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Nobel-prize winner backs world currency

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KAZAKH President Nursultan Nazarbayev has won backing for his plan for a single world currency from an intellectual architect of the euro currency, Nobel-prize winner Professor Robert Mundell.

Nazarbayev, speaking at an economic forum in the glitzy new capital he has built on the Kazakh steppe, defended his proposal for the "acmetal" world currency saying it might "look kind of funny" but was not.

And he received intellectual support from the Canadian economist Prof Mundell, who helped lay the intellectual groundwork for Europe's single currency.

"I must say that I agree with President Nazarbayev on his statement and many of the things he said in his plan, the project he made for the world currency, and I believe I'm right on track with what he's saying," Prof Mundell said, adding the idea held "great promise".

Mr Nazarbayev and Prof Mundell urged the Group of 20 leading developed and developing economies to form a working group on the proposal at their summit on the global economic crisis in London on April 2.

"We should deliver our thoughts and the thoughts of this conference to the leaders of those countries," Mr Nazarbayev said, referring to the G8 and G20 nations.

Mr Nazarbayev, who has held his post since Soviet times and has seen his oil-rich state hit badly by the crisis, unveiled his proposal last month and said yesterday the UN should oversee the currency's introduction.

Though a boost for what might seem an other-worldly plan, Prof Mundell has previously suggested single currencies are only appropriate for countries with similar economies.

Mr Nazarbayev's coining of "acmetal" combines the Greek word "acme," meaning peak or best, and "capital."

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