



Press Release

Expo 2020 Organizers and Steering Committee Participants Explore Postponement of the Event by One Year in View of COVID-19 Impact Worldwide

DUBAI, 30 March 2020 – Expo 2020 Dubai has convened a second virtual meeting of its Steering Committee, with representatives of the countries taking part in the event, as part of ongoing consultations that the impact of COVID-19 will have on global preparations of Expo 2020 Dubai.

Participating countries briefed the Steering Committee on the global precautionary measures that have to be taken to ensure the health and safety of all those involved in the preparation of this mega event.

The Steering Committee reviewed with grave concern the major impact that the spread of COVID-19 is having on global public, social, and economic health. The members reaffirmed their solidarity with the international community as it navigates through the ramifications that have resulted from this unprecedented global crisis.

Expo 2020 Organisers reaffirmed the United Arab Emirates commitment to working hand in hand with its international partners to deliver a World Expo which holds true to its founding purpose: providing an inclusive global platform to address shared challenges, and seek solutions in the spirit of international cooperation and global solidarity. The global platform that Expo 2020 will provide will be needed more than ever.

The Committee collectively agreed to explore with the BIE, the World Expo governing body, the possibility of a one year delay to the opening of Expo 2020. The Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), will now work with its Member States and Expo 2020 Dubai organisers to establish a change in dates. A final decision on postponement can only be made by the BIE's Executive Committee and the General Assembly. Article 28 of the BIE Convention stipulates that, a change of dates requires a two-thirds majority vote from Member States of the Organisation.

Elaborating on the decision, **Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation and Director General, Expo 2020 Dubai** said: "The global situation is fast moving, and remains unpredictable. Over the last several weeks, we have been consulting with key UAE and international stakeholders to review the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on our plans and preparations for Expo 2020 Dubai.

"While they remain firmly committed to Expo 2020, many countries have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and they have therefore expressed a need to postpone the opening of Expo 2020 Dubai by one year, to enable them to overcome this challenge. The UAE and Expo 2020 Dubai have listened. And in the spirit of solidarity and unity, we supported the proposal to explore a one year postponement at today's Steering Committee meeting. We look forward



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to welcoming the world, which we are certain will only come out of this pressing challenge stronger, and more resilient than it ever was.”

“We will follow due BIE processes on making the decision to delay Expo 2020. We remain firm in our collective commitment to deliver an Expo that’s true to its time and to our shared, urgent priorities. We believe that in light of this global challenge, humanity needs to come together to remember what unites us. That remains the collective ambition of all those involved in this Expo,” she added.

Dimitri S. Kerkentzes, Secretary General of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) welcomed Expo 2020 organisers's approach and the Steering Committee's recommendations. He said: “The World is facing extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances and we all expect the challenges to continue in the months to come. Today's agreement by the organiser and the members of Expo 2020 Dubai's Steering Committee to explore options for a one-year delay to the opening of the World Expo is welcome. In the spirit and in accordance with the Paris Convention of 1928, any decision on the World Expo needs to be collaborative and agreed upon collectively in a vote of the countries that form the BIE. We will move forward in supervising the process to follow in accordance with the rules and regulations of the BIE convention.”

“I am confident that we will collectively overcome the challenges caused by this global crisis. The UAE's decision to support a one year postponement demonstrates pragmatism, openness, and commitment to delivering an Expo that lives up to our shared ambition. We retain full confidence in the UAE's ability to host a World Expo that inspires and delights millions, when the time is right.”

Pyung-oh Kwon, President and CEO of the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) and Commissioner General of the Republic of Korea at Expo 2020 Dubai, said: “It was heartening to see all the participants of Expo 2020 coming together with a strong message of solidarity and support. World Expos are a place where the world comes together to showcase the best of humanity, and at what is a difficult time in many places, it is more important than ever that this Expo comes to life in the best possible way and at an appropriate time. We are thankful for the proactive approach of the organisers and their full support.”

Erik Linquier, Commissioner General of France at Expo 2020 Dubai, said: “We applaud the Expo 2020 organisers and the UAE for their openness, dynamic engagement, and support to participants in these extraordinary circumstances we are all facing. Gathering humanity in one place to celebrate all the things that unite us is something that will be more necessary than ever once this pandemic passes. We remain fully committed to playing our part in making this a truly memorable World Expo that can be experienced and enjoyed by anyone, and so we fully agree with today's collective decision to explore the best options for our Expo family.”

Dr Malick Diop, Commissioner General of Senegal at Expo 2020 Dubai, said: “Around the world we can see the best of humankind as people work together to save lives and contain this virus. Expos are about the best of



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humanity and we look forward to coming together in Dubai when the conditions are right for what we confidently expect will be an incredible global event.”

Mr Dody Edward, Commissioner General of Indonesia and Expo 2020 Dubai said: “Expos are a place where the world comes together. After a year shaped by isolation and distancing, imagine the appetite for human contact and collaboration in 2021. Indonesia is hopeful the postponement will be passed by the BIE General Assembly and we can all look towards a brighter 2021.”

Justin McGowan, Commissioner General of Australia at Expo 2020 Dubai, said: “If the BIE General Assembly decides to postpone it gives us another year to produce an even more inspiring World Expo. In a year’s time, the world will be a very different place and Expo will be an opportunity to highlight our united resilience and vision for the future. At the moment our collective energy needs to be directed elsewhere.”

Expo 2020 Dubai organisers will continue to assess the situation and consult closely with all stakeholders in Dubai, the UAE and internationally.

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About Expo 2020 Dubai

Expo 2020 Dubai will bring together millions of people for The World’s Greatest Show, celebrating human brilliance and achievement under the theme ‘*Connecting Minds, Creating the Future*’.

- We are extending a warm Emirati welcome to the world:
 - 25 million visits are expected, with many visitors expected to come more than once
 - 70 per cent of visitors anticipated to come from outside the UAE, the largest proportion of international visitors in the 169-year history of World Expos
- An entertaining global celebration with something for everyone, Expo 2020 will enchant visitors with 60 daily events across 173 days, showcasing the best of music, technology, creativity and culture, while 200 F&B outlets will feature famous chefs and cuisines from every corner of the world
- Expo 2020 will represent an endless journey of discovery. Visitors will have access to the latest innovations and breakthroughs, with more than 200 participants – including 192 nations, multilateral organisations, businesses and educational institutions – coming together to highlight real-life solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges
- Expo 2020’s sub-themes 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 and impact in the world
- The first World Expo to take place in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) will be located on a 4.38 sqkm site adjacent to Al Maktoum International Airport in Dubai South

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To kick off your journey with Expo 2020, please ensure that you:

1. Register to access Tawassul at <https://media.expo2020dubai.com>.
2. Once registered, submit an Expo 2020 Media Accreditation expression of interest. To attend Expo 2020 or cover Expo 2020 remotely using content and assets generated by Expo, you must be accredited.

For support, contact Expo 2020 Dubai's Media Operations team at media.services@expo2020.ae or +971 56 689 2101.

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About World Expos

In 1851 the Crystal Palace was the centrepiece of London's Great Exhibition – the first World Expo. It celebrated the man-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, 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.

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