

**THE GROUP OF SEVEN (G7) AND 2021 SUMMIT'S PLAN OF ACTION
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

BY

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Abstract

The G7 Leaders' Summit of 2021 was presided over by the UK with aims to unite leading democracies to help the world build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and create a greener, more prosperous future and build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper gives an analogy of the submission of the June 2021, G7 summit that held at Cornwall explaining the Cornwall summit in details, its agenda, the Seven ministerial Tracks to run throughout the year, each supporting a core part of the agenda to lead the world's efforts to build back better from coronavirus as well as how the UK Presidency determined to draw on expertise and advice from all sectors across each nation, working with G7 Engagement Groups, as follows: Women 7, Youth 7, Business 7, Civil Society 7, Labor 7 and Science 7. The work adopts the intergovernmentalist theory of integration. All available secondary sources were utilized and the paper discovers that, Ministers engagement like the Finance, Trade, Digital and Technology Ministers' meetings will build back better by promoting future prosperity and championing free trade, the Health Ministers' meeting will build back better by protecting people's health and global resilience against future pandemics, the Climate and Environment Ministers' meetings will build back better by protecting the planet and the Foreign, Development and Interior Ministers' meetings will build back better by championing shared values including democracy and human rights. The paper concludes that the UK has taken on the Presidency of the G7 at a critical time for the world with new vaccines offering a way to end the pandemic, using its G7 Presidency. The paper recommends that the implementation of already agreed program and adopted policy must be taken seriously among others.

Keywords: Group of seven; G7; Summit; Advanced Economies; Developed Economies; Industrialized societies.

Introduction

The last G7 summit was held on 11-13 June, 2021. It's the G7 Cornwall UK summit presided over by the UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson used the medium to ask leaders to seize the opportunity to fight and build back better from coronavirus, uniting to make the future fairer, greener and more prosperous. It aims to unite leading democracies to help the world build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and create a more prosperous future. The global pandemic has wide ranging impact on nearly every aspect of development. From what's termed lockdown, mobility restrictions to controlling the spread of Corona virus to economic melt-down. The pandemic claimed lives, led to extreme poverty, global health crisis, global recession, accelerated economic downturn among others. The June edition of the Global Economic Prospects, put it plainly: "COVID-19 has triggered a global crisis like no other – a global health crisis that, in addition to an enormous human toll, is leading to the deepest global recession since the Second World War." It forecast that the global economy as well as per capita incomes would shrink this year – pushing millions into extreme poverty.

Impact of Covid-19 on education is overwhelming. Emerging evidence from some of the region's highest-income countries indicate that the pandemic is giving rise to learning losses and increases in inequality. To reduce and reverse the long-term negative effects, Ukraine and other less-affluent lower-middle-income countries, which are likely to be even harder hit, need to implement learning recovery programs, protect educational budgets, and prepare for future shocks by "building back better." (Robin Donnelly 2021). The G7 countries held a leader's summit due to the global and took submissions towards the global recovery from the coronavirus pandemic to help the world heal and promote future prosperity. However, the G7 has been criticized as being an "outdated group of countries", partly because it does not include two of the largest countries in the world - India and China.

Conceptual Clarification

G7: The G7 (Group of Seven) is an organization of the world's seven largest so-called advanced economies. They are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the United States. (BBC, 2021). The G7 (Group of 7), is the seven members (UK, USA, Canada, Japan, Germany, France and Italy, plus the EU) that's all bound by shared values as open, democratic and

outward-looking societies. It's the only forum where the world's most influential and open societies and advanced economies are brought together for close-knit discussions. Its leaders have gathered together annually since the 1970s, alongside the heads of the EU, with ministers from their governments meeting throughout the year.

G7 Summit: In past years the G7 has taken action to strengthen the global economy and combat tax evasion, save 27 million lives from AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and supported the education of millions of children in the poorest countries. In 2015 its members led the way in helping secure the historic Paris Climate Agreement to limit global emissions and in June 2021, held a summit in Cornwall UK where the Prime Minister used the first in-person G7 Summit in almost two years to ask leaders to seize the opportunity to fight and build back better from Corona Virus, uniting to make the future fairer, greener and more prosperous. It is however from the above points that this work seeks to explain the submission given at the last G7 submit held in UK, referred to as the 2021 Cornwall Summit and its agenda.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this paper is the secondary methodological analogy. It adopts descriptive qualitative method of research. In other words, its descriptive in nature and available literature was fully explored and utilized to analyze the concept and its content.

Theoretical Framework

This research work chose the intergovernmentalism theory of regional integration. As it relates to regional integration as against functionalists and neo-functionalists, they hold the view that regional integration should be conducted based on government coming together to discuss issues bilaterally or militarily agreement. Intergovernmentalism, a theory of integration and a method of decision-making in international organizations, allows states to cooperate in specific fields while retaining their sovereignty. As a theoretical approach, intergovernmentalism was developed in the mid-1960s. Building on realist premises, writers such as Stanley Hoffmann highlighted the convergence of national interests and the will of states to cooperate as central to the analysis of regional integration. More recently Andrew Moravcsik's 'liberal intergovernmentalism' incorporates the role of domestic interests in helping define national state preferences, while still arguing that states have the ultimate control over the process and direction of integration.

Intergovernmentalism assumes national governments to be the key actors in regional integration. Governments use regional integration to maximize their national security and economic interests in the context of regional interdependence. In international relations, intergovernmentalism treats states (and national governments in particular) as the primary actors in the integration process

Intergovernmentalism approaches claim to be able to explain both periods of radical change in the European Union because of converging governmental preferences and periods of inertia because of diverging national interests. Intergovernmentalism is distinguishable from realism and neorealism because of its recognition of the significance of institutionalization in international politics and the impact of domestic politics upon governmental preferences.

The 2021 Cornwall Summit

At the G7 Summit in Cornwall on 11-13 June 2021, leaders discussed an ambitious agenda, based on their nations' shared values, for international action to build back better for all our people and create a greener, more prosperous future. The G7 has always helped drive wider international action. The Prime Minister's ambition is to use the UK's 2021 G7 Presidency to intensify cooperation between the world's democratic and technologically advanced nations. To that end, he invited leaders from Australia, India, South Korea and South Africa to attend the G7 Summit as guest countries, to deepen the expertise and experience around the table. The 11 leaders of the G7 member nations and our invited guest countries represent over 60% of the people living in democracies around the world, more than 2.2 billion people – and over half of the world's economy. Representatives from the European Union are present while India, South Korea and Australia have also been invited this year.

The G7's Cornwall meeting held from Friday 11 to Sunday 13 June at the Carbis Bay Hotel near St Ives in Cornwall. The region is seen as central to the UK's green technology sector. Showing off the country's green credentials is important to the government ahead of the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow in November. It is not the first time the world leaders have met in a beach resort. The last before the CORNWALLS G7 summit held in 2019, at the French seaside town of Biarritz. The UK Government committed to delivering a sustainable and carbon neutral G7 Leaders' Summit in Cornwall. To do this, we demonstrated leadership within sustainable event management as this relates to environmental, social and economic performance for the G7 Leaders' Summit. One of our keys aims for a sustainable Summit was to achieve ISO20121, an International Standard for Sustainable Event management. As part of ISO20121, it included a carbon management plan. Its approach to achieving ISO20121 was guided by its Sustainability Governing Principles these are:

- i.** Climate change and carbon
- ii.** Responsible supplier and resource management
- iii.** Equality, diversity and inclusivity
- iv.** Environmental impact and benefits
- v.** Economic and socio-economic benefit

vi. Continual improvement and legacy

Its ambition was to deliver an event that reflects the core values of the UK Government, ensuring the G7 Leaders' Summit was a world-class and carbon-neutral conference with sustainability at its core that will leave a positive legacy. At the end of the G7 summit, the G7 leaders adopted a leader's communique-G7 leader's communique. Shared agenda for global action to build back better with ministerial tracks and engagement groups, which will be discussed subsequently in this work. The agenda cuts across:

1. Health, the leaders adopted the Carbis Bay health declaration.
2. Economic recovery and jobs.
3. Free and fair trade.
4. Future frontiers; commits to promote stronger collaboration on research and development. To this end the leaders endorsed the G7 compact of research collaboration.
5. Climate and environmental change
6. Gender equality
7. Development and Global responsibility and actions.

The Cornwall (UK 2021, G7) Summit Agenda.

The agenda starts with a dinner at the Eden Project on Friday night, attended by the Queen and members of the Royal Family. The main topic of conversation for the rest of the summit is COVID recovery, including "a stronger global health system that can protect us all from future pandemics". The agenda also includes climate change and trade. Boris Johnson held talks with President Biden on Thursday afternoon. They covered topics including the President's concerns over the peace in Northern Ireland. The 2021 Cornwall G7 summit has it that the leaders of the Group of Seven determined to beat COVID-19 and build back better. Allowing their example of collaboration and determination as inspiration, the G7 gathered to share beliefs and responsibilities of which they believe are the bedrock of leadership and prosperity. Guided by these principles of collaboration and determination, they agreed and gave a shared G7 agenda for global action. These agenda include:

- i.** To end the pandemic and prepare for the future by driving an intensified international effort, starting immediately.
- ii.** To reinvigorate economies by advancing recovery plans that build on the \$12 trillion of support put in place during the pandemic.

- iii.** To Secure future prosperity by championing freer, fairer trade within a reformed trading system, a more resilient global economy, and a fairer global tax system that reverses the race to the bottom.
- iv.** To Protect the planet by supporting a green revolution that creates jobs, cuts emissions and seeks to limit the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees.
- v.** To Strengthen G7 partnerships with others around the world.
- vi.** To embrace G7 values as an enduring foundation for success in an ever-changing world.

The first agenda, G7 submits to vaccinate the world by getting as many safe vaccines to as many people as possible as fast as possible. Creating the appropriate frameworks to strengthen collective defenses against threats to global health by: increasing and coordinating on global manufacturing capacity on all continents; improving early warning systems; and support science in a mission to shorten the cycle for the development of safe and effective vaccines, treatments and tests from 300 to 100 days.

The second agenda, the G7 submits to continuous support of world economy for as long as is necessary, shifting the focus of their support from crisis response to promoting growth into the future, with plans that create jobs, invest in infrastructure, drive innovation, support people, and level up so that no place or person, irrespective of age, ethnicity or gender is left behind. This has not been the case with past global crises, but are determined that this time it will be different.

Thirdly, the G7 submit to collaborate and ensure future frontiers of the global economy and society, from cyber space to outer space, increase the prosperity and wellbeing of all people while upholding their values as open societies. They are convinced of the potential of technological transformation for the common good in accordance with their shared values.

Fourthly, submit to commit to net zero no later than 2050, halving their collective emissions over the two decades to 2030, increasing and improving climate finance to 2025; and to conserve or protect at least 30 percent of their land and oceans by 2030. They acknowledge their duty to safeguard the planet for future generations.

Furthermore, they seek to develop a new partnership to build back better for the world, through a step change in their approach to investment for infrastructure, including through an initiative for clean and green growth. They are resolved to deepen their current partnership to a new deal with Africa, including by magnifying support from the International Monetary Fund for countries most in need to support their aim to reach a total global ambition of \$100 billion.

Lastly, they submit to harness the power of democracy, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights to answer the biggest questions and overcome the greatest challenges. They will do this in a way that values the individual and promotes equality, especially gender

equality, including by supporting a target to get 40 million more girls into education and with at least \$2¾ billion for the Global Partnership for Education.

The Seven Ministerial Tracks and Engagement Groups

The Ministerial Meetings & Engagement Groups having welcomed G7 leaders to Cornwall in June. The UK hosting a number of meetings throughout the year between a variety of Government Ministers from the G7, both virtually and physically ensuring that UK's G7 Presidency encapsulates a broad range of issues. These seven Ministerial Tracks cover economic, environmental, health, trade, technology, development and foreign policy issues. Each supports a core part of its agenda to lead the world's efforts to fight and build back better from Corona Virus.

The Ministerial Groups are;

1. Trade ministers: The UK's 2021 G7 Presidency features a dedicated Trade Track at the G7 for the first time, led by the Department for International Trade. The Trade Track presents an opportunity for the UK to work with its G7 partners to shape a bold global vision for economic recovery that sees the world to build back better together - greener, more prosperous, resilient, and fair. To do so, the Trade Track focuses on four priority areas (Robin, 2021):

- a) WTO reform.
- b) Trade and health
- c) Digital trade and
- d) Trade and climate policy (**G7 Trade Ministers communique, 2021**).

2. Health ministers: The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of continued multilateral collaboration on global health issues. The UK G7 Presidency provides an important opportunity for the G7 to provide leadership in learning from the current pandemic and seeking to prevent a similar crisis happening again. In order to deliver meaningful change and improvements in pandemic preparedness, the Health Track, led by the Department for Health and Social Care, focuses on the themes of (Robin, 2021):

- a) Global health security
- b) Anti-microbial resistance
- c) Digital health
- d) Clinical trials in the development of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. (**G7 Health ministers' communique 2021**).

3. Interior ministers; The G7 Interior & Security Ministers' meeting to be hosted by the Home Secretary in September. The aim of the Interior Track is to take collective action to address a range of threats to the safety and security of our citizens so we can build back better for all. The four priorities are:

- a) Protecting the people and strengthening resilience against Online Harms worsened by the pandemic.
- b) Ensuring economic security is not undermined by the threat of Serious and Organized Crime, including illicit threats to nature, such as the illegal wildlife trade.
- c) Supporting global action to confront emerging issues for National and Border Security.
- d) Supporting international action against Corruption and kleptocracies. (**G7 Interior ministers' communique**).

4. Foreign and Development ministers: The G7 Foreign and Development Track, led by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, is taking an integrated approach to tackling the foreign policy and international development challenges of the day, to support our overall Presidency ambition of building back better together. (**G7 Foreign and Development Minister's Communique, 2021**).

5. Climate and Environmental ministers: The Climate and Environment Track, jointly led by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, focuses on six policy priorities:

- a) A net zero G7 by 2050 at the latest.
- b) Supporting the transition to a low carbon economy.
- c) Resetting their relationship with nature.
- d) Driving action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss
- e) Ocean action.
- f) Tackling illicit threats to nature (**G7 Climate and Environmental Ministers' Communique, 2021**).

6. Digital and Technology ministers: Following the virtual G7 Digital & Technology Ministerial meeting on 28-29 April 2021, ministers declared that collective recovery from Corona Virus must be rooted in a desire to build back a better, more productive and resilient global economy, with digital technology at its heart. The Digital and Technology Track, led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, seeks to demonstrate the G7's ambition to place the needs of open, democratic societies at the heart of the technology debate.

Striving for a trusted, values-driven digital ecosystem that can enhance prosperity in a way that is both sustainable and inclusive.

The Track focuses on six policy priorities:

- a) Internet safety.
- b) Telecoms diversification.
- c) Data free flow with trust.
- d) Digital facilitation of trade.
- e) Technical standards.
- f) Digital competition. **(G7 Digital and Technological ministers' communique, 2021).**

7. Finance ministers: The Finance Track is jointly led by Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak and Governor of the Bank of England Andrew Bailey. The UK Presidency priorities for the 2021 Finance Track are fourfold:

- a) Protecting jobs and supporting the global economic recovery
- b) working to reach a global solution to the tax challenges created by digitalization of the economy
- c) Helping its global economies reach their net zero targets
- d) Providing necessary support for the world's most vulnerable countries **(G7 Finance Ministers Communiqué, 2021).**

The Engagement Groups consist of the following:

1. Youth7(Y7): The Youth 7 (Y7) champion the voice of Future Generations to G7 Ministers and Leaders. Young people now, and in years to come, will bear the social and economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Y7 call on G7 leaders to embed the needs of future generations in all national and international recovery plans, and to dramatically increase youth participation in democratic processes.
2. Women7(W7): Brings together women's rights advocacy groups from the G7 countries and around the world committed to women and girls' rights. Its objective is to ensure that G7 leaders adopt concrete commitments that lead to a tangible, lasting and transformative impact on women and girls' lives in 2021 and beyond.
3. Science7(S7): Brings together the leading science bodies of each of the G7 countries to advise leaders how to respond to major challenges facing the world. Led by the Royal Society as chair, the national science academies of the G7 nations have produced three statements on net zero, biodiversity loss and data for international health emergencies ahead of the G7 leaders' summit in the UK in June 2021.

4. Labour7(S7): Consists of national trade union centers from G7 countries and international trade union organizations that represent the interests of working people and campaign to improve their rights around the world. Under the UK Presidency.

5. Civil Society7(C7): Responsible for coordinating dialogue between the government and civil society.

6: Business7(B7): The Business 7 (B7) Summit is a mainstay of the G7 Presidency calendar. Led by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the three-day virtual summit brought together leading business organizations from across the G7 countries, with the senior Government Ministers in attendance.

The Advisory Groups are the Economic Resilience Panel and Gender Equality Advisory Council;

As part of the UK's G7 2021 presidency, the Prime Minister nominated Lord Sedwill, former UK Cabinet Secretary and National Security Advisor, as G7 Envoy on Economic Resilience, and Chair of an independent G7 Panel on Economic Resilience. The Panel is composed of representatives appointed by G7 Leaders, and from Guest Nations in an observer capacity, supported by a working-level group of expert officials to advise G7 leaders on arising matters, develop proposals in line with the UK G7 presidency wider agenda and consult widely the G7 and beyond, among others.

Equally, The UK has committed to putting gender equality and fairness at the heart of our G7 Presidency. The Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC), an independent panel, will bring fresh ideas and new voices to the heart of G7 discussions to galvanize our ambitions on gender equality and ensure the Presidency delivers for women.

Conclusion

So far, this paper has examined the submission given at the G7 summit that held in June 2021. The UK has taken on the Presidency of the G7 at a critical time for the world with new vaccines offering a way to end the pandemic, using its G7 Presidency to fight and build back better from Corona Virus by leading the global recovery from Corona Virus while strengthening resilience against future pandemics, promote future prosperity by championing free and fair trade tackling climate change and preserving the planet's biodiversity championing its shared values as its agenda. The UK government said it was important for world leaders to meet in person (**BBC reports, 2021**).

Recommendations

The following recommendation given, however will be useful for implementation.

- i. Youth delegates from across the G7 nations presented their recommendations to Government which advise how they can ensure young people's voices are heard throughout the UK's G7 Presidency, better involve young people in decision making and to actively consider the implications of decisions made today on the young people of tomorrow. **(Y7)**
- ii. The implementation of already agreed program and adopted policy must be taken seriously.
- iii. Improve safe data access and use for health emergencies and work closely with WHO and other health stakeholders. **(S7)**
- iv. All organization called upon should respond immediately, "We call on the World Bank Group and the other Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to increase the speed of their financial support, and will continue to support ACT-A in this regard" (Communique reports).
- v. The G7 to commit earnestly to their shared values of champion its values to supporting the poorest nations to grow alongside them for a global unity.

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