 305 million jobs and warned that up to half the global workforces were at risk. There are also concerns that, in many countries, these losses seem to be disproportionately impacting women, minorities, and those on the lowest incomes.

The picture varies worldwide. For example, having lost over 40 million jobs to Covid-19, the US is experiencing signs of hope, with 2.5 million new jobs being added in May 2020. In the UK, around 8.7 million are furloughed, and up to two million of these jobs are considered at risk, alongside hundreds of thousands of self-employed workers and small firm owners whose businesses may not return.

Savings rates The level of uncertainty over jobs and incomes and the extent to which that drives people to

Business recovery Close attention is being paid to how the most affected businesses bounce back and whether this drives job creation or further redundancies. Some countries are anticipating up to 40 per cent failure rates as firms discover that they are no longer viable particularly with social distancing rules in effect. Major firms from airlines to oil companies and financial services are already starting to announce worldwide job cuts which could further dampen consumer spending.

Sectors such as hospitality, entertainment, travel, aviation, and tourism are seen as particularly vulnerable. The question here is what the impact might be of government stimulus investments and private investment in new science and technology growth sectors, and how quickly they might come through. The risk is one of a skills mismatch between those losing

Automation A trend towards business automation and adoption of artificial intelligence was already underway before the pandemic. The lockdown has seen an acceleration, with a particular focus on deploying physical robots, the use of robotic process automation of many administrative tasks, and generally removing human involvement in service roles, driving the growth on contactless and paperless processes in everything from airports to retail. Such developments could improve efficiency and profitability, create new specialist roles for those developing and deploying the solutions, but potentially drive higher unemployment due to job displacement.

Retraining Significant job opportunities are emerging in new sectors. These require people to be retrained into the skills necessary; the speed at which this can happen will be crucial.

“Perhaps the single biggest factor of all will be how governments choose to steer the recovery and handle the costs of the health and economic emergency”

There are clear questions over who funds such training, with many arguing that for governments, the short-term retraining costs would be greatly outweighed by the long-term savings on unemployment benefits and the inflow of new incomes taxes.

Government spending and

action Perhaps the single biggest factor of all will be how governments choose to steer the recovery and handle the costs of the health and economic emergency. From unemployment benefits and healthcare to education and infrastructure, the pressure will be on governments to spend and invest heavily to drive economic activity, build business and consumer confidence, and encourage banks to lend more readily. Hence, some governments may look to spend their way out of the downturn.

Government spending-led recovery could see major investment in physical and digital (for example broadband) infrastructure, business support, R&D programmes, green growth initiatives, and training and education at every level. This could extend to health and care systems, and enhanced preparedness in resilience and contingency preparation

for future health and environmental shocks. Funding this will require some mix of debt, quantitative easing/the printing of money, and public-private finance initiatives. All of this would be predicated on the hope that growth will deliver the necessary tax revenues to pay the interest bill and start chipping away at the levels of accumulated debt.

Concerns will grow over nations with the most precarious of economies and the long-term social, economic, and environmental cost of any deals they might sign with those willing to bail them out. Of course, some may decide that the markets must take care of themselves and focus instead on austerity measures designed to reduce the scale of debt and associated interest payments. The extent to which the wealthiest nations and donors might collaborate to support those in most need will have a crucial bearing on the extent to which a truly sustainable global recovery can be affected.

Written by Rohit Talwar, Fast Future



PHOTO Sara Appelgren

ROGER KELLERMAN *Publisher, business intelligence analyst, trend creator, educator and networker. Has over 30 years' experience of the global meeting industry. Founder of Mötesindustriveckan. twitter.com/thekellerman*

No Vision, NO FUTURE

THERE IS an old saying: "A person without a vision is a person without a future. A person without a future will always return to the past." And Helen Keller wrote: The only thing worse than being blind is having sight with no vision. (Helen Keller was the first deaf-blind person in the US to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.)

It's easy to look at the lack of results that the majority of people experience (or don't experience) as a result of not taking action. People buy products and don't use them, study courses and don't implement what they learn and even go as far as spending thousands of dollars on university degrees and never use the skills and knowledge they spent so much money to acquire.

I believe if you analyse why people fail, it's not because they were unable to take action, it's because they wake up each day and choose to do the wrong actions for their given goals.

Dig a little deeper still, and you finally hit the real reason why people are unhappy and fail to achieve goals, they don't really know what they want.

Then lift this to a country, almost anywhere when I think about it. Why does the development of the world look so ominous? This even though we all know (well, should know is perhaps closer to the truth), at least

we who have read Hans Rosling's *Factfulness*, then we know that the world has de facto progressed very much. Unfortunately, however, there are a growing number of leaders in many countries who are trying to make time go backwards by creating dictatorships where they want to decide for themselves and abolish democracy.

But what do we do in the meeting and event industry to counteract this, because meetings and events are in themselves keys to democracy and development?

To create a vision or several visions, you need analysis of the surrounding world, to obtain an analysis of the surrounding world, you need time and new knowledge. We have somehow got more of time; it seems through the ongoing pandemic. And of course, many webinars have become so much better than they were just a year ago. Those who are worse off, we must learn to leave behind because we are powerfully moving forward despite appalling unemployment and the closure of hotels and congress facilities. However, we must not stare blindly at short-term pessimism.

We must look ahead and be able to look forward, and it is time to create a vision for the global meeting and event industry. We must think at least

ten years ahead, maybe also 20 and 30 years ahead. Business events have the most critical keys to education, knowledge, networking of individuals, companies, organisations, universities and entire communities.

So, get yourself a vision for your own life. What do you want to be in ten years? What kind of society do you want to live in? I have been in the middle of healthy development paths in the global meeting and event industry for over 40 years. It's a long time. This year is the toughest so far, but we will soon have it behind us. Sure, the pandemic will be with us longer than we want, but we'll take it back. Create your vision and start getting the tools to turn your vision into an action plan.



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