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Introduction

Firstly I'd like to thank to Nicola for opening today's meeting. I'd also like to thank you for joining us and thank Secretary General Gurría, and all our friends at the OECD, for bringing us together this morning.

As we battle through the biggest public health emergency in a generation, our interdependence, and the vulnerabilities in our global health, economic and governance systems, have been laid bare.

There has never been a more critical and challenging time for the international community to work together.

International organisations, and the rules and standards they help set, are key to fighting this virus and emerging from this pandemic together, stronger, and in a more sustainable way.

International organisations are the glue that binds us. They inform us. They challenge us. And they chivvy us along. They make us more than the sum of our parts.

Each of the international organisations with us today has their own unique strengths and expertise. We are delighted to have senior representatives with us today from organisations as diverse as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and many more who are all playing a crucial role in convening countries to agree approaches on trade, energy, health, technology and other shared priorities

Many have been architects of global economic governance, and our co-host at the OECD has been highly influential in shaping the global approach in areas as diverse as Artificial Intelligence, corporate social responsibility and tax.

The OECD has also been a go-to resource against COVID. Their COVID-19 Hub has informed domestic policies and the international response. They have also

led the way with in-depth analysis on the economic impact of Coronavirus.

Despite the need for countries to be joined-up in the fight against COVID, global unity-of-purpose is sadly not yet a reality.

No country can put COVID behind it until every country is able to do so. Consensus-building and a joined-up approach are vital.

Being joined-up helps save lives. Just look at how mutual recognition, or harmonisation of standards, speeds-up the movement of PPE and medical equipment to where it is needed. Without the work that many of you do on standards and harmonisation, this simply could not happen.

By acting fast and working together, we can also shape a global recovery from COVID that advances - rather than hinders - our climate, biodiversity, and wider environmental priorities.

The decisions we make as we strive to bounce back will either lay the foundations for sustainable and inclusive growth, or lock-in polluting emissions for decades to come.

The UK has always been a leading proponent of the multilateral system and I believe our aim to be a force for good in the world radiates through the international response to COVID.

We have pledged more than £770 million to combat the impacts of the virus around the globe, which places us among the world's biggest donors.

We are financing some of the most advanced vaccine research programmes in the world at Oxford University and Imperial College London. And we have been clear that vaccines and treatments should be made available as rapidly and widely as possible.

We are working with our G7 and G20 partners to build a coordinated response to the virus and its economic impacts, delivering on the commitments set out in the ambitious G20 Action Plan agreed in April.

Of course, the pre-COVID challenges have not gone away.

Technology, for all its many benefits, is a constant disrupter to our security and liberties.

In a technological age when innovators will always outpace regulators, there will always be work to do to protect individuals, organisations, and nations.

So regulatory diplomacy should be the top of every government's to-do list. We should all want to be part of writing a fair rulebook, and establishing norms that genuinely benefit our planet and everyone on it.

So let's use this critical juncture – an unprecedented time when the whole world is going through this major struggle together – to rethink the way we do things and strive for a better, safer and more sustainable world.

I now have the pleasure of handing over you over to Secretary-General Gurria.

Thank you.