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Brussels, 21 April 2020

Subject: Support of the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) for G20 Trade Actions to Respond to COVID-19

Dear Dr. Fahad Almubarak:

In these extraordinarily challenging times, on behalf of the global chemical industry, we appreciate the efforts of governments around the world to moderate the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, to partner with industry to support relief efforts, and to sustain economic resiliency. These efforts are essential to overcoming this challenge, and as the chemical industry we are committed to supporting your efforts. As manufacturers, we can make a valuable contribution by applying prudent measures to prevent the spread of infection at our sites; maintaining production through the crisis and recovery; and providing science-based solutions to these challenges.

We value the commitments by governments to foster a globally coordinated response to this world-wide problem, especially recommitting and encouraging strong measures to sustain global value chains, facilitate trade of necessary life-saving equipment and continue to foster commercial engagement and partnerships to source and sustain our communities.

As a contribution to the global response, we recommend that governments, and especially G20 Leaders, combat the pandemic by:

1. Continuing to coordinate globally and regionally, including with industry, to ease supply chain constraints, building on the recent G20 Leaders¹ and Trade and Investment Ministers² Statements.
2. Designating chemical manufacturers and downstream value chains as essential businesses, so that they can continue to operate and deliver the critical goods and services needed to combat the pandemic. We propose that all governments, both at the national and sub-national levels, issue clear guidance to reduce differences and uncertainties, so that the global chemical industry can respond effectively to the pandemic crisis and support necessary value chains that sustain our communities and capabilities

¹ [https://g20.org/en/media/Documents/G20_Extraordinary%20G20%20Leaders%E2%80%99%20Summit_Statement_EN%20\(3\).pdf](https://g20.org/en/media/Documents/G20_Extraordinary%20G20%20Leaders%E2%80%99%20Summit_Statement_EN%20(3).pdf)

² https://g20.org/en/media/Documents/G20_Trade%20&%20Investment_Ministerial_Statement_EN.pdf



during lock down situations. We recommend that governments draw from existing advisory language³.

3. Committing immediately to a standstill and rollback of trade-distorting measures (e.g., export restrictions) on products essential for combatting COVID-19⁴, as well as the value chain materials comprising those products, including the granting of exemptions in export restrictions for personal protective equipment used in production, in order to prevent further supply chain disruptions. A standstill and rollback will help governments overcome this crisis and ensure the availability of necessary medical and protective equipment, while enabling the global economy to recover more quickly.
4. Supporting and facilitating supply chains for products essential for combatting COVID-19, as well as the value chain materials comprising those products, including by re-committing to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; fast tracking measures to remove regulatory hurdles and bureaucratic inefficiencies for shipments of medical and its related raw materials, and other life-saving equipment; and implementing “Green Lanes” to ensure goods move efficiently across internal and external borders.
5. Providing facilitating and financing support to suppliers of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) manufacturing products essential for combatting COVID-19, as well as the value chain materials comprising those products, to bolster supply chains and trade flows.

In addition, we recognize that some national governments may use their own domestic procedures to temporarily suspend or reduce customs duties on necessary imports of chemicals and other related products relevant to pandemic response production. By expediting their domestic procedures to provide temporary tariff relief in brief consultation with chemical industry associations and with local manufacturers, national governments can facilitate the timely import of products essential for combating COVID-19 and the chemical value chain materials comprising those products.

The global chemical manufacturing industry is a \$5.7 trillion enterprise that touches nearly all aspects of the world’s economy. The chemical industry supports a vast supply chain. In fact, 96 percent of all manufactured goods rely on chemistry. The role of chemistry is particularly important during the pandemic, as chemicals enable countless products that will be needed to treat those who are infected with the coronavirus in the weeks and months ahead; ensure the safety and health of healthcare workers through personal protective equipment; and support good hygiene, sanitation, and cleaning in all countries.

³ For example, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Version_3.0_CISA_Guidance_on_Essential_Critical_Infrastructure_Workers_1.pdf:

- Workers supporting the chemical and industrial gas supply chains, including workers at chemical manufacturing plants, workers in laboratories, workers at distribution facilities, workers who transport basic raw chemical materials to the producers of industrial and consumer goods, including hand sanitizers, food and food additives, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and paper products.
- Workers supporting the safe transportation of chemicals, including those supporting tank truck cleaning facilities and workers who manufacture packaging items
- Workers supporting the production of protective cleaning and medical solutions, personal protective equipment, and packaging that prevents the contamination of food, water, medicine, among others essential products
- Workers supporting the operation and maintenance of facilities (particularly those with high risk chemicals and/ or sites that cannot be shut down) whose work cannot be done remotely and requires the presence of highly trained personnel to ensure safe operations, including plant contract workers who provide inspections
- Workers who support the production and transportation of chlorine and alkali manufacturing, single-use plastics, and packaging that prevents the contamination or supports the continued manufacture of food, water, medicine, and other essential products, including glass container manufacturing.

⁴ For example, see the World Customs Organization (WCO) HS classification reference for Covid-19 medical supplies: http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/nomenclature/covid_19/hs-classification-reference_en.pdf?la=en

We welcome this opportunity to share with you our efforts to protect the health of our employees and communities while also continuing to produce essential materials to the global healthcare community and all our communities, during these challenging times:

- Chemical biocides and disinfectants are active ingredients in cleaning products that eliminate bacteria and viruses on a personal, household and industrial scale, and in particular with respect to medical environmental and treatments.
- Polypropylene and other polycarbonate materials are necessary to produce syringes, surgical instruments, and IV components. Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is used in medical tubing, blood and IV bags. Polypropylene is a key component of medical-grade personal protective equipment including masks (non-woven), face shields, and other body protectives; sanitizer bottle and dispensers; and gowns.
- Personal hygiene products including diapers, soaps, detergents, hand sanitizers, toothpastes and antiseptics (e.g., chlorine bleach, hydrogen peroxide, isopropyl alcohol, and oxo-alcohols) rely on chemicals and chemical production.
- Chemicals are necessary to produce and industrialize food, and fertilize and protect crops; chlorine chemistry is essential to protecting our nations' drinking water.
- A range of chemicals serve as ingredients in over-the-counter and prescription medications.
- Packaging and hygienic single-use products help prevent contamination of food, personal care products, and medical products as well as person-to-person transmission of disease-causing microorganisms.
- The chemical industry also enables energy-efficient building materials and hygienic coatings for fast-track construction of safe and secure hospitals.

All segments of society have a role to play to help limit the spread of coronavirus and protect public health, especially those who are most vulnerable. We value your support for our industry to continue to engage and innovate necessary solutions, processes and products to combat the COVID-19 virus.

Sincerely,



Chris Jahn
ICCA Council Secretary/President
President and CEO, American Chemistry Council