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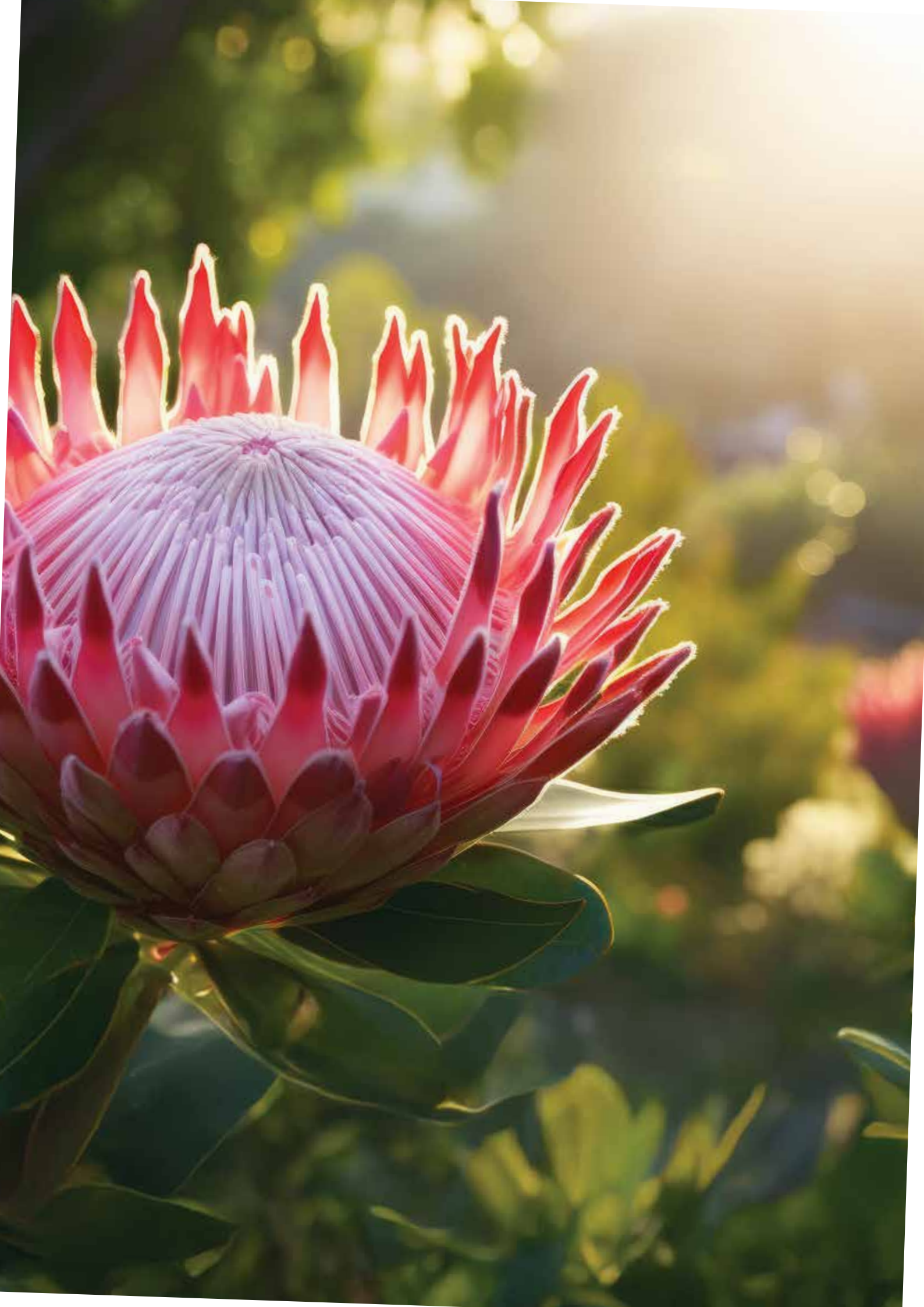
South Africa's Public Diplomacy in action 



G20

SOUTH AFRICA 2025





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Publisher

Clayson Monyela

Editor

Janine Duminy – duminyj@dirco.gov.za
Tel: +27 12 351 8552

Photo Editor

Yolande Snyman – snymany@dirco.gov.za

Editor-in-Chief

Michelle Greeff – greeffm@dirco.gov.za
Tel: +27 12 351 1743

Distribution

Fhulu Maeba – maebaf@dirco.gov.za
Tel: +27 12 351 1613

Designer

Thabiso Tshehla – tshehlat@dirco.gov.za

Photographers

Department of International Relations and Cooperation; Government Communication and Information System; South African Tourism; UN Photo; Adobe Stock; South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO)

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Tel: +27 12 351 1000, www.dirco.gov.za
Private Bag X152, PRETORIA, 0001, Republic of South Africa

460 Soutpansberg Road, Rietondale, Pretoria, 0084, Republic of South Africa

UBUNTU

a Nguni word meaning humanity

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation's quarterly magazine



ON THE COVER

"The symbol of South Africa's G20 Presidency is the magnificent King Protea, our national flower, which has a rare ability to regenerate. It is a symbol of renewal, resilience and hope.

"It symbolises South Africa's intention to deliver a positive and solution-driven G20 presidency.

"The colours of South Africa's flag are prominently displayed in the logo, representing our country's diverse heritage and cultural vibrancy." – President Cyril Ramaphosa

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Welcome message by **President Cyril Ramaphosa**



continent that is rich in potential, opportunity and resilience. We are committed to ensuring Africa's voice is heard and its concerns addressed. Our presidency aims to bridge perspectives between the Global South and Global North.

The hosting of the first G20 Leaders' Summit on African soil marks a historic moment. As South Africa, we stand not only as hosts but as partners with countries of the world dedicated to multilateralism, cooperation, justice, peace and shared prosperity.

South Africa's G20 Presidency comes at a time of global challenges and change. The world is facing rapid technological advancement, a climate emergency, rising inequality, a debt crisis and instability in various parts of the world. These challenges are significant, but our collective capacity to address them is even greater. The G20 provides a space for nations to set aside differences and work together for sustainable, innovative solutions.

As the world focuses on the G20, I hope leaders will embody the principles of solidarity, equality, and sustainability, both in words and actions. This means driving meaningful reforms in global financial governance, aligning development finance, trade rules and debt mechanisms with the needs of developing economies. It also means championing equitable access to technology, clean energy and life-saving vaccines, ensuring that no nation is left behind. We must confront the climate crisis with courage, ambition and fairness, recognising our shared but differentiated responsibilities.

As South Africa, we offer more than venues and events; we share our spirit of Ubuntu. South Africa is a land of diversity, in its people and landscapes. Our history is one of

resilience. From division and inequality, we emerged into democracy through dialogue, compromise and a belief in the dignity of all.

As we attend the G20 Leaders' Summit, let us be guided by a shared sense of responsibility and common humanity. The decisions we make here will impact workers seeking decent jobs, children needing education, mothers wanting better healthcare, communities vulnerable to climate disasters, and nations striving to overcome poverty.

The world looks to the G20 for tangible outcomes that leave no one behind. Let this summit in South Africa be remembered for advancing solidarity, equality and sustainability. Let it be a summit where leaders showed unity of purpose, where multilateralism proved its worth and where hope was rekindled in uncertain times.

Thank you for making the journey to South Africa. Your presence affirms the value of collective dialogue and partnership.

May your time here be productive, enlightening and inspiring. May you return home not only with agreements but also with new friendships, fresh perspectives and lasting memories of South Africa's people, culture and beauty.

I wish you all a successful summit and a warm, memorable stay in our beloved country.

Welcome to South Africa. Welcome to the G20 Summit. 🇿🇦

A stylized signature of Cyril Ramaphosa in black ink.

Mr Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa
President of the Republic of South Africa





It always seems impossible until it is done.

– Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela





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SOUTH AFRICA'S G20 PRESIDENCY: SHARED HUMANITY, INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

By Ronald Lamola
Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

In February 2025, the Group of 20 (G20) Foreign Ministers met at the Johannesburg Expo Centre (JEC) for its first meeting. And now, at the end of South Africa's presidency, we meet again at the same venue—a venue where history and hope intersect.

Built to bridge the apartheid-era divides between Johannesburg's north and south, the JEC is more than a venue—it is a symbol of what humanity can achieve when we choose unity over division, progress over stagnation.

Just a stone's throw away from us lies Soweto, South Africa's largest township, a place born of segregation but now a beacon of resilience. It was home to two Nobel Peace Prize laureates, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, whose legacies remind us that even the deepest divides can be overcome. The JEC's location is no accident. It stands as a powerful metaphor for the work ahead: bridging divides—historical, economic, and geopolitical—to create a world that works for all.

As South Africa navigated its G20 presidency, we carried this spirit of unity into our mission. Our theme—*Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*—is not just a slogan; it is a call to action for a world at a crossroads.

The urgency of this moment cannot be overstated. We are halfway to the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, António Guterres, has issued a stark warning: "We are leaving more than half the world behind." His recent report paints a grim picture: only 12% of SDG targets are on track, while 30% have stalled or regressed. Without immediate action, the 2030 Agenda risks becoming an epitaph for what might have been.

The challenges we face are not isolated; they are interconnected and escalating. Geopolitical divisions are widening, economic tensions are rising, and the devastating

impacts of climate change are accelerating. These crises threaten to derail progress on poverty eradication, gender equality, and global peace. The G20, as a forum for international economic cooperation, must rise to the occasion. We cannot afford to let these fractures deepen.

South Africa's G20 Presidency is guided by the philosophy of Ubuntu—a profound African concept that means "I am because we are." It speaks to our shared humanity, our interconnectedness, and our collective responsibility to one another. These values are reflected in our G20 presidency's theme of *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*.

Solidarity demands that we recommit to multilateralism and dialogue. In a world increasingly fractured by trade wars, ideological divisions, and political intolerance, we must find common ground. The G20 must lead by example, fostering collaboration to restore stability and shared purpose.

Equality requires us to confront the stark disparities between the Global North and Global South. Africa, for instance, contributes the least to climate change yet bears its harshest consequences. Climate-related costs consume up to 5% of the continent's gross domestic product, yet Africa received a mere 2% of global clean energy investments between 2015 and 2022. This inequality is not just unjust—it is unsustainable.

Sustainability is the cornerstone of our collective future. The G20 must prioritise financing for development, debt relief, and the transition to clean energy. High financing costs and unsustainable debt burdens are stifling progress in developing economies, diverting resources away from critical development needs. We must reform the global financial architecture to ensure that no country is left behind.

The G20 has the unique opportunity to shape a more equitable and sustainable world. By focusing on solidarity, equality, and

sustainability, we can address the root causes of global instability and inequality.

First, we must recommit to the principles of multilateralism. The UN remains the primary forum for maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, and promoting sustainable development. However, the UN must be reformed to reflect the realities of the 21st century. This includes revitalising the General Assembly, ensuring equitable geographical representation in the Secretariat, and reforming the Security Council to make it more representative and democratic.

Second, we must prioritise conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We call on the G20 to support efforts to "silence the guns" in Africa and achieve inclusive development and prosperity.

Third, we must address the global debt crisis. The current system is fundamentally flawed, with high financing costs and debt service obligations diverting resources away from development needs. The G20 should advance sustainable solutions to tackle structural deficits and liquidity challenges, extending debt relief to developing economies.

As South Africa comes to the end of its G20 presidency, we will continue in our commitment to playing a bridge-building role between the Global North and South. The challenges we face are immense, but they are not insurmountable. By embracing the principles of solidarity, equality, and sustainability, we can build a world that leaves no one behind. The G20 must lead the way, fostering dialogue, cooperation, and shared purpose to address the interconnected crises of our time.

In the words of Nelson Mandela, "It always seems impossible until it is done." Let us seize this moment to bridge divides, heal our planet, and create a future of dignity and opportunity for all. 🌍

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South Africa's G20 Presidency is uniquely poised to elevate African issues on the global map

By Enoch Godongwana
Minister of Finance

South Africa assumed the G20 presidency at a challenging time marked by global crises and complex challenges. A time of navigating fragile economic growth, rising geopolitical tensions and rapid technological changes. South Africa's G20 Presidency represents a critical opportunity to elevate African development as a global priority, arguing that Africa's challenges and opportunities are inherently global concerns requiring multilateral cooperation.

Under the theme of *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, South Africa will provide strong global leadership and proof that together, through multilateral and inclusive platforms, we can address the urgent and long-term challenges facing the globe.

The country is focusing on revitalising international cooperation, strengthening multilateralism, and catalysing collective action to confront pressing economic and financial issues.

A central pillar of South Africa's G20 agenda is the elevation of Africa's development priorities within global discourse. This supports the African Union's Agenda 2063, which envisions a strong, united, resilient and influential continent.

Demographic trends underscore the urgency of this focus. According to the United Nations, sub-Saharan Africa's population

is projected to increase by close to 80%, reaching 2.2 billion by 2054. By the end of the century, the African population could reach 3.3 billion, accounting for more than one-fifth of the global increase.

Yet, the landscape of multilateralism has shifted. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, we were already beginning to see shifts in the value different nations attached to these institutions and how they imagined they should look in the future.

In Africa, and perhaps more broadly amongst the developing economies of the Global South, our realisation was that we simply needed a stronger and unified voice that could articulate more sharply the developmental needs, challenges and opportunities presented by the fast-changing landscape.

The continent faces significant and interconnected challenges that require multiple, coordinated and cross-cutting interventions. Addressing these can unlock Africa's substantial untapped growth and development potential as the world's youngest and fastest urbanising continent.

The G20's Finance Track is developing a structured framework to support African countries and the continent. This initiative builds on previous and current initiatives such as the Compact with Africa to avoid duplication and strengthen synergies and will culminate in an African Engagement Framework that spans multiple years (i.e., 2026-2030).

The framework is focused on addressing four key areas: reducing macroeconomic vulnerabilities, strengthening public institutions, enhancing infrastructure development, and reducing the cost of capital.

In tackling the macroeconomic vulnerabilities, efforts will centre on creating an enabling environment for private investment, enhancing fiscal sustainability, maintaining price stability through monetary policy and implementing growth-orientated structural reforms.

Addressing these issues requires sound policies and ambitious reforms to boost resilience to shocks, safeguard macroeconomic stability and unlock countries' growth potential.

For strengthening public institutions, the emphasis is on improving governance and institutional capacity.

Effective, transparent and accountable institutions are vital for economic stability, competitiveness, mobilisation of private sector investment and generating employment opportunities. Short-term efforts include adopting digital tools, strengthening tax administration, enhancing procurement processes and supporting justice institutions. Long-term work will focus on overcoming systemic institutional challenges.

In terms of infrastructure development, the goal is to drive a structural transformation to support rural development, urban planning, connectivity with value chains and regional integration. Success hinges on careful planning, execution and management within a framework of strong institutions, good governance and sound policies.

To address the high cost of capital, the focus will be on strengthening domestic financial systems, improving risk perception and signalling, and scaling up development finance and risk-sharing tools. These efforts are essential to attract additional private capital on favourable terms.

Under the theme of *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, South Africa will provide strong global leadership and proof that together, through multilateral and inclusive platforms, we can address the urgent and long-term challenges facing the globe.

Addressing impediments to Africa's growth will also benefit from the work of the Africa Expert Panel led by former Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel. The Panel offers strategic advice on strategies that advance Africa's development agenda. This includes emerging global and domestic developments and economic and development policies, and policy coherence. Its aim is to identify solutions that are apolitically feasible and practically implementable.

Through initiatives like the Compact with Africa, the South African G20 presidency is showcasing the progress and achievements of participating countries while deepening engagements with non-member African states and G20 partners.

The African Union's involvement is key to increasing the compact's visibility. Building on earlier successes, the second phase of

the Compact with Africa will focus on reform-orientated countries, enhancing technical assistance for these countries to focus on more impactful and results-orientated efforts, and strengthening the focus on local entrepreneurial activities.

Ultimately, these initiatives are about shaping Africa's future.

By fostering deeper cooperation, boosting infrastructure, and supporting sustainable growth, a strong foundation for a resilient, self-reliant Africa capable of thriving on the global stage is laid. This is Africa's moment to unlock its full potential—a future rooted in opportunity, innovation, and shared prosperity.

The G20's leadership under South Africa's presidency is committed to turning this vision into reality, ensuring Africa's long-term growth becomes a global priority. 

A central pillar of South Africa's G20 agenda is the elevation of Africa's development priorities within global discourse. This supports the African Union's Agenda 2063, which envisions a strong, united, resilient and influential continent.





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Africa in Global Economic Governance: South Africa's G20 Presidency and the measurable outcomes

As we host the G20 Leaders' Summit, we do so with pride in what we have achieved—but also with clarity about what remains to be done.

By Alvin Botes
Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

As I addressed the DIRCO–Sanlam Africa Outreach Programme earlier this year, I was reminded how deeply interconnected our world has become and how the choices we make as nations, regions, and multilateral partners carry profound consequences for the future of our shared global economy.

We are living through a time of converging global challenges: rising geopolitical tensions, uneven growth, widening inequality, climate disruption, and mounting debt burdens. Yet, amid these uncertainties, Africa's voice is stronger than ever. Our aim has been to ensure that Africa's priorities are not only heard, but reflected in measurable outcomes that advance development, justice, and sustainability—both for our continent and for the world.

Our presidency has been guided by three imperatives: solidarity, equality, and sustainability. These are not abstract ideals; they are lived realities for billions of people seeking a fair chance at prosperity. Through this lens, we have sought to make sure that Africa is not merely present in global economic governance, but central to shaping its future.

When the African Union (AU) secured its permanent membership of the G20 in 2023, it was not the end of a journey—it was the beginning of a responsibility. For the first time, Africa has both a voice and a vote in the premier forum for global economic cooperation.

Our task during South Africa's presidency has been to turn that voice into influence—to ensure that Africa's priorities are reflected in the G20's outcomes and that reform of the global financial architecture moves from aspiration to action.

The truth is that global financial governance remains skewed. Decision-making power within institutions like the International

Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization does not reflect the realities of today's global economy. Reform is not an act of charity—it is a matter of legitimacy and effectiveness.

Equally, the United Nations Security Council must evolve to reflect 21st-century realities. Africa cannot be expected to shoulder global responsibilities while remaining underrepresented in global decision-making.

Throughout our presidency, South Africa has worked tirelessly to highlight this imbalance and to press for meaningful reform. We have placed Africa at the centre of discussions on financial architecture, development finance, and global economic governance.

From the start, I have insisted that our G20 Presidency would not be about rhetoric; it would be about delivery. I am proud to share several of the measurable outcomes that have emerged under South Africa's leadership this year.

Outcomes:

1. The Extraordinary Committee on Global Inequality

In August 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa launched the G20 Extraordinary Committee of Independent Experts on Global Wealth Inequality, chaired by Nobel Laureate Professor Joseph Stiglitz.

For the first time, inequality is being treated not as a peripheral concern but as a systemic challenge undermining growth, peace, and stability. The Committee's four objectives are to:

- Generate global attention on surging wealth and income inequality;
- Forge alliances between governments and civil society;
- Provide credible, evidence-based analysis of inequality's economic and social impacts;
- Propose concrete policy solutions—from

progressive taxation to debt reform and just transition mechanisms.

The Committee's inaugural report, due next year, will be the first of its kind—shaping future global debates and influencing development financing and reform agendas.

2. The G20 Africa Cooperation Agenda (ACA)

Another defining achievement of our presidency is the G20 Africa Cooperation Agenda (ACA)—a practical framework for investment in Africa's productive sectors, health systems, infrastructure, and digital economy.

The ACA is not just a declaration; it is a roadmap for implementation. Aligned with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Agenda 2063, it focuses on three pillars:

- Supporting AfCFTA implementation through trade facilitation, digital protocols, and investment frameworks;
- Scaling up investment in productive sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, green industrialisation, and value-added minerals;
- Accelerating infrastructure integration through the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), covering energy, water, transport, and ICT.

Jointly managed by the AU and the African Development Bank (AfDB), the ACA embodies co-ownership and African leadership in shaping our development trajectory.

At the same time, we are partnering with the AU Commission and Germany to strengthen the Compact with Africa (CwA) initiative—aligning it with Agenda 2063's Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan to promote inclusive growth, industrialisation, and job creation.

3. The Cost of Capital Initiative

Access to affordable capital remains a major constraint for developing countries. To address this, we have launched a review of

the Cost of Capital during our G20 Presidency. A G20 Africa Expert Panel, chaired by former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, has been established to identify structural impediments to Africa's growth and propose solutions.

4. Progress on SDR Rechannelling and Multilateral Development Bank Reform

We have advanced Africa's long-standing demand for the reallocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to regional development banks like the AfDB. This ensures that liquidity support reaches the countries that need it most.

Furthermore, the G20 has made progress on the Capital Adequacy Framework Review, which will unlock new lending capacity and reduce the cost of capital for developing economies.

5. Debt Sustainability and Just Energy Transition

We continue to push for faster implementation of the Common Framework for Debt Treatment and for innovative instruments such as climate-resilient debt clauses. Restructuring agreements concluded this year have already freed up resources for education, health, and climate resilience in several African countries.

At the same time, we are championing Just Energy Transition financing—ensuring that Africa can industrialise while transitioning to cleaner energy sources. Our message is clear: Africa will not accept an energy transition that deepens inequality or hinders development.

Our presidency has also sought to frame the next phase of Africa's role in global economic governance.

Critical Minerals and Beneficiation: Africa holds a third of the world's critical minerals essential for the green transition. But exporting raw materials without value addition would repeat the mistakes of the past. Beneficiation and technology transfer must be non-negotiable.

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation: Digital sovereignty is a necessity, not a luxury. Under our Presidency, the G20—in partnership with UNESCO—launched the AI Initiative for Africa, which will train thousands of civil servants and policymakers while supporting national AI roadmaps aligned with international standards.

Food Security and Agricultural Transformation: Africa has the potential to feed both itself and the world. Through the G20 Sustainable Food Systems Task Force, we have channelled investment toward modernising agriculture and strengthening food resilience under the CAADP framework.

Inequality and Inclusive Growth: Our initiatives on inequality, debt relief, and digital inclusion reaffirm that growth must be inclusive and people-centred. Africa's progress cannot be measured by GDP alone—it must be seen in the opportunities created for our citizens.

Africa is no longer a peripheral player. With the AU at the G20 table, Agenda 2063 as our blueprint, and the AfCFTA as our flagship, Africa is asserting its rightful place in shaping global economic governance.

Reform of the international financial and trading systems is essential. Decisions affecting billions cannot continue to be made without equitable representation. South Africa's Presidency has championed a rebalancing of power within the IMF, World Bank, and WTO to ensure fairness, legitimacy, and inclusivity.

We also view the G20's adoption of high-level principles to combat illicit financial flows

Our message to the G20
and the world is simple
and unwavering:
Africa is ready. Africa
is capable. Africa is
indispensable.

as a critical step in addressing the severe economic impact these flows have on Africa's development.

As we host the G20 Leaders' Summit, we do so with pride in what we have achieved—but also with clarity about what remains to be done.

We have demonstrated that Africa can lead with vision, competence, and measurable impact. From the Africa Cooperation Agenda to the Stiglitz Committee, from debt relief to AI innovation, our Presidency has advanced outcomes that will outlast this year's term.

The milestones ahead are clear: implementing ACA projects, releasing the first global report on inequality, advancing SDR rechannelling, securing concessional finance for just energy transitions, scaling up AfCFTA-linked projects, and continuing the reform of global financial institutions.

Our message to the G20 and the world is simple and unwavering:

Africa is ready. Africa is capable. Africa is indispensable. 🌍

With the African Union at the G20 table, Agenda 2063 as our blueprint, and the AfCFTA as our flagship, Africa is asserting its rightful place in shaping global economic governance.





South Africa's G20 Presidency: Advancing Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability

Our Presidency is anchored in the theme *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*. This reflects South Africa's conviction that cooperation—not competition—is the key to overcoming the challenges of our era.

By Deputy Minister Tandi Moraka

Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), Republic of South Africa

When I arrived in Vhembe, at the University of Venda, for my first Group of 20 (G20) Community Outreach Programme, I was struck by the deep symbolism of the setting. Vhembe, whose name translates to “fountain of life,” truly captures the essence of what we aim to achieve during South Africa's G20 Presidency—to flow outward, nurture, and give life to a vision of inclusive global progress. The Venda saying, “Vhembe yo alama, yo ela, yo beba vhana vhayo” (“The Vhembe River has spread wide like an ocean, flowing and giving rise to its children”), resonates profoundly with this moment in our national and continental journey.

The phrase “think globally, act locally” has never felt more relevant. My visit to Limpopo formed part of our broader mission to bring the G20 closer to the people—to make this global forum meaningful not only to policymakers and diplomats, but to every South African whose life is shaped by the decisions made on the world stage.

On 1 December 2024, South Africa assumed the presidency of the G20—the first time in its history that an African nation leads this important global bloc. We will hold the presidency until 30 November 2025, and with it comes both immense pride and immense responsibility.

The G20 represents the world's major developed and developing economies—including China, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany, Brazil, India, and others. Together, G20 members account for roughly 85% of global gross domestic product, 75% of international trade, and two-thirds of the world's population. The African Union (AU) recently joined the bloc as a permanent member, cementing Africa's place at the heart of global decision-making.

This is not a ceremonial role. The G20 agenda influences issues that directly affect the lives of ordinary citizens—from trade and sustainable development to health, energy, climate, and anti-corruption. It is a platform where South Africa can pursue its national, continental, and multilateral priorities, and help shape the global order toward fairness, inclusion, and sustainability.

At the national level, our G20 Presidency aligns with the three strategic priorities of the Government of National Unity's Seventh Administration:

- Reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living.
- Building a capable, ethical, and developmental state,
- Driving inclusive growth and job creation.

These priorities are not isolated from the global agenda—they are deeply interconnected. The G20 allows us to situate our domestic development imperatives within broader multilateral frameworks, enabling South Africa to harness international cooperation for tangible national outcomes.

At the continental level, our presidency provides a platform to elevate Africa's voice. We are using this historic opportunity to spotlight the AU's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, and to champion the aspirations of the Global South.

The issues that matter most to developing nations are clear: achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring food and energy security, promoting industrialisation and trade, securing predictable financing for debt sustainability, and bolstering our capacity to respond to pandemics and natural disasters.

Inequality remains one of the greatest challenges of our time—within and between states. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed just how entrenched and structural this inequality is, exacerbating existing disparities across health, education, and economic opportunity. Left unchecked, inequality threatens global stability and weakens the very foundations of democracy. Addressing it requires bold, coordinated global action—and the G20 provides that forum.

One of South Africa's core priorities during our presidency is to drive consensus around reforming the International Financial Architecture (IFA). This includes strengthening the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to ensure they are more responsive to the needs of developing economies.

Our journey as a nation has always been defined by resilience and collaboration. Through the G20, we now have the chance to extend that spirit globally—advancing a world that is just, equitable, and sustainable for all.

The G20 agenda influences issues that directly affect the lives of ordinary citizens—from trade and sustainable development to health, energy, climate, and anti-corruption.

Our goal is to mobilise predictable, sustainable, and low-cost financing to support sustainable development and green transitions. Africa cannot be left behind in the race toward decarbonisation and innovation. The G20 must facilitate access to financing that allows developing countries to tackle debt vulnerabilities, invest in renewable energy, and pursue inclusive growth without compromising sovereignty.

An important dimension of this agenda is the Critical Minerals Initiative. The global demand for minerals essential to the energy transition—from lithium and cobalt to platinum and rare earths—is fuelling intense geopolitical competition. Africa, home to nearly 30% of the world's mineral reserves, is central to this new frontier.

South Africa, and particularly provinces like Limpopo, are richly endowed with these resources. Yet the question remains: how do we ensure that this abundance translates into equitable development for our communities?

Through our G20 Presidency, we aim to promote an inclusive framework that ensures resource-rich nations benefit fairly from their mineral wealth, with downstream value addition and sustainable industrialisation at the centre of the conversation.

Our Presidency is anchored in the theme *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*. This reflects South Africa's conviction that cooperation—not competition—is the key to overcoming the challenges of our era.

In a world marked by geopolitical tension and rising protectionism, we are advocating for renewed collaboration and partnership between nations. The principle of Ubuntu—"I am because we are"—captures the moral foundation of our approach. It reminds us that humanity's progress is interconnected and that collective prosperity depends on empathy, respect, and shared responsibility.

To bring this spirit to life, we have expanded dialogue beyond the 13 official G20 engagement groups through initiatives such as the G20 Social Summit, which involved communities and civil society in shaping the global agenda.

We are often asked: what does the G20 Presidency mean for South Africans? The answer is both economic and symbolic.

During our presidency, South Africa hosted more than 85 in-person meetings across all nine provinces, including five in Limpopo. These gatherings brought thousands of delegates, diplomats, and business leaders from across the world, injecting significant

value into the local tourism, hospitality, transport, and services sectors.

The year-long presidency culminates in the G20 Leaders' Summit, where over 40 Heads of State and Government are expected to attend. This is one of the largest and most logistically demanding undertakings in our democratic history—but also one of the most rewarding.

Beyond its immediate economic benefits, the Presidency provides an unparalleled opportunity to showcase South Africa's cultural diversity, innovation, and resilience. It allows us to tell our own story on the global stage—a story of progress, partnership, and potential.

The success of South Africa's G20 Presidency will depend on collective effort. Every province, city, and citizen has a role to play in shaping and sharing our narrative. The legacy we seek to leave is one of African solidarity and global credibility—proof that Africa is not a passive participant in world affairs but an active architect of its future.

As we take on this historic responsibility, I am mindful of the magnitude of the task before us. Yet I am equally confident in our capacity to deliver. Guided by unity of purpose and the principles of Ubuntu, we can transform this Presidency into a milestone of progress for South Africa, for Africa, and for the global community.

Our journey as a nation has always been defined by resilience and collaboration. Through the G20, we now have the chance to extend that spirit globally—advancing a world that is just, equitable, and sustainable for all. 🌍







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Agriculture at the heart of global resilience: South Africa leads G20 dialogue on inclusive growth and innovation

"Agriculture must be a source not only of food, but of hope, dignity, and opportunity for all."

South Africa reaffirmed its commitment to placing agriculture at the centre of the global development agenda as Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, welcomed Group of 20 (G20) delegates to the Ministerial Meeting of the Agriculture Working Group in Somerset West, Western Cape, earlier this year in September.

Set against the backdrop of South Africa's fertile agricultural heartland, the meeting gathered ministers, senior officials, and experts from across G20 member states to adopt key policy outcomes aimed at advancing food security, innovation, and sustainability.

Minister Steenhuisen underscored that from the onset of its G20 presidency, South Africa had sought to ensure agriculture occupied a central position in global policy deliberations. "Agriculture is not a sector that can be placed on the margins; it is the foundation of food security, livelihoods, and stability," he affirmed.

The country's leadership in the Agriculture Working Group has been guided by four key priorities:

- Inclusive market participation

- Empowerment of youth and women
- Innovation and technology transfer
- Building climate resilience

Promoting inclusive markets

The Minister highlighted that inclusivity must underpin agricultural development. Across Africa, smallholders, women, and youth form the backbone of production, yet often remain excluded from formal markets. South Africa's initiatives—such as the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme and blended finance schemes—have provided young and emerging farmers access to land, credit, and equipment, linking them to both local and export markets.

"The outcomes we consider today reflect this spirit," Minister Steenhuisen noted. "They commit us to policies and partnerships that make markets more open, transparent, and fair."

Empowering women and youth

Women make up nearly 60% of the agricultural labour force across the continent, yet continue to face barriers to land ownership, financing,



and technology. Minister Steenhuisen praised the rise of women-led cooperatives and youth-driven agribusinesses in South Africa, calling them examples of empowerment in action.

Institutions such as Fort Cox, Cedara, and Taung agricultural colleges are equipping the next generation of farmers and agripreneurs with the technical and managerial skills to thrive in a modern agricultural economy.

“Empowerment is not only a matter of fairness,” he said, “but a driver of innovation and resilience in our food systems.”

Fostering innovation and technology transfer

A key feature of South Africa’s G20 presidency has been advancing cooperation in agricultural science and innovation. The Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS), held earlier this year in Limpopo, deepened collaboration on soil health, water efficiency, biosecurity, and climate-smart technologies.

The Minister emphasised that research must be translated into tools farmers can use. From drought-tolerant cultivars to digital advisory systems and blockchain-based traceability, innovation is shaping the continent’s agricultural future.

“Innovation must be affordable, accessible, and inclusive, with smallholders as full

participants—not passive recipients,” Minister Steenhuisen stated.

Building climate resilience

Recognising climate change as the single greatest threat to global agriculture, the Minister called for intensified international collaboration on adaptation and resilience. Drawing lessons from the Western Cape’s 2017 drought, he highlighted how farmers have adopted drip irrigation, groundwater recharge, and diversified cropping to mitigate risk.

At the global level, he cited the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) as a vital tool for improving transparency and helping governments respond to market volatility. However, Steenhuisen stressed that further investment in climate finance—accessible to small-scale farmers—is essential to sustain innovation on the frontlines of climate change.

The Minister concluded by noting that the outcomes of the Somerset West meeting would inform broader G20 priorities, feeding into the Food Security Task Force deliberations and the G20 Leaders’ Summit.

“These outcomes matter,” he said. “For farmers, they mean greater access to resources and markets; for consumers, they mean safer food and more stable prices;

and for governments, they mean stronger rural economies and progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.”

With a call for unity and purpose, Minister Steenhuisen urged delegates to reaffirm their collective commitment to a more inclusive and sustainable global agricultural system. “Agriculture,” he concluded, “must be a source not only of food, but of hope, dignity, and opportunity for all.” ☸

Minister Steenhuisen underscored that from the onset of its G20 Presidency, South Africa had sought to ensure agriculture occupied a central position in global policy deliberations.





South Africa leads the fight against corruption at the inaugural **G20 Anti-Corruption Summit**

Drawing on the symbolism of the Western Cape's geography, where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet, Minister Buthelezi urged participants to unite in purpose: "Just as these oceans meet without borders, so must our resolve against corruption—uncompromising and leaving no routes for escape."

Earlier this year, the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi, delivered a powerful address at the Inaugural Group of 20 (G20) Anti-Corruption Summit, held in the Western Cape. Speaking on behalf of the Republic of South Africa, Minister Buthelezi welcomed delegates from G20 member states and guest countries to what he described as a "historic setting united by a common purpose—to confront corruption, an adversary that threatens the very fabric of democracies, economies, and societies."

Minister Buthelezi highlighted the significance of the occasion, noting that the

summit marked a defining moment not only for South Africa, as the first African nation to assume the G20 presidency, but also for the entire African continent and the Global South. Under the theme *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, he affirmed South Africa's unwavering commitment to fostering global cooperation to address the root causes of corruption.

He reminded delegates that corruption is a multifaceted challenge—from the misappropriation of public funds to bribery and nepotism—and emphasised that it both stemmed from and perpetuated poor governance. Corruption, he noted, undermined

public trust, weakened institutions, and deprived millions of citizens of essential services and opportunities. "Corruption," the Minister stressed, "is not just an economic crime but a betrayal of the trust that our people place in us. It must be uprooted at every level."

Since ratifying the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2004, South Africa has pursued a comprehensive and inclusive approach to combat corruption. Minister Buthelezi reaffirmed that this fight involved not only government but all sectors of society. He also emphasised the importance of robust institutions, legislative frameworks, and coordinated law enforcement agencies



in preventing, detecting, and prosecuting corruption effectively.

A key focus of the Minister's address was the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) and its role in strengthening public sector integrity. He noted that South Africa had adopted a multi-agency model to enhance coordination and effectiveness and outlined four national priorities aligned with the G20 ACWG Action Plan (2025–2027):

1. Strengthening public sector integrity by promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership.
2. Enhancing asset recovery efforts to ensure that stolen resources are returned for public benefit.
3. Fostering inclusive participation by engaging the public and private sectors, civil society, and academia.
4. Protecting whistle-blowers through stronger legislative and institutional safeguards.

"Corruption is not just an economic crime but a betrayal of the trust that our people place in us. It must be uprooted at every level."

Minister Buthelezi underscored that the protection of whistle-blowers remained critical, as fear of retaliation often discouraged individuals from reporting corruption. Creating an environment of safety and accountability, he said, was vital to ensuring that integrity flourished across all sectors.

He further noted that the ACWG operated under the St. Petersburg Strategic Framework of 2013, which guided its priorities and partnerships with G20 engagement groups such as Business 20 (B20), Civil Society 20 (C20), and Think 20 (T20). These collaborations, he explained, enabled a holistic approach to anti-corruption measures that integrated diverse perspectives.

Minister Buthelezi extended appreciation to Brazil for agreeing to co-chair the Working Group alongside South Africa, recognising its leadership and expertise in shaping meaningful outcomes. He also reaffirmed South Africa's commitment, as G20 President, to building upon previous summit commitments and accelerating the implementation of international legal instruments that reinforced the global fight against corruption.

Linking the summit's objectives to broader continental aspirations, he pointed out that its outcomes would align with the African Union's Agenda 2063, supporting the vision of good governance and sustainable development across Africa. He expressed confidence that the ACWG's work, which was focused on strengthening institutions, recovering assets, promoting inclusivity, and safeguarding whistle-blowers, would have a lasting global impact.

In closing, Minister Buthelezi reminded delegates that the fight against corruption

The ACWG's work, which is focused on strengthening institutions, recovering assets, promoting inclusivity, and safeguarding whistle-blowers, would have a lasting global impact.

was "not a sprint but a marathon" requiring steadfast commitment and collective action. He called on G20 nations to demonstrate leadership by example, setting a global standard for transparency and accountability. Drawing on the symbolism of the Western Cape's geography, where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet, he urged participants to unite in purpose:

"Just as these oceans meet without borders, so must our resolve against corruption—uncompromising and leaving no routes for escape."

The Minister concluded by expressing confidence that the summit would mark a turning point—from combatting corruption to prioritising its prevention—and reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to integrity, transparency, and sustainable governance. 🇿🇦





R410m

invested through the MultiChoice
Innovation Fund (MIF)

1980

jobs created through
the YES Program

1000+

jobs created
by MultiChoice

348

bursaries
awarded

79+

black-owned
SMEs supported

350

soccer players
promoted to PSL

An aerial night view of a city skyline, likely Johannesburg, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings illuminated. Overlaid on the image are various digital graphics, including a large circular radar-like pattern on the left, several sets of right-pointing chevrons (arrows) in the center, and a dotted grid pattern on the right. The sky is a deep blue with some light clouds.

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No Future without Culture

South Africa's presidency has taken the culture agenda to greater heights, seeking to anchor culture through a dynamic community of practice.

The Group of 20 (G20) Culture Working Group is a more recent addition to the workstreams under the Sherpa track. In the last five years, culture has come to the fore, beginning with the first G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting hosted by Saudi Arabia in 2020, and thereafter through the positioning of the G20 Culture Working Group (CWG) under the Italian Presidency in 2021. Culture has gained momentum under the successive presidencies of Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa. While reflecting the growing importance of culture in multilateral fora, this also reflects the G20's sophistication and expanded mandate and indicates the increasing global groundswell of opinion that culture should be viewed as a standalone in sustainable development and in its contribution to society and the economy. "No future without culture" and "nothing about us without us" has been the rallying cry of cultural activists and international organisations in recent times.

Since its establishment, the CWG has engaged with diverse priorities articulated by successive presidencies, fostering progress in areas such as the protection of cultural heritage—particularly against illicit trafficking—and the promotion of cultural and creative industries. This working group has taken a leading role in advocating for the integration of culture into sustainable development

agendas, advancing its recognition across other policy fora. The group has succeeded in expanding culture-related language agreed within other international fora, including the World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) MONDIACULT 2022 and 2025 as well as UNESCO Conventions or United Nations (UN) Resolutions.

Under the overarching presidency theme of *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, South Africa is leading the CWG in advancing a transformative vision that positions culture as a cornerstone of sustainable development and a pillar of human progress.

South Africa's presidency has taken the culture agenda to greater heights, seeking to anchor culture through a dynamic community of practice.

Increasingly, in side events, experts have been invited to present on a wide array of related topics. Knowledge building and dissemination have become supporting informed policy deliberations among member state as well as contributing to a broader knowledge ecosystem shared across all tracks. South Africa's leadership has also brought renewed attention to data, research and evidence-based policymaking as essential tools for valuing culture's contribution to development, drawing from frameworks such

as UNESCO's Cultural Statistics and the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Creative Economy Model.

An outcome-focused publication has been launched reflecting on the work of the 2025 Culture Working Group, including a series of webinars that unpacked the four priorities contained in the issue note. Leaving a documented legacy of the work done is critical for the sustainability and relevance of the group's work.

The Issue Note guiding this year's CWG outlines four interrelated priorities. "Safeguarding and Restitution of Cultural Heritage to Protect Human Rights" has been the first priority focusing on the restitution of cultural property at the centre of its presidency. Discussions on this priority reaffirm the importance of open, inclusive international dialogue on the return and restitution of cultural property, while also strengthening cooperation against illicit trafficking. The work of UNESCO, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) has also been highlighted. Discussions have emphasised the ethical and human rights based dimensions of restitution, the need for provenance research, and recognising the inclusion and consent of Indigenous Peoples and local and traditional communities in protecting and transmitting their heritage.



The second priority has been that of “Integrating Cultural Policies with Socio-Economic Strategies.” Discussions have centred on culture and development as going hand in hand. Culture’s role has been extended not only in providing a cultural identity and sense of belonging, but also determining how societies evolve, seek to innovate and out of crises are able to recover. The G20 culture discussions have also focused on integrating cultural policies within broader socio-economic frameworks to ensure inclusive, rights-based and equitable development. South Africa has followed on from Brazil’s presidency by championing a call to elevate language preservation and multilingualism as global cultural priorities, ensuring that digital innovation, language and economy, education and cultural industries reflect the world’s linguistic diversity and that digital platforms support discoverability and a diversity of content as well as tools.

G20 members have deliberated on ways to promote decent work and fair remuneration for artists and cultural professionals, strengthen public investment in culture, and promote cultural participation for all.

The third priority is: “Harnessing Digital Technologies for Culture and Sustainable Economies” and there is acknowledgement that digital transformation has revolutionised the way culture is created, preserved and shared. Deliberations have included how to harness this transformation for the public good, promoting inclusive and ethical digital ecosystems that protect cultural diversity and support fair opportunities for creators.

Strategies explored include how to bridge the digital divides, invest in infrastructure, and build digital skills among youth, women and marginalised communities. The governance of artificial intelligence (AI) has come to the fore and the need to ensure that its use in cultural production and heritage management is human-centred, transparent and rights-based, and that it safeguards intellectual property, creativity and linguistic diversity.

“No future without culture” and “nothing about us without us” has been the rallying cry of cultural activists and international organisations in recent times.

The fourth priority is “The Intersection of Culture and Climate Change: Shaping Global Responses.” The South African Presidency has also prioritised the cultural dimensions of climate change, recognising both the vulnerability of cultural heritage to environmental degradation and the potential of culture to inspire climate action. Discussions have focused on promoting culture-based climate strategies, drawing on Indigenous and local knowledge systems and aligning with international framework. By integrating culture into climate policies, the aim has been to foster resilience, adaptation and sustainable practices within the cultural and creative sectors—ensuring that culture contributes to the global response.

The spirit of solidarity has characterised South Africa’s approach to the work of the G20 CWG. The inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20 has been an important milestone; and this year with its full participation as well as that of African organisations and institutions, Africa’s heritage, aspirations, creativity and innovation have become central to the world’s cultural agenda.

Through this work, South Africa has guided the CWG towards a shared recognition: that culture is not merely a reflection of humanity’s achievements, but a dynamic area of engagement and that cultural domains have vast potential for economic growth and development and can accommodate youth and vulnerable groups in great numbers.

As negotiations have progressed from the first online meeting in February to physical gatherings in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, as well as many intercessional sessions and side events, there is a growing consensus emerging that the KwaDukuza Declaration, if adopted, will provide a roadmap for integrating culture across the G20 agenda, from education and employment to digital transformation and climate resilience.

The efforts of the 2025 CWG will also contribute to ongoing multilateral processes, including preparations for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (2027), where culture is expected to feature more prominently in global discussions on the post-2030 agenda. South Africa’s stewardship of the CWG has reaffirmed that culture is the heartbeat of sustainable development, seeking to unite rather than divide, and finding common ground among the world’s nations through shared heritage, through fostering creativity, and encapsulating an unshakeable and unwavering belief in humanity. 🌍





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Cape Town welcomes the world: South Africa's G20 Moment

As hosts, we welcome the world with the conviction that the digital economy must be inclusive, innovative, and just, for South Africa, for Africa, and for the world

By Solly Malatsi
Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies

From 22 September to 1 October 2025, Cape Town became the global stage for the Group of 20 (G20) Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) and the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Task Force. This marked the fourth and final leg of South Africa's G20 preparatory meetings for the Leaders' Summit in the ICT sector. The hosting journey started with a set of virtual meetings of the two workstreams we led in February. Earlier this year, we convened G20 digital meetings in Gqeberha (April) and Limpopo (June). Together, these four engagements represent a deliberate choice: to show that the digital transformation agenda is not confined to a single geography or demographic. It is a national and continental project, rooted in both local realities and global aspirations.

Why South Africa chose these three provinces for physical meetings

When we gathered in Gqeberha, the focus was on digital public infrastructure: the backbone systems that allow societies to deliver services more efficiently, transparently, and inclusively. The Eastern Cape, with its unique mix of industrial strength and grassroots innovation, was a fitting backdrop. It reminded us that digital tools must work for everyone. From a Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) exporting goods through the Port of Ngqura to a rural learner accessing online classes in Qunu.

In Limpopo, the contrast between rural and urban connectivity could not have been more striking. Hosting there allowed us to confront head-on the digital divide that exists within

nations, not just between them. Yet Limpopo also showed the promise of inclusion. Two young entrepreneurs from Gumbani Village, working on a second-hand computer, built NOVAR, a free e-learning platform that has now secured funding to scale. This was proof that innovation can rise from anywhere if we create enabling ecosystems.

In Cape Town, we aimed to integrate all these lessons into a global conversation. It is where global tech giants meet local innovators, where cutting-edge AI research intersects with pressing questions of access, fairness, and governance.

What was at stake in Cape Town

1. Connectivity as a human right

Connectivity is not a luxury; it is the foundation



In Gqeberha, we laid the foundations, in Limpopo, we saw the human face of digital inequality, in Cape Town, we charted the global path forward.

of participation in today's economy and society. South Africa's SA Connect programme is expanding broadband access, delivering affordable smart devices, and rolling out digital literacy initiatives nationwide.

As hosts, we will challenge the G20 to treat digital access as a basic right. Without universal connectivity, we risk deepening social and economic divides at the very moment when technology could be our greatest equaliser.

2. Digital public infrastructure with public value

At the June meeting in Limpopo, South Africa proposed a Public Value Measurement Framework. This framework helps countries assess digital public infrastructure not only for technical efficiency but also for social value: Does it empower citizens? Does it enhance trust in government? Does it mitigate risks?

Cape Town built momentum on this framework, offering a roadmap for governments to design DPI that earned legitimacy because it serves people first.

3. Empowering MSMEs through digital ecosystems

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are not just economic actors; they are engines of resilience, job creation, and local problem-solving. In South Africa, MSMEs have pioneered fintech platforms in Khayelitsha, agritech apps in Limpopo, and e-learning solutions across provinces.

But too often, MSMEs face barriers to scale due to lack of capital, skills, and digital ecosystems that support them. In Cape Town, we highlighted policies and partnerships that enabled MSMEs to thrive so that the next NOVAR was not an exception but part of a broader wave of African digital innovation.

4. Artificial intelligence: Growth with fairness

Artificial intelligence (AI) holds extraordinary potential but also extraordinary risk. Without deliberate guardrails, AI could amplify bias, exclusion, and disinformation. That is why



South Africa, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is developing a toolkit for equitable AI, addressing issues of fairness, transparency, and accountability.

At the Cape Town meetings, the AI Task Force deepened these discussions. Our goal was clear: to ensure that AI does not widen divides but instead drives inclusive growth and responsible innovation.

Africa's voice at the global table

By hosting G20 meetings in Gqeberha, Limpopo and Cape Town, South Africa has demonstrated that Africa is not a passive recipient of global digital policy but that it is an active shaper of the future.

We bring perspectives forged in rural villages and urban innovation hubs alike. We bring solutions born of necessity but brimming with creativity, and we bring a conviction that global digital governance must be inclusive, fair, and just.

The G20 is at its best when it listens to all voices, not only the most powerful ones.

In Cape Town, South Africa, we ensured that the voices of the Global South and especially Africa, are heard and integrated into the global digital economy agenda.

Looking ahead

Cape Town's deliberations have shaped the contours of what digital cooperation looks like in practice.

For South Africa, this is more than diplomacy. It is about building a future where a child in Lusikisiki can learn online as easily as one in Sandton; a small business in Polokwane can sell to the world; and an African-developed AI model can compete on equal footing globally.

In Gqeberha, we laid the foundations. In Limpopo, we saw the human face of digital inequality.

In Cape Town, we charted the global path forward.

As hosts, we welcome the world with the conviction that the digital economy must be inclusive, innovative, and just, for South Africa, for Africa, and for the world. 🌍

We bring perspectives forged in rural villages and urban innovation hubs alike. We bring solutions born of necessity but brimming with creativity, and we bring a conviction that global digital governance must be inclusive, fair, and just.



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DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Building resilience through nature and community:

South Africa's leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction

In the spirit of solidarity that defines South Africa's G20 Presidency, the message resonated clearly—that the future of disaster risk reduction lies not merely in infrastructure, but in empathy, inclusion, and shared stewardship of our planet.

Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, delivered the opening address at the (Group of 20) G20 Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR) Working Group Outreach Event held at Green Point Urban Park in Cape Town in September. The event, hosted under South Africa's G20 Presidency, brought together global and local partners to explore innovative solutions for strengthening resilience in the face of growing climate-related disasters.

Standing before delegates in the park's Eco Dome and Amphitheatre—symbols of urban sustainability and community engagement—Minister Hlabisa reflected on the venue's significance as “a living testament to the challenges and opportunities we face in building a safer, more sustainable future for our coastal communities.”

As host of this pivotal gathering, South Africa reaffirmed its G20 Presidency's guiding principles of solidarity, equality, and sustainability. These are not abstract values, but the pillars of a collective response to the accelerating impacts of climate change, coastal degradation, and urban vulnerability.

A nation on the frontline of climate resilience

Like many coastal nations, South Africa is experiencing firsthand the realities of rising sea levels, intensifying storm surges, and coastal erosion. Cape Town's Atlantic coastline, stretching from Mouille Point to Sea Point, bears visible testimony to these threats, where infrastructure, livelihoods, and ecosystems intersect under growing pressure.

Yet, within this vulnerability lies innovation. The Eco Dome and Amphitheatre, venues for the outreach event, stand as examples

of nature-based design and community engagement—proof that resilience is built not only through engineering, but through collaboration, foresight, and respect for natural systems.

Integrating disaster risk reduction into governance

Minister Hlabisa underscored South Africa's unwavering commitment to advancing the global DRR agenda, emphasising that disaster preparedness and risk mitigation must be mainstreamed across all levels of governance—from municipal planning to traditional leadership.

This approach is already taking shape across provinces through:

- Risk-informed urban planning in housing and transport sectors,
- Strengthened early warning systems,
- Investment in resilient infrastructure, and

- Community empowerment programmes that position citizens as active agents of safety.

The Minister highlighted that DRR could not be a top-down process; it had to be co-created with communities. Traditional leaders, he noted, played an essential role in stewarding land, preserving cultural knowledge, and mobilising collective action — especially in rural and peri-urban contexts.

Nature-based solutions for coastal protection

South Africa's coastline, stretching over 3 000 kilometres, sustains millions of people, rich biodiversity, and vital economic hubs — from fishing villages and wetlands to tourism and trade infrastructure. But these lifelines are increasingly under threat.

Minister Hlabisa declared coastal protection a national imperative, calling for a holistic response that balances engineered defences with Ecosystem-based Approaches (EbA). Under Priority 6 of the G20 DRR Working Group, South Africa is advancing Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) as cost-effective, sustainable instruments for resilience.

Among the country's leading initiatives are:

- Dune rehabilitation projects in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, stabilising shorelines and shielding inland communities;
- Urban green belts and bioswales in Cape

Town that mitigate flood risks; and

- Wetland restoration efforts that enhance biodiversity and act as natural buffers against extreme weather.

These projects exemplify how ecological thinking is being woven into urban and coastal planning, informed by indigenous knowledge and driven by community participation.

Community empowerment at the core

Programmes such as Safer Places of Worship, Fire Wise, Floodwise, and Beating the Heat are empowering citizens to assess and manage risks in their own environments. The City of Cape Town's Disaster Risk Management Volunteer Programme was also lauded as a shining model of civic engagement, where volunteers act not only as responders, but as educators and advocates for public safety.

"Resilience is a shared responsibility," Minister Hlabisa affirmed. "It requires collaboration across borders, sectors, and disciplines."

Strengthening global partnerships

In his closing remarks, the Minister called upon G20 partners to deepen cooperation in:

- Technology transfer for hazard mapping, data analytics, and predictive modelling;
- Innovative financing through climate funds and public-private partnerships;
- Joint research and innovation pilots exploring sustainable materials and ecological designs; and

- South-South cooperation, leveraging developing nations' experiences to craft inclusive and locally grounded solutions.

From Green Point to global action

The outreach event at Green Point was more than a showcase — it was a vision in motion. As delegates engaged with community exhibits and local practitioners, they witnessed resilience in action: a living example of how science, policy, and society can converge for collective safety and sustainability.

"Let Green Point not only be a venue, but a vision," Minister Hlabisa urged. "Let us protect our coasts not just with concrete, but with conscience."

In the spirit of solidarity that defines South Africa's G20 Presidency, the message resonated clearly—that the future of disaster risk reduction lies not merely in infrastructure, but in empathy, inclusion, and shared stewardship of our planet. 🌍

"Resilience is a shared responsibility. It requires collaboration across borders, sectors, and disciplines."





Africa at the forefront:

South Africa hosts historic G20 Development Working Group Ministerial in Kruger National Park

"From illicit finance to inclusive social protection, these agreements reflect not just what we stand for but what we stand to gain when we act together,"

By Jesselene Pandaram, Acting Deputy Director: Media Liaison, Content, Speechwriting and Assistant Director: Graphic Design at the Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation.

From the iconic Kruger National Park, a historic moment unfolded as South Africa became the first African country to host a Group of 20 (G20) Development Working Group (DWG) Ministerial Meeting. Held in July this year, this high-level engagement was chaired by Minister Maropene Ramokgopa, Minister in

The Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and marked a powerful shift in global development discourse towards the priorities of the Global South.

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of Skukuza Safari Lodge, the meeting brought together G20 Development Ministers, invited guest countries, and international

organisations under the theme of South Africa's G20 Presidency, *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*.

In her opening remarks, Minister Ramokgopa emphasised that the challenges of our time, which are climate change, fragile global supply chains, and persistent inequality, cannot be tackled in silos.



"South Africa's G20 Presidency is not just about convening meetings. It is about shifting the centre of gravity in global conversations and placing people and planet at the heart of development."

"What we witnessed in Skukuza was more than a meeting; it was a collective recommitment to global solidarity. We are seeing a stronger voice from the Global South that is shaping the future of multilateral development cooperation."

The G20 DWG Ministerial Meeting concluded with the adoption of three landmark outcomes:

- The 2025 G20 Skukuza Development Ministerial Declaration
- A Call to Action on Universal Social Protection Systems and Social Protection Floors
- A Call to Action on Combatting Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)

In addition, a Chairperson's Statement on Global Public Goods, which includes a proposal to establish an Ubuntu Commission, was issued by the South African presidency to guide continued dialogue and cooperation on equitable global development.

These outcomes reflect a united commitment to accelerating progress on the SDGs through inclusive, just, and transformative policies. The discussions centred around four key

"South Africa's G20 Presidency is not just about convening meetings. It is about shifting the centre of gravity in global conversations and placing people and planet at the heart of development."

focus areas: expanding universal access to social protection; combatting IFFs that undermine development; strengthening domestic resource mobilisation; and ensuring global public goods are equitably accessed and sustainably financed.

The Chairperson of the G20 DWG and Outcome Facilitator at DPME, Josephilda Nhlapo-Hlope, praised the spirit of consensus and cooperation shown by all participants, "What we witnessed in Skukuza was more than a meeting; it was a collective recommitment to global solidarity. We are seeing a stronger voice from the Global South that is shaping the future of multilateral development cooperation."

Beyond declarations, the meeting underscored the urgent need for global financial reform and stronger partnerships to address systemic inequities. South Africa's leadership is already influencing the G20 agenda, with the outcomes from Skukuza set to inform deliberations at the G20 Leaders' Summit.

"From illicit finance to inclusive social protection, these agreements reflect not just what we stand for but what we stand to gain when we act together," Minister Ramokgopa concluded. 🌱





Education professionals for a changing world:

A global narrative from the third G20 Education Working Group Meeting

This gathering laid the foundation for a new global compact for teachers—one that champions excellence, equity and collective responsibility.

By Writer: G20 Education Working Group content team

The coastal town of Zimbali, in KwaZulu-Natal, became a locus of global reflection as education leaders, policymakers, and academics convened for the Third G20 Education Working Group (EdWG) Meeting. Hosted under South Africa's G20 Presidency, the meeting centred on a unifying theme, *Education Professionals for a Changing World*. Against a backdrop of geopolitical shifts, technological transformation, and widening inequities, this gathering underscored a

profound truth: educators are not only the backbone of learning systems—they are catalysts for social renewal.

Teachers as system shapers

Throughout the meeting, the centrality of teachers was reaffirmed with clarity and conviction. Their influence transcends instruction; they cultivate resilience, mediate anxiety and ignite curiosity in the classroom. Yet across the globe, persistent challenges weaken their capacity to thrive. Attrition in

remote areas, ageing demographics and eroding public esteem have converged to create a crisis in the profession. Delegates expressed concern over burnout, inequitable continuing professional development (CPD) access and administrative overload. These issues, exacerbated by digital disruption and economic pressures, call for urgent systemic reinvestment.

At the heart of every thriving education system is a teacher who is respected, well-trained, and motivated. The message

was clear: investing in teachers is more than educational policy—it is a moral and developmental imperative.

Interconnected pathways to reform

Discussions naturally gravitated toward three interwoven pillars that must inform systemic change:

- Cultivating a capable and professional teaching workforce.
- Reimagining continuous development through lifelong learning ecosystems.
- Aligning teaching competencies with evolving curricula and learning environments.

These pillars are interconnected, each reinforcing the others. Without strong, skilled educators, new curricula remain ineffective; without ongoing support, even the most talented teachers face stagnation. Delegates shared a litany of challenges—lack of succession planning, marginalisation of substitute educators, outdated data systems and mounting psychological stress—all of which highlighted the need for resilient, adaptive planning and more inclusive professional development.

Innovative models and promising practices

Hope emerged through shared innovations that are reshaping the profession. Countries like India and China showcased scalable digital CPD models reaching millions. The United Kingdom's teacher census demonstrated how data can personalise learning and support retention. Other nations highlighted hybrid career tracks, exchange programmes and mobility frameworks that foster regional collaboration and mutual recognition.

The projected global demand for 44 million teachers by 2030 underscores the scale of the challenge. Solutions lie not only in recruitment but in making teaching an aspirational career, with competitive salaries, clear progression routes and compelling public narratives that honour teachers' contributions to society.

Teaching beyond the classroom: life-wide and lifelong learning

As delegates explored the changing nature of teaching, a broader paradigm took shape:

professional development must evolve beyond pedagogy and subject knowledge to include relational intelligence, emotional literacy and leadership capacities. Especially in Early Childhood Development (ECD), frameworks now emphasise care, empathy and community-building.

Inspired by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's call for lifelong learning, the meeting embraced education as a system that extends into community centres, vocational hubs, libraries and workplaces. The inclusion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training and ECD professionals, and those who train teachers, reflects a growing awareness that the entire learning ecosystem must be capacitated.

Professional growth

Mentorship, coaching and peer-led learning were championed as low-cost, high-impact methods for professional growth. Schools can become vibrant hubs of inquiry and reflection, fostering cultures of collaboration and shared practice. Countries are now emphasising teacher-led models, blended training platforms, and flexible learning pathways tailored to individual career stages and local contexts.

Strategic planning and partnership for impact

Building a professional teaching workforce requires agile planning systems capable of responding to acute shortages and fragility. Emergency training programmes, substitute staff integration, and psychosocial support for new teachers were surfaced as vital strategies. But as several participants noted, policy alone is not enough. Transformative change demands collective action.

Delegates underscored the importance of partnerships between government, unions, higher education institutions, civil society, private sector innovators, and media platforms. Collaboration must extend into classrooms and communities, where parents and local leaders play crucial roles in affirming the dignity and prestige of teachers.

Monitoring, evaluation and real-time data collection were flagged as essential for continuous improvement. More granular

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insights into migration trends, teacher deployment, performance and certification are critical for informed policy and resource allocation.

Toward a global compact for teachers

As the curtains closed on the meeting, the sentiment was unmistakable: teachers are nation-builders. To invest in their capacity and wellbeing is to invest in the future itself. South Africa's G20 Presidency, rooted in the values of Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability, provided a powerful platform for global collaboration.

This gathering laid the foundation for a new global compact for teachers—one that champions excellence, equity and collective responsibility. The work now continues in every country, classroom and policy chamber. By translating these insights into concrete country-level actions, we move closer to education systems that are not only fit for the future but inspired by humanity, dignity and hope. 🌍

This article first appeared in *The Public Sector Manager* magazine



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POWERING POSSIBILITY

A landmark for global labour: G20 ministers forge a historic consensus with the Fancourt Declaration, championing a future of dignity, equity, and prosperity for all

Placing decent work and shared prosperity at the heart of the global agenda is the only path to building societies that are truly equitable and resilient.

By Nomakhosazana Meth
Minister of Employment and Labour

In a resounding display of global solidarity, the Group of 20 (G20) Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM) culminated in a momentous achievement: the unanimous adoption of the visionary G20 Fancourt Declaration. Convened under the esteemed leadership of South Africa's 2025 G20 Presidency, this landmark agreement marks a bold and unified leap towards a future labour market that is not only sustainable and resilient but fundamentally more just and inclusive for every citizen.

Inspired by the powerful theme of South Africa's presidency—*Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*—the meeting transcended dialogue to deliver actionable commitments. It directly confronted the pressing challenges of our time, captured in the LEMM theme, *Living and Working in an Unequal World: Ensuring Decent Work and Decent Lives*.

Against a backdrop of unprecedented global transitions, the ministers issued a powerful, collective affirmation: that placing decent work and shared prosperity at the heart of the global

agenda is the only path to building societies that are truly equitable and resilient. The declaration stands as a beacon, championing the inviolable protection of labour and human rights, the strengthening of robust labour institutions and the indispensable role of social dialogue and international cooperation.

With great pride, Jacky Molisane, Chairperson of the G20 Employment Working Group (EWG) and Acting Director-General of South Africa's Department of Employment and Labour, presented the Declaration. "Today, we



"The G20 Fancourt Declaration is a testament to what we can achieve through collaboration—a visionary blueprint for a fairer world where every worker's dignity is upheld. This is a proud legacy of our presidency."



have not merely reaffirmed our commitments; we have ignited a new chapter for the global workforce," she proclaimed. "The G20 Fancourt Declaration is a testament to what we can achieve through collaboration—a visionary blueprint for a fairer world where every worker's dignity is upheld. This is a proud legacy of our presidency."

A new dawn for global labour: pillars of the Fancourt Declaration

The Declaration sets forth an ambitious and comprehensive framework for action, with several groundbreaking initiatives:

1. A generational pact: The Nelson Mandela Bay G20 Target on Youth Employment: In a truly inspirational move, the G20 launched a

powerful new target to slash the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) by a further 5% by 2030. This holistic strategy promises to unlock the potential of millions by combating school drop-outs, dramatically expanding hands-on learning opportunities, and championing the mental wellbeing of young people.

2. Building a data-driven safety net:

Committing to leave no one behind, ministers vowed to fortify the world's social protection systems through superior, evidence-based policymaking. In a key decision, they have commissioned the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to pioneer a groundbreaking international reference classification for occupations, a vital tool for ensuring fair and portable protections for workers everywhere.

3. An unwavering march towards fairness:

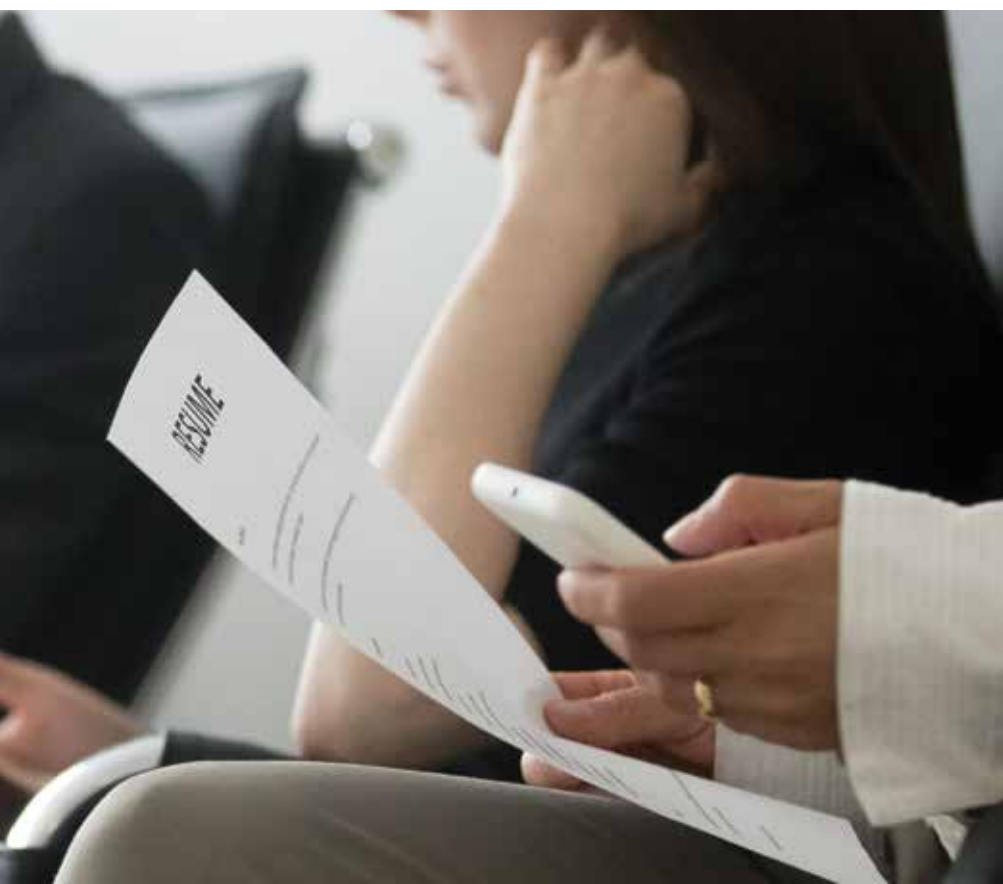
The declaration powerfully renews the crusade against inequality in the world of work. It places governments and social partners at the forefront of a shared mission to promote decent work, secure fair labour income, and accelerate the achievement of true gender equality in every workforce.

4. A symphony of global collaboration:

Embodying the spirit of solidarity, ministers pledged to deepen the G20's synergistic partnerships with leading international organisations and to energise its dialogue with labour (L20), business (B20), and civil society. This collaborative engine will drive a shared agenda for sustainable and inclusive economic growth that benefits all.

The successful two-day LEMM in George, Western Cape was the crowning achievement of an intensive four-meeting technical process, where experts laid the groundwork for this historic consensus on inclusive growth, job creation, and the opportunities of digitalisation.

The adopted G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration now ascends to the G20 Leaders' Summit in November 2025, carrying with it the promise of transformative global action to secure decent work and decent lives for generations to come. 🌍





South Africa's G20 legacy programme to tackle energy inefficiency in Africa

The AfEEF is a collaboration initiative between the department, the African Union (AU) Commission through the African Energy Commission (AFREC), and the United Nations Environment Programme.

The Africa Energy Efficiency Facility (AfEEF), a legacy project of South Africa's G20 Presidency, aims to mobilise US\$3 billion over the next few years in a bid to combat crippling energy inefficiencies across the continent.

This according to Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy, Samantha Graham-Maré, who spoke at the legacy launch of

the AfEEF in Durban, held ahead of the G20 Energy Transitions Working Group (ETWG) meetings.

Deputy Minister Graham-Maré noted that energy inefficiencies in Africa have reached levels of up to 60% in some areas, leaving millions of people completely without access to electricity and others without clean cooking solutions.

"The Africa Energy Efficiency Facility is a response to this urgent need. AfEEF is envisaged to serve as a continental platform to mobilise finance at scale, with a target of US\$3 billion by 2030; support member states to harmonise energy efficiency policies and regulations; build technical capacity across our regions and institutions; and promote digitalisation and innovation through systems



“It is about the mother who should not cook over smoky firewood, the student who deserves light to study at night, and the entrepreneur who needs reliable power to grow a business. The Africa Energy Efficiency Facility concept is our promise to them.”

“Together, let us make AfEEF idea not just an initiative, but a movement. A movement that lights up homes, powers industries, and gives our children a cleaner, safer, more prosperous Africa,” Deputy Minister Graham-Maré said.

She emphasised that energy efficiency is “not a technical choice; it is a human imperative”.

“It is about the mother who should not cook over smoky firewood, the student who deserves light to study at night, and the entrepreneur who needs reliable power to grow a business.

“The Africa Energy Efficiency Facility concept is our promise to them. A promise that we will not stand still while millions remain in the dark. A promise that we will unlock Africa’s energy productivity, not tomorrow, but today,” Deputy Minister Graham-Maré said. ¶

This article first appeared on www.SAnews.gov.za

such as energy management and appliance databases.

“Energy Efficiency is our ‘first fuel’. It is the fastest, cheapest, and most sustainable way to close the gap between energy demand and supply. It is not simply about saving energy, it is about creating opportunities for growth, jobs, and better lives for all,” she said.

Deputy Minister Graham-Maré explained that the AfEEF had the potential to:

- Improve efficiency by at least 12% by 2030
- Create some one million “green” jobs by 2040
- Avoid the need for up to 40 gigawatts of new generation capacity saving billions in investment
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 300 million tonnes of CO₂.

“This is not just a technical problem. It is a human rights problem. It affects the health of our children, the productivity of our industries, the education of our youth, and the dignity of our households.

“Without addressing these inefficiencies, we cannot hope to unlock Africa’s full potential,” the Deputy Minister said.

Building partnerships

The AfEEF is a collaboration initiative between the department, the AU Commission through

the African Energy Commission (AFREC), and the United Nations Environment Programme.

The foundations of the initiative were laid at the second and third ETWG meetings held in the Western Cape and North West earlier this year.

The programme is aligned to the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the African Energy Efficiency Strategy and directly responds to the UN Sustainable Development Goals 7 and 13, focusing on energy access and climate action.

“Its value lies in the symbolism of Africa’s unity and resolve. It signals to our citizens, our partners, and the world, that Africa is ready to take charge of its energy future and that we are prepared to act together, decisively and ambitiously.

“But a facility is only as strong as the partnerships that sustain it. I therefore call upon our AU Member States, to embrace AfEEF and integrate its objectives into national strategies; our development partners and financial institutions, to walk with us, to invest, and to share knowledge; our private sector actors, to seize the opportunities in building markets, delivering technologies, and creating jobs; and our civil society and academia, to help ensure accountability, inclusivity, and innovation.





How private capital can deliver on **G20's six sustainability priorities**

The urgency of climate action and the provision of the requisite support, on mitigation and adaptation, as well as loss and damage, cannot be overstated.

By Narend Singh
Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

As the South African Group of 20 (G20) unfolds, I wish to reiterate what was said during the first G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) meeting in March: we are less than five years away from our deadline to achieve the sustainable development goals and the end of this critical decade for climate action.

The second meeting of the ECSWG has crystallised six interlocking priorities—each a potential growth engine for the private sector. With fewer than five years to hit the sustainable development goals and cap this decisive decade for climate action, corporates must marshal capital, technology, and expertise to turn ecological imperatives into resilient returns.

These priorities have been carefully chosen. They build on the successes and key outcomes of the previous G20 environment and climate sustainability working group presidencies, particularly those of Brazil, India, and Indonesia, and are aligned to the objectives contained in the African Union's

Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want, the blueprint for the continent's sustainable development.

The priority area of biodiversity and conservation focuses on sharing experiences on the national biodiversity strategies and action plans and their role in effectively realising the aspirations and ambitions of the global biodiversity framework. Indeed, the G20 can play a crucial part in halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030, aiming for a "nature-positive world" for the benefit of people and the planet.

Building on the Brazilian presidency's initiative on bioeconomy, this priority area will also deal with the role of the bioeconomy, nature economy, and wildlife economy in contributing to the livelihoods of communities.

Here, we recognise the critical role of traditional and indigenous communities in biodiversity stewardship and anti-poaching, as a foundation for sustainable livelihoods.

We have also recognised the importance of addressing the issue of environmental crime within the G20. Indeed, in many

countries endowed with large forests and rich biodiversity as well as other natural resources, the risks of illegal logging, illicit mining, poaching, and wildlife trafficking are threatening the achievement of environmental, economic, and social developmental imperatives. It is therefore important that as the G20, we send a strong and clear message in this regard.

The second priority area is land degradation, desertification, and drought, including water sustainability. Achieving land degradation neutrality requires the following concurrent actions:

- Avoiding new degradation of land by maintaining existing healthy land.
- Reducing existing degradation by adopting sustainable land management and regenerative practices, focusing on integrated water resource management, while increasing biodiversity, soil health and food production.
- Scaling up efforts to restore and return degraded lands to a natural or more productive state.



Given the limited resources to address environmental problems in today's global economy, there is a need for us as countries to pool our resources to address these challenges synergistically. Therefore, focusing on land degradation neutrality represents a major opportunity to contribute to sustainable development by scaling up good practices and pilot activities through large-scale transformative projects and programmes. These initiatives can generate multiple benefits, including positive changes in human well-being, poverty alleviation, and the restoration of terrestrial ecosystems and their services.

Importantly, we aim to navigate these complexities with respect for the rights of landholders, especially of marginalised, traditional and indigenous communities.

The third priority focuses on chemicals and waste management, which includes the subpriorities of sustainable chemicals management; the circular economy; waste management; waste to energy; and extended producer responsibility implementation. The G20 can notably support the development of a legally binding international treaty to combat plastic pollution, as agreed at the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2022.

This priority area recognises, among other things, the importance of promoting and increasing capacity for the circular economy as a regenerative system designed to minimise resource input, waste, emissions and energy loss by promoting activities such as design for longevity, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing and recycling.

Furthermore, the continued and growing global demand for, and supply and use of, pesticides and industrial chemicals, as well as mounting waste from rapid increases in critical minerals mining and processing, present a

significant health and environmental risk if poorly managed. Opportunities to transition relevant sectors to safe and nonchemical alternatives exist; it is upon us as a collective to realise that we are faced with the challenge of increased pollution from chemicals. This is an issue that the ECSWG is well-positioned to address.

The fourth priority area is on climate change, with a focus on the just transitions beyond the scope of the energy transition; adaptation and resilience; loss and damage, and now this priority also includes a subpriority on mitigation within the context of low carbon economic development and other co-benefits beyond the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The urgency of climate action and the provision of the requisite support, on mitigation and adaptation, as well as loss and damage, cannot be overstated. The G20 process provides an opportunity to deliberate on and agree to steps to accelerate climate action and support at the required scale reflected in the outcome of the first global stocktake.

As a primary outcome of our G20 presidency this year, South Africa will explore ways that the G20 can leverage opportunities to increase the scale and flows of climate finance. It is paramount for developing economy countries to be actively supported in their efforts to achieve “whole of society and whole of economy” just transitions to sustainable development on the ground, through scaled access to low-cost finance, technology, capacity development, and skills transfer.

The fifth priority area is now dedicated to air quality. It is also increasingly recognised that many people globally are exposed to unhealthy and often deadly levels of air pollution, and that the impacts of air pollution extend beyond health—affecting climate, biodiversity, ecosystems and economic development. This is also a key issue that

needs to be addressed, and to which this working group can contribute. Furthermore, we should not lose the significance of the synergies between decarbonisation and the improvement of air quality.

The final priority area is oceans and coasts, which focuses on the importance of marine spatial planning as an integrated approach to improving the rational planning, management and governance of the ocean space and marine resources. Marine spatial planning is also critical as a resilience investment to protect people and critical infrastructure from a climate change-driven increase in extreme weather events.

More broadly, the blue economy approach can make a significant contribution to the livelihood of coastal communities around the globe as well as addressing climate change. Its sustainable, long-term development should be promoted and enhanced through collective action at the level of the G20. It is also recognised that plastic pollution poses a significant threat to coastal and marine environments, affecting marine life, human health, and livelihoods, which needs to be addressed in an integrated and coordinated manner. ¶

This article was originally published on www.businesslive.co.za

The G20 can play a crucial part in halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030, aiming for a “nature-positive world” for the benefit of people and the planet.



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G20 dive into diagnostics

Under South Africa's G20 presidency, the HWG has prioritised science and innovation as a driver of both health and economic growth.

At the fourth Health Working Group (HWG) Meeting of South Africa's Group of 20 (G20) presidency, South Africa's National Department of Health, the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND), and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) convened a high-level co-branded event, *Dive into Diagnostics* to demonstrate the critical role of diagnostics in achieving the goals of Priority Area 5 of the HWG, Harnessing Science and Innovation for Healthier Societies and Thriving Economies.

Leaders from government, industry and civil society gave expert perspectives on the critical importance of diagnostics to public health and as a contributor to economic growth.

G20 member states representatives from Brazil, India, South Korea, Singapore and South Africa shared national experiences in advancing the World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution on Diagnostics.

"Diagnostics underpin all of our health goals, from pandemic preparedness to tackling Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and reducing the burden of non-communicable disease,"

said Dr Ayoade Alakija, FIND Board Chair. "If we really want to save lives, drive development and pandemic-proof our societies and economies, investing in diagnostics is critical. The G20 can turn political will into policy action to ensure everyone has access to good quality diagnostics.

Under South Africa's G20 presidency, the HWG has prioritised science and innovation as a driver of both health and economic growth. Today, leaders from government, industry, and civil society came together to share expert insights, success stories, demonstrating how diagnostic innovation, and investment in science, are delivering progress across health and development. They also highlighted the gaps where more support is needed. For example, building human capacity in country, reducing costs of raw materials and addressing barriers to market access.

"Diagnostics have long been overlooked and underfunded, yet they hold immense potential to fortify health and economies," said Dr Ifedayo Adetifa, CEO of FIND. "The South African G20 presidency has recognised science and innovation as catalysts for

producing health and wealth. Diagnostics must be at the heart of the "health for all" agenda. This landmark meeting is a vital opportunity to galvanise policy commitments, identify systemic barriers, and advance the innovation and investment needed to strengthen the diagnostic ecosystem."

Accurate, accessible, and timely diagnostics are essential for effective patient care and the foundation of broader health priorities such as universal health coverage (UHC), pandemic preparedness and the fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Yet nearly half the world still lacks access to basic diagnostics. Prioritising sustained investment to foster scientific innovation in diagnostics and improved access to underutilised diagnostics are critical steps toward closing this gap, building resilient health systems and achieving global health security.

Dr Aquina Thulare, Technical Adviser, National Department of Health, South Africa stated that, "South Africa is committed to advancing equitable solutions to address the health challenges of today, such as the diagnostics gap, and we recognise that



system, support local manufacturing and advance gender equity.

The side event concluded with a high-level panel featuring an update on the World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution on Diagnostics from Dr Yukiko Nakatani, Assistant Director-General at the World Health Organization (WHO), who emphasised the value of the partnership with FIND and thanked FIND for keeping diagnostics high on the political agenda. G20 member state representatives from Brazil, India, South Korea, South Africa and Singapore shared national experiences in closing the diagnostics gap to conclude the session.

"The strategies and case studies on accelerating science, innovation and investment in diagnostics shared by countries and industry leaders have clearly demonstrated the transformative power of diagnostics and the strong return on investment they yield. By building on the momentum generated today and scaling up these solutions, we can fully realize the potential of diagnostics to drive lasting health, development and economic gains," said Dr Rachel Chikwamba, CSIR Group Executive for Advanced Chemistry and Life Sciences. ^U

This article first appeared on www.csir.co.za

The G20 can turn political will into policy action to ensure everyone has access to good quality diagnostics.

harnessing science and innovation is an essential part of the solution. We are proud to have partnered with FIND and CSIR to explore the practical, evidence-based strategies that can drive meaningful change on a national and global scale."

The session, chaired by FIND Board Chair Dr Ayode Alakija, opened with the powerful testimony of Carol Nawina Maimbolwa, a renowned TB, HIV and cervical cancer

advocate whose experience as a patient highlighted the critical need for timely, accurate, and accessible diagnostics, underscoring that there can be no universal health coverage or pandemic preparedness and response without them. This was followed by presentations of case studies demonstrating the return on investment from diagnostics innovation, with examples from Egypt's Healthy Lives investment, which has led to the elimination of hepatitis C, Singapore's Diagnostics Hub, which is driving innovation and economic growth, India's investment in its domestic R&D ecosystem, which produced a new TB diagnostic platform, Truenat by Molbio (FIND's contribution to this was acknowledged), Senegal's diaTROPIX manufacturing facility for rapid diagnostics tests with (FIND and UNITAID investment) and South Africa's progress in developing and deploying RDTs to strengthen the health

The South African G20 presidency has recognised science and innovation as catalysts for producing health and wealth. Diagnostics must be at the heart of the "health for all" agenda.





Minister Nzimande concludes South Africa's G20 Research and Innovation Ministers' Meeting with the successful adoption of the Tshwane Package 10 Deliverables

The Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Professor Blade Nzimande, officially concluded South Africa's Group of 20 (G20) Research and Innovation Working Group (RIWG) presidency with a successful Ministerial Meeting held at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) International Convention Centre (ICC) in Pretoria in September 2025. The meeting marked the culmination of a year-long process of strategic consultations with the G20 members in Mangaung at the University of the Free State in February and in May in Mbombela at the University of Mpumalanga, positioning South Africa as a key driver of inclusive, equitable, and sustainable science and innovation on the global stage.

The Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) led the RIWG process under the national G20 theme *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability* and the RIWG-specific theme *Science, Technology and Innovation for Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability*. This process, which supports the annual G20 Ministerial Meeting on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), was driven by Programme 3: International Cooperation and Resources within DSTI.

Nationwide consultations in support of global leadership

South Africa's RIWG presidency was supported by three high-level stakeholder meetings across the country:

Bloemfontein (February 2025): The inaugural RIWG consultative meeting was hosted at the University of the Free State, laying the foundation for the identification of three strategic priority areas:

- Open Innovation for Sustainable Development
- Biodiversity Information for Sustainable Development
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in STI

Mbombela (May 2025): The second meeting took place at the University of Mpumalanga, where detailed technical sessions refined the 10 priority deliverables under these themes.

Pretoria (September 2025): The final Ministerial Meeting at the CSIR ICC saw the formal presentation and adoption of the Tshwane Package of Deliverables and the consultations on the Tshwane Declaration.

Ten key G20 deliverables aligned to national priorities

The RIWG produced ten major deliverables aimed at enhancing global science collaboration, and they are as follows:

- **Deliverable 1.1: The G20 Open Innovation Platform of Platforms** – A globally accessible digital platform hosted on South Africa's Innovation Bridge Portal, showcasing STI capabilities across G20 countries.
- **Deliverable 1.2: Open Innovation Hackathon on Disaster Risk Reduction** – A successful pilot event involving 17 teams addressing flood risks and informal urban expansion.
- **Deliverable 2.1: Cooperation with the regional and/or subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** – Support for UN Convention on Biodiversity Centres to collect bioinformatics data.
- **Deliverable 2.2: Natural History collaboration seminar** – A report and roadmap on natural history collaboration was developed after a G20 seminar on the same topic was hosted in Mpumalanga.

South Africa's successful
stewardship of the G20
Research and Innovation
agenda reinforces the
country's role as a leader
in science diplomacy
and innovation-driven
development.

- **Deliverable 2.3: Support for the Development of a Catalogue of Life** – Text which express this support has been successfully negotiated and was included in the Chair's Summary.
- **Deliverable 2.4: Strengthening Global Capacity to Understand Africa's Human Genetic Diversity** – A call to correct genomic under-representation by promoting research that enhances inclusive healthcare and understanding of human origins.
- **Deliverable 3.1: Compendium of Good Practices in STI Policy** – An online resource featuring equity-focused policies from 18 countries, to be launched on the Open Innovation Platform.
- **Deliverable 3.2: G20 GO-SPIN portal** – South Africa, Brazil, and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) signed a Letter of Intent to operationalise the DEIA-focused GO-SPIN portal for tracking inclusive STI policies globally.
- **Deliverable 3.3: G20 Recommendations on science engagement** – These are recommendations to foster interaction between the public and scientists, create trust and to enable diverse and broader participation in STI.
- **Deliverable 3.4 Women and Girls in Science Events** – Two major G20 side events were hosted in Bloemfontein and Pretoria, featuring female scientists, high school learners, and global partners including Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), Women20, and L'Oréal-UNESCO.

Ministerial Outcome Document – Chair's Summary

Despite some disagreement during the negotiations process, particularly regarding the inclusion of Priority 3: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, the majority of G20 members reaffirmed their support, and the Tshwane Package was adopted by acclamation during the Ministerial Meeting. The Chair's Summary reflects a strong support on the importance of inclusive science for sustainable development.

Minister Nzimande expressed deep appreciation for the national and international knowledge partners who supported South Africa's G20 RIWG presidency:

"Our journey across Bloemfontein, Mbombela, and Pretoria was not just symbolic—it reflected our commitment to inclusive dialogue, equitable partnerships, and sustainable science. These deliverables represent a collective commitment to a more just and scientifically empowered global society," he said.

South Africa's successful stewardship of the G20 Research and Innovation agenda reinforces the country's role as a leader in science diplomacy and innovation-driven development.

Showcasing African Excellence: SKA Site Visit and Maropeng Cradle of Humankind Visit

To conclude the G20 Research and Innovation programme, the ministers also visited the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) site in Carnarvon, Northern Cape, on 24 September 2025. The visit showcased South Africa's world-leading capabilities in radio astronomy and its contributions to global "big science." The other delegates visited the Maropeng, Cradle of Humankind and this visit aligns well with Deliverable 2.3 on the support for the Development of a Catalogue of Life. ¶





Building tourism together: Investing in Africa's shared growth

Tourism is now, more than ever, in the hands of tourists. They are shaping the narrative. Our task is to harness that energy, amplify it, and turn it into sustained growth.

By Patricia de Lille, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of South Africa and Chair of the Tourism Working Group

While it is true that South Africa is the only African G20 member state, we stand not only as a nation of immense tourism potential, but also as a gateway to Africa. We stand alongside the African Union, which represents all 55 African nations of our shared home. As you rediscover South Africa, we are positioning Africa as a global tourism powerhouse. So, may your journey not end here; let your itinerary take you further, into the heart of Africa.

According to the United Nations, "Africa has the youngest population in the world, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30. Such a high number of young people is an opportunity for the continent's growth." This youth dividend represents an

extraordinary opportunity for transformation, economic growth, creativity, and innovation. This is where the future of tourism is being redesigned.

Armed with smartphones and limitless imagination, young people are reshaping how the world experiences tourism and markets travel. Every photo and video posted online tells a story of place, connection, and discovery.

Recently a young South African couple shared on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) photos of their romantic bush getaway. In less than a week the post was viewed more than 27 million times. It sparked a viral trend #BushGetAway as more tourists shared photos of their own bush holidays. Tourism is now, more than ever, in

the hands of tourists. They are shaping the narrative. Our task is to harness that energy, amplify it, and turn it into sustained growth.

Recognising this, the Department of Tourism has made it a priority to empower young innovators to shape the sector's future. This year, South Africa hosted the inaugural G20 Tourism Hackathon Challenge, where 48

We have declared
that tourism policy is
economic policy. Tourism
is transformation; tourism
is our future.

students from 21 higher education institutions competed to design AI-driven, people-centred solutions for the tourism industry.

The winning team, *The Catalysts*, developed *The Hologram Hub*. An immersive heritage experience that combines storytelling, tourism booking, and a digital marketplace for local artisans. Imagine arriving in a remote village and being greeted by a hologram sharing its history, cuisine, and crafts. This is innovation rooted in culture.

In second place, *Team Map My Biz* created an offline-accessible learning and business mapping platform for entrepreneurs in rural and township areas. Their "smart map" allows the certified graduates to feature their businesses, helping tourists discover authentic local experiences.

And in third place, *Ubuntu Unlimited* designed a platform that uses virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and blockchain to preserve and promote African rural culture, merging heritage and high-tech to offer meaningful, inclusive tourism experiences.

These ideas were presented before the world's most influential tourism leaders at the G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting in Skukuza, Mpumalanga. The young South Africans showcased innovation that is both proudly African and globally competitive.

Next year South Africa commemorates 50 years since the 1976 Soweto Uprising, a day which is marked on our calendar as 16 June, Youth Day. As we celebrate our young people, we also celebrate a lineage of discovery and creativity that stretches across centuries. That same year, 1976, scientists uncovered the world's oldest dinosaur embryos in the Free State, right here in South Africa.

According to the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of Witwatersrand, the embryos belonged to a five meter-long dinosaur known as *Massospondylus carinatus* which nested in the Free State region some 200 million years ago. You are invited to immerse yourself in the experience of this Jurassic period at the Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretation Centre at the Golden Gate Highlands National Park in the Free State.

This is how knowledge becomes experience, and experience becomes tourism. However, a critical task that faces the sector is determining the skills needed for the traveller experience of tomorrow. At the inaugural G20 Tourism Infrastructure Investment Summit, South Africa called on investors to help define the demand-led skills of the future. Our people, our human capital, remain our greatest asset.

At the Investment Summit, eight projects, collectively valued at nearly R1 billion (US\$58 million), were showcased. These

bankable projects can be found in the UN Tourism Investment Guideline booklet on tourisminvestmentsummit.co.za. As we start preparing for the Tourism Infrastructure Investment Summit 2026, we are also growing our pipeline of tourism infrastructure projects. Every rand or dollar invested is a job created and a future secured.

South Africa's tourism sector, as we have said before, is open for business. As of 1 June 2025, the Amended National Treasury Regulation 16 for Public-Private Partnerships came into effect. These changes allow us to embrace models including DBOT (Design, Build, Operate & Transfer), DBOO (Design, Build, Own and Operate), DBFO (Design, Build, Finance & Operate), Concession Agreements, and Management & Operation Contracts, etc.

This reform aligns directly with South Africa's second G20 Tourism priority: *Enhancing tourism financing and investment to promote equality and sustainable development*.

Through partnerships with the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), the private sector continues to prove its leadership and excellence. This was demonstrated when South Africa successfully hosted high-level diplomatic gatherings during our G20 Tourism Working Group meetings and the G20 Tourism Minister's meeting right in the middle of the Kruger National Park in Skukuza, where giraffes and elephants roamed freely beyond the conference walls.

This collaboration drives our Tourism Growth Partnership Plan, which is anchored on five priorities:

1. Ease of Access
2. Coordinated Destination Marketing
3. Tourist Safety and Security
4. Product Development
5. Job Creation

We have declared that tourism policy is economic policy. Tourism is transformation; tourism is our future. The sector currently contributes 8.8% to South Africa's GDP while sustaining 1.8 million jobs. These are the people who are running the engine of our experience economy. Their dedication, passion, and hospitality are the true currency of our nation. To them, we want to say Siyabonga. Thank You.

And so, to you, our distinguished visitor, thank you for choosing South Africa, or Mzansi, as we call our country fondly. As you enjoy our warmth, our rich diversity and our award-winning cuisines and wines, we invite you to follow your curiosity. Because here, every journey leads to discovery. #BeCurious. Siyabonga. 🇿🇦





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South Africa's G20 Vision for African Trade Transformation

Through effective leadership, South Africa can help shape a prosperous future for the continent.

**By Ambassador Anil Sooklal,
High Commissioner of South Africa to India and
Dr Samir Bhattacharya, Associate Fellow at Observer Research Foundation**

As the first African country to assume the G20 Presidency, South Africa has a unique opportunity to demonstrate leadership by prioritising African issues at the global stage.

A key focus should be securing greater financial and technological support for implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Currently, intra-African trade is only 16%, highlighting the potential for growth through stronger trade integration. By 2035, boosting trade could increase Africa's gross domestic product by up to US\$500 billion, creating 30 million jobs and lifting millions out of poverty.

Additionally, enhanced trade would stimulate industrialisation, enabling African nations to transition from raw material exports to more diversified, higher-value

manufacturing hubs. This shift would promote economic growth and strengthen Africa's global competitiveness, reducing its reliance on external markets and improving its bargaining power in international negotiations.

Through effective leadership, South Africa can help shape a prosperous future for the continent.

However, a significant barrier to boosting intra-African trade is the absence of a robust, African-led payment system capable of efficiently handling cross-border transactions. Over 80% of intra-continental payments currently rely on the SWIFT system, which routes transactions through intermediary banks in Western countries.

This process causes significant delays and inflates transaction costs. African businesses lose an estimated US\$5 billion

annually in transactions, according to Afreximbank. These high costs stem largely from currency conversion fees, ranging from 3% to 6% per transaction, and other service charges.

Some regional mechanisms, such as the SIRESS in Southern Africa and the CFA Franc Zone in West Africa, offer partial solutions. While they are more cost-effective and reduce delays, they have structural limitations. For example, SIRESS's over-reliance on the South African Rand often marginalises smaller economies in the bloc, limiting equitable participation.

Meanwhile, around 20 African countries leverage mobile money platforms like M-Pesa and Orange Money for small-scale cross-border transactions. Others have pursued bilateral arrangements to avoid dollar dependency. For example, in 2018,



Nigeria and China signed a US\$2.5 million currency swap deal, enabling businesses in both countries to settle trade transactions in either Naira or Yuan.

Likewise, in 2023, Tanzania and India inked the use of the Indian rupee for trade with Tanzania, facilitating direct trade in local currencies.

Additionally, Pan-African banks like United Bank of Africa and Ecobank have also attempted to create continent-wide payment solutions, leveraging their regional presence. However, these efforts face hurdles due to limited reach and interoperability challenges.

In more remote and underdeveloped regions, informal payment systems such as barter and cash still dominate, further fragmenting the continent's trade ecosystem.

Without a unified, scalable, and accessible African payment infrastructure, the dream of seamless intra-African trade remains distant. Addressing these gaps is essential for lowering costs, enhancing trade efficiency, and achieving the full potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Towards an African solution

In 2022, under the AfCFTA framework, the African Union and Afreximbank launched the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), a financial infrastructure allowing intra-African transactions in local currencies. By removing the need for foreign currencies and offshore intermediaries, PAPSS aims to reduce transaction costs, cut delays, and boost trade efficiency.

However, significant challenges remain. Nearly 45% of African adults are unbanked, and 40% lack internet access, highlighting the need for stronger digital and financial infrastructure. Economic disparities across countries complicate benefit-sharing, while domestic issues like hyperinflation, currency controls, and political instability fuel reluctance to adopt the system.

Countries like Algeria and Sudan continue to rely on outdated mechanisms, and concerns over PAPSS's transparency and trustworthiness have slowed broader adoption.

As G20 Chair, South Africa championed deeper intra-African trade. Its success in implementing the Customs Modernisation Programme and fostering trade within the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) positions it well.

By promoting best practices and encouraging the adoption of regional trade facilitation models seen in countries like Rwanda, Morocco, and Kenya, South Africa



can lead efforts to unlock the full potential of PAPSS and advance African economic integration.

Way forward

South Africa's G20 leadership comes at a pivotal moment. With global tensions rising—conflicts in Eastern Europe and West Asia, and negative impacts of protectionism under the second Trump presidency, the international landscape is uncertain.

The threat of 100% tariffs on BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) nations for de-dollarisation efforts adds to the pressure. As a member of both BRICS and the G20, South Africa must play a bridging role and try to tackle the socioeconomic challenges, encompassing the perspectives from Global North and South.

Under the G20 theme of *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, South Africa has outlined three core priorities: reducing poverty and the cost of living, building a capable and ethical developmental state, and driving inclusive growth and job creation.

Consequently, South Africa aims to leverage its G20 Presidency to advance the African Union's 2063 agenda towards transforming Africa into a global powerhouse. With the ongoing structural changes in the global order, the agenda requires some revision.

A continental payment mechanism would definitely work as a key driver, contributing directly and indirectly to the implementation of Agenda 2063. As the G20 chair, South Africa must champion African priorities. Promoting intra-continental trade by supporting mechanisms like the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) and digital public infrastructure (DPI), essential for a more integrated African trade system, would be at the top of its agenda. ¶

This article first appeared on www.iol.co.za

A continental payment mechanism would definitely work as a key driver, contributing directly and indirectly to the implementation of Agenda 2063. As the G20 chair, South Africa must champion African priorities.

South Africa places paid and unpaid care work as a priority for G20 working group

As part of its leadership role within the G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group (EWWG), South Africa is spearheading efforts to promote women's participation and representation in leadership

By Cassius Selala

Communications Director, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD)

South Africa is one of the few countries that explicitly enshrines gender equality in its Constitution. Section 9 of the Bill of Rights guarantees that women and men have equal rights and access to opportunities. In accordance with this constitutional mandate, all individuals—regardless of gender—are entitled to equal participation and contribution across all sectors of the economy, politics and society, at every level.

Emerging as a beacon of hope in the pursuit of gender equality, South Africa ranked 20th out of 146 countries in the 2023 Global Gender Gap Report released by the World Economic Forum, with a score of 0.787. While this reflects significant progress, persistent challenges, such as gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), economic disparities, health inequities and socio-political barriers, continue to hinder the full realisation of gender equality.

As part of its leadership role within the G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group (EWWG), South Africa is spearheading efforts to promote women's participation and representation in leadership, governance, and decision-making, while also advocating for increased ownership and control by women across economic and social sectors.

The group focuses on three priorities: care work, financial inclusion and GBVF. The third Technical Meeting of the G20 EWWG, held at Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga, focused on *The Care Economy – Paid and Unpaid Care Work and Household Responsibilities*.

Care work and inequality

Care work is essential for the well-being of individuals, families and society. It includes a wide range of activities that meet the physical, emotional and social needs of people, including caring for children, the

elderly, and those who are ill or living with disabilities, as well as domestic tasks like cooking, cleaning, and collecting water and fuel. It is classified into paid and unpaid care work.

Unpaid care work refers to the essential tasks performed within households and communities without monetary compensation. This includes childcare, caring for the elderly or sick, cooking, cleaning, fetching water and fuel and other domestic chores.

Paid care work encompasses direct care for persons within a household or institution for pay or profit.

In South Africa, as in many parts of the world, women disproportionately bear the burden of both paid and unpaid care work. Studies show that women in sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, spend as much as 3 to 3.4 times more on unpaid care work than men and boys. This is often due to



traditional gender roles that assign women as primary caregivers and homemakers.

Delivering the keynote address at the event, Minister in The Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Sindisiwe Chikunga, made an urgent call for inclusive economic transformation that places women at the centre of key value chains.

Calling the care economy the “hidden engine” that sustains the visible economy, the Minister urged G20 nations to take bold steps to quantify, invest in and redistribute care work.

“If we costed all paid and unpaid care work, it would equal about 40% of global gross domestic product and 380 million jobs. Remove care and almost half the world’s economic value would evaporate overnight,” she warned.

Outlining a three-part call to action, Minister Chikunga pressed for public investment in care as critical infrastructure, the regular measurement of unpaid care through time-use surveys, and legal reforms to support parental leave, living wages for carers, and equitable workplace policies.

“Treating care as peripheral is not a statistical error; it is an act of economic self-harm rooted in patriarchal thinking,” she said.

Key aspects and challenges

Delegates underscored the urgent need to improve conditions for women in the paid care workforce, who are over-represented in roles such as domestic work, early childhood development, home-based care and community health. Despite their vital contributions, many care workers are informally employed, earn below the national minimum wage, or are classified as volunteers, leaving them without access to labour protections, sick leave or unemployment benefits.

Limited training and professional development opportunities, coupled with unsafe and often exploitative working conditions, further hinder their ability to advance or secure decent work. Weak enforcement of labour laws and inconsistent policy implementation exacerbate these challenges.

The group focuses on three priorities: care work, financial inclusion and GBVF.

Addressing these issues through improved wages, formalisation, stronger legal protections, and better training is essential for safeguarding workers’ rights and ensuring the sustainability and quality of South Africa’s care economy.

“Our work will be measured by practical outcomes: a woman whose unpaid care burden is lighter; a girl who stays in school because a community crèche opened; a survivor who receives timely support and justice. These are the tests that matter,” said Minister Chikunga.

Policy and advocacy

The group noted growing momentum in South Africa for stronger care policies and improved conditions for care workers. Central to this effort is the adoption of the “5Rs” framework – Recognise, Reduce, Redistribute, Reward, and Represent, as advocated by the United Nations Women. The framework emphasises recognising the value of care work, reducing the burden of unpaid care (particularly on women), and redistributing responsibilities more equitably. It also calls for rewarding paid care workers with fair wages, decent working conditions, and social protection to support decent work and inclusive economic growth.

Recommendations

The meeting highlighted the need to strengthen care systems as part of its G20 EWWG priorities, calling for increased public investment in affordable, accessible, and quality care services, including childcare, elder care and healthcare, supported by essential infrastructure. A key recommendation was the meaningful inclusion of care workers in policy processes and improved representation.

Policy proposals included equal paid parental leave to encourage shared caregiving responsibilities and challenge gender norms, along with expanding social protection, particularly the Unemployment Insurance Fund, to cover informal and self-employed workers, the majority of whom are women.

The delegation also stressed the importance of robust data collection on unpaid care work to inform evidence-based policymaking. Addressing both paid and unpaid care challenges was framed as essential for achieving gender equality, reducing poverty, and driving inclusive growth. ¹

This article first appeared in *The Public Sector Manager* magazine





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The Palace of the Lost City, North West Province

South Africa's G20 Presidency: A historic moment for Africa and an elevation of Nation Branding

As host of the 2025 G20 Summit, South Africa stands ready to reshape the global agenda, promote a strong and inclusive nation brand, and position Africa as a key driver of sustainable development.

By Neville Matjie
Chief Executive Officer at Brand South Africa

South Africa is ready to host the Group of 20 (G20) Summit from 22 to 23 November 2025, marking a historic milestone as the first African country to assume the G20 presidency. This moment represents not only a diplomatic achievement but also a powerful opportunity

Africa has remained united in its diversity while striving for solidarity, equality, and sustainability. This is a defining moment for the continent, entrenching Africa's capacity to lead.

to prioritise Africa's development agenda on the world stage. As president, South Africa is uniquely positioned to champion the priorities of emerging markets and elevate Africa's voice within the G20 framework.

South Africa's advocacy for the African Union's (AU) full G20 membership—achieved in 2023—has underscored our commitment to ensuring that Africa's priorities remain central to global economic governance. Throughout our presidency, the country has worked closely with the AU and its member states to align the G20 agenda with the AU's six strategic priorities, namely, reforming international financial institutions, boosting agricultural output, creating a just energy transition, promoting trade for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and enhancing health and vaccine manufacturing.

Africa has remained united in its diversity while striving for solidarity, equality, and sustainability. This is a defining moment for the continent, entrenching Africa's capacity to lead.

Nation Branding through the G20 presidency

As the official marketing and reputation management agency of South Africa, Brand South Africa has played a strategic role in leveraging the G20 presidency as a nation branding opportunity, placing special focus on promoting the country's socio-economic strengths in order to attract investment and encourage public-private partnerships.

With G20 members representing approximately 85% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and over 75% of international trade, this platform enables South Africa to:

- Strengthen international economic cooperation.
- Showcase economic resilience and innovation.
- Promote investment and partnerships.
- Demonstrate solidarity with Africa and the Global South.

South Africa's G20 presidency aligns closely with key nation branding objectives



of enhancing South Africa's reputation internationally, positioning it as an attractive destination for trade, investment and travel.

The country's participation in strategic platforms such as the Africa CEO Forum, the Intra-Africa Trade Fair, the United Nations General Assembly, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, Tourism Investment Forum Africa, and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Summit, among others, has allowed South Africa to put its best foot forward in the global space, transforming challenges into opportunities and positioning itself as a reliable partner in global development.

The Nation Brand Forum, Brand South Africa's flagship programme, has additionally served as a key platform to facilitate dialogue among government, business, and civil society in order to align on country messaging and build a cohesive nation brand image.

The Nation Brand Forum has, for almost 10 years, addressed key Nation Branding strategies such as:

- Emphasising the importance of public-private partnerships in driving inclusive growth.
- Ensuring clear and consistent country messaging so that South Africa's value proposition resonates across stakeholder groups.
- Ensuring alignment across government, the public sector and civil society groups.

The Nation Brand Forum has become a strategic platform where stakeholders have an opportunity to engage on subject matter that impacts the nation brand by sharing experiences, addressing challenges, and celebrating successes. Nation Branding remains one of the most effective techniques for any country to compete in the global reputation management space.

Earlier this year, Brand Africa ranked South Africa as the most admired nation brand in Africa for 2025 in their 15th annual Brand Africa 100 | Africa's Best Brands survey. This is the most extensive pan-African brand study to date, and South Africa is in the lead for the list of nation brands, earning the highest admiration across the continent. This recognition is an indication of the country's positive reputation and influence during its G20 presidency year.

South Africa's G20 presidency is a moment of global significance and national pride. It enables the country to lead on issues that matter not only to Africa but also to the broader international community. As host of the 2025 G20 Summit, South Africa stands ready to reshape the global agenda, promote a strong and inclusive nation brand, and position Africa as a key driver of sustainable development.

Brand South Africa is the official marketing agency of South Africa, with a mandate to build the country's brand reputation, to improve its global competitiveness. Its aim is also to build pride and patriotism among South Africans, to contribute to social cohesion and nation brand ambassadorship. ¹



Inspiring new ways



Championing inclusive growth amid elevated uncertainty

The G20's commitment to strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth was stressed by all during South Africa's presidency, including the importance of continued multilateral cooperation to address existing and emerging risks to the global economy.

Macroeconomic environment

South Africa assumed the G20 presidency at a challenging time, marked by elevated policy uncertainty and a global economic environment marred by ongoing wars and conflicts, geopolitical and trade tensions, high debt levels, and frequent extreme weather events and natural disasters. South Africa's presidency proved to be agile, responding to, deliberating on and facilitating robust dialogue on current issues threatening the macroeconomic environment.

Further to conjunctural issues, such as trade policies, which were an ongoing theme throughout 2025, South Africa identified climate change and artificial intelligence (AI) as themes that merited elevation and further exploration from both a risk and an opportunity perspective. To this end, South

Africa commissioned two reports, namely, how macroeconomic policies and structural reforms can help countries reduce the costs from severe weather and natural disasters, and increase growth, in part by enabling greater investment; and an examination of the macroeconomic implications of AI, demographic shifts, and migration, with a focus on productivity and economic growth.

The focus on AI was extended into the financial sector issues agenda, with South Africa's priorities in this area laying the foundations to assist in making better use of AI for policy purposes in the financial sector, understanding its implications for financial stability and considering how it could be used for improving supervision. In the area of financial regulation and financial stability, the G20 South African Presidency identified six priority areas (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2025 G20 financial sector issues priority areas





Financial Sector

Enhancing cross-border payments (XBP) was a flagship priority, recognising that improvements in this area have widespread benefits for ordinary citizens and small and medium-size enterprises as well as for economic growth, international trade, global development, remittances and financial inclusion. Furthermore, Africa, and more specifically, Sub-Saharan Africa, has the highest remittance costs globally, due to inefficiencies in the current way funds flow across our borders. The South African G20 presidency's ambition was to take practical steps towards enhancing cross-border payments, particularly for those regions and end users that are disproportionately affected, and which are likely to be major beneficiaries of an enhanced and more efficient global cross-border payment system.

From a financial stability perspective, we chose to focus on Non-Bank Financial Intermediation (NBFi), which now accounts for approximately 50% of global financial intermediation and therefore represents a notable area of vulnerability that contributed to the 2008 global financial crisis and the March 2020 market turmoil and other recent episodes of financial instability. Significant data gaps exist in this area, making it difficult to monitor and understand the financial stability risks inherent in this sector. Therefore, South Africa commenced a work programme to address issues related to non-bank data availability, use and quality. Furthermore, efforts have focused on deepening understanding of investment behaviour and the interconnectedness of non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs)—

particularly their impact on the scale and stability of capital flows to Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs).

Fifteen years after the establishment of the Financial Stability Board (FSB), it has become evident that there are challenges with the implementation of the G20/FSB financial regulatory recommendations and commitments within jurisdictions, thus suggesting the need for increasingly robust implementation monitoring. An implementation review of G20 financial regulatory reforms by the FSB has been initiated, aiming to enhance monitoring tools and processes to improve reform implementation.

Adaptation and Innovation

There is an urgent need to address escalating extreme weather events and accompanying socio-economic vulnerabilities (Figure 2). No country is immune to the impact of climate change and the significant costs required to achieve net zero. Under the Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG), we included a priority to unlock obstacles to adaptation finance¹. South Africa's current climate adaptation strategy response is estimated to reach US\$122 billion by 2025 and US\$375 billion by 2030². To understand the scale of this investment, the 2025 adaptation cost represents nearly one-third of South Africa's GDP, highlighting the immense financial burden of climate resilience.

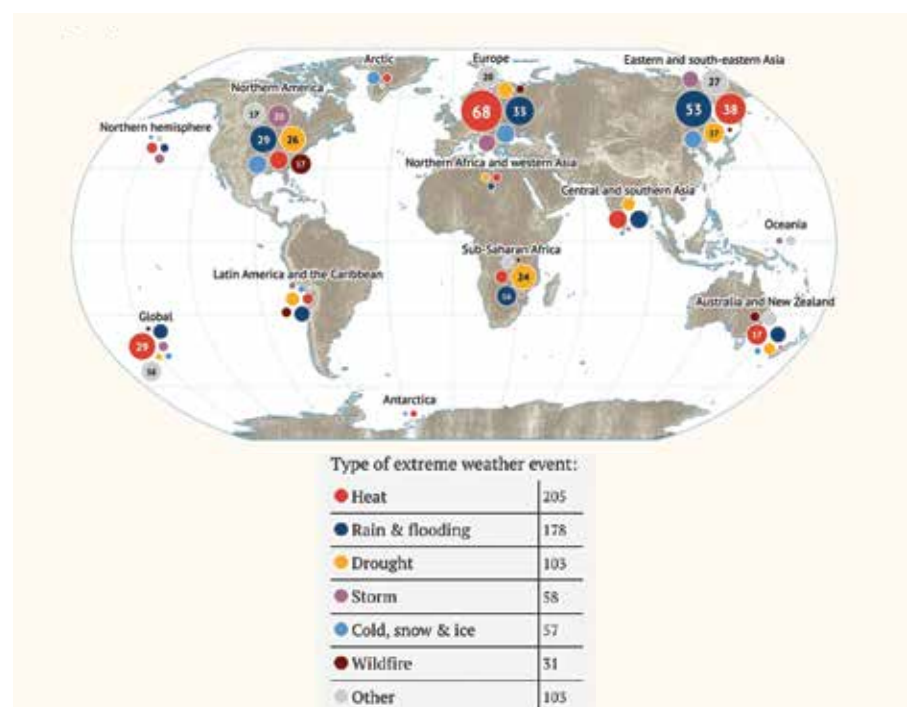
The focus on adaptation finance included recommendations for integrating adaptation into transition plans to encourage financial institutions and corporates to treat adaptation not only as a risk management tool but also as a source of opportunity. Working together with international insurance experts, we provided recommendations to address insurance protection gaps and their impact on adaptation funding. Specific attention was dedicated to identifying how government can contribute to efforts in bridging insurance protection gaps, particularly in agriculture and infrastructure sectors, and the data availability challenges and reinsurance dependence, particularly in emerging markets and developing economies. Finally, we explored innovative financing instruments (as well as the prerequisites for these instruments to succeed), such as blended finance mechanisms and co-financing models that de-risk investments in EMDEs. Besides innovative funding models, emerging technologies such as early warning systems and precision data systems are critical.

The G20's commitment to strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth was stressed by all during South Africa's presidency, including the importance of continued multilateral cooperation to address existing and emerging risks to the global economy. South Africa upheld these principles throughout its presidency. ¶

¹UNFCCC definition of 'adaptation': https://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/press_factsh_adaptation.pdf

²Cost estimates from the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS): https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/nationalclimatechange_adaptationstrategy_ue10november2019.pdf

Figure 2: Natural disasters in G20 countries



Source: Carbon Brief, 2024





Picturesque view of Bourke's Luck Potholes in the Blyde Canyon Nature Reserve, Graskop, Mpumalanga



Harnessing Global Business for a future of Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability

By Cas Coovadia
B20 Sherpa for South Africa

Throughout the year, the B20 South Africa Secretariat and I have taken Africa's message to global audiences, engaging with key institutions and forums to ensure our priorities resonate worldwide. From the World Bank and International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings in Washington to the Africa CEO Forum in Côte d'Ivoire, from the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in Spain to the World Economic Forum in China, BRICS in Rio, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Yokohama, and the Corporate and Institutional Integrity Africa Business Conclave in India—

we have consistently advocated for Africa's development agenda. At the United Nations General Assembly in New York and through sustained engagement with journalists across the continent, we have amplified the call for solidarity, equality and sustainability in global business.

These global engagements have enriched our work and informed the development of 30 actionable recommendations across eight task forces. These recommendations, grounded in real-world case studies, key performance indicators (KPIs), and implementation playbooks, align with the G20 presidency's core themes and reflect the collective wisdom

of business leaders from more than 25 countries.

Our recommendations are structured around eight imperatives:

- **Infrastructure and capital access:** Reimagining development finance to close Africa's US\$100 billion annual financing gap through blended finance, innovative instruments, and SME inclusion.
- **Climate-responsive agriculture:** Investing in logistics, scaling climate-smart practices, and empowering agri-SMEs to build resilient food systems.
- **Green transition acceleration:** Mobilising climate finance and industrialising



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- **Digital and skills transformation:** Bridging the digital divide and equipping youth with future-ready skills to leapfrog into a rapidly evolving digital business environment and society.
- **Industrialisation and critical minerals:** Shifting from raw exports to value-added production in the minerals value chain to drive global innovation from African soil.
- **Business resilience and market stability:** Enforcing anti-corruption, supporting the African Continental Free Trade Area integration, and renewing commitment to rules-based trade.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Designing transparent PPPs to unlock infrastructure investment and economic dignity.
- **Inclusive markets:** Empowering women entrepreneurs, upgrading small- to medium-

sized enterprises (SMEs) and championing safe, competitive workforces.

Our presidency has also been defined by deep collaboration with other G20 engagement groups. We proudly supported the Youth 20 Summit, recognising youth as co-architects of the future. We involved Women 20 (W20) leaders in our task forces to ensure gender equity was embedded in our work, supported their summit, and co-hosted side events. With Startup20, we engaged early on in SME-related matters and partnered on events like the Global SME Finance Forum. We

supported the Media20 Summit, profoundly aware that the media and journalism are at the heart of global progress. We believe that public trust cannot be engendered without information integrity.

The B20 South Africa's recommendations are not just a business agenda; they are a blueprint for global partnership. As we stand alongside the G20 Summit, we call on leaders to transform these shared priorities into concrete commitments. By acting in solidarity, we can build an economy defined by greater equality and sustainability, ensuring that global growth leaves no one behind. ¹



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DRIVING A GLOBAL AGENDA FOR COLLECTIVE PROSPERITY

In all our engagements, the Civil Society Engagement Group has been guided by the C20 principles of a global character, transparency, independence, collaboration, inclusiveness, human rights, gender equality, women empowerment, continuity, and predictability.

By Thulani Tshefuta
Chairperson of the C20

The G20, or Group of 20, is an international forum of the world's major economies—both developed and emerging—that collectively represent approximately 85% of global gross domestic product (GDP), 75% of international trade, and about two-thirds of the world's population.

Over time, the G20 has evolved into a central forum for addressing a wide range of global challenges, including climate change, poverty, digital transformation, food security, and inclusive development.

South Africa, as the sole African G20 member state and now the host of the 2025 G20 presidency, plays a crucial role

in facilitating and amplifying African agency in this forum. South Africa's presidency is particularly important because it offers a platform to re-centre the G20's focus on development outcomes for the Global South, particularly Africa.

South Africa's presidency, themed *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, is not only a call for cooperative global action but also a platform for Africa to reshape its engagement with the global community. With the theme *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, South Africa has pledged to push for collective global responses that reflect the principles of justice, equity, and inclusiveness—values deeply rooted in the African philosophy of Ubuntu.

In our view, the essence of the theme of the South African G20 presidency on solidarity, equality, and sustainability is about co-existence, collaborations and partnerships. You cannot be in solidarity with yourself. You cannot be equal to yourself. Measures of sustainability outlive oneself. This further suggests that as social partners, we can play different but complementary roles.

The South African G20 presidency has promised to promote a people-centred, development-orientated G20 that fosters inclusive economic transformation rather than economic dominance by the few. The establishment of non-state actors into various G20 Engagement Groups gives practical expression and meaning to the notion of a people-centred and driven approach.

The Civil20 (C20) is a platform of engagement for civil society on G20 processes. The C20 South Africa is led by a network of national apex organisations that represent a broad range of sectors and activism, including youth, women, the disabled, civics,

In all our policy proposals, we advocate for the mainstreaming of the plight of the vulnerable and marginalised populations and communities across all the thematic policy areas that are covered by G20.



Ours is a call to collective
ACTION in driving a global
agenda for collective
prosperity.

cooperatives, the informal sector, traditional leaders, faith-based organisations, coalitions and campaigns, social movements, non-profit/non-governmental organisational networks, and issue-based formations. From December 2024 to date, we have been able to register more than 3000 civil society organisations who have declared their interest in participating in C20 processes. These range from apex organisations, national formations, medium-sized organisations, and grassroots organisations, all drawn from South Africa, Africa, and the rest of the G20 countries.

In all our engagements, the Civil Society Engagement Group has been guided by the C20 principles of a global character, transparency, independence, collaboration, inclusiveness, human rights gender equality women empowerment, continuity, and predictability.

The substantive work of C20 is organised into 14 working groups that are in turn consolidated into six clusters, namely:

- Finance, Trade, Global Financial Architecture and Sustainable Development
- Poverty Alleviation and Food Sustainability
- Human Capital Development
- Transformative Imperatives
- Just Transitions and Innovation
- Global Governance

These working groups and clusters have been meeting to consider a number of high-impact policy proposals that have been packaged into policy briefs that were in turn consolidated into a civil society policy pack that is being used to influence the G20 governments.



In all our policy proposals, we advocate for the mainstreaming of the plight of the vulnerable and marginalised populations and communities across all the thematic policy areas that are covered by G20.

Equality cannot be achieved without raising the base of the marginalised people through deliberate implementation of measures that support empowerment and transformation.

We must spare no effort in advancing the transformation and democratisation of global structures of governance and global financial architecture that are fit for the purpose of driving collective action for collective prosperity.

In order to yield collective ownership of the outcomes of the G20, its structures, processes, and outcomes should continue

to promote active citizenry through people-to-people diplomacy, emphasising the role of ordinary citizens and non-state actors in promoting mutual respect, cultural exchanges, and international cooperation.

In order to mitigate the trust deficit and build confidence between the citizens and the governments, the G20 member countries should consider implementing "Legacy Projects" that are linked to the outcomes of G20 2025.

Ours is a call to collective ACTION in driving a global agenda for collective prosperity. 卐





Justice in a time of change:

The 2025 J20 Summit forges new path for global judiciary

The 2025 J20 Summit in South Africa represented far more than a diplomatic formality. It marked the emergence of an essential platform for collective problem-solving among the world's foremost judicial minds.

A converging of gavels

In September 2025, judicial leaders from across the world gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, for a landmark event that would potentially reshape how justice systems confront 21st-century challenges. The J20 Summit, hosted by South Africa's Office of the Chief Justice under the leadership of Chief Justice Mandisa Maya, brought together constitutional courts and supreme courts from G20 nations under the resonant theme, *Justice in a Time of Change: Independence, Innovation and Cooperation*.

This extraordinary convening occurred at a critical juncture for judicial systems worldwide,

as they grapple with unprecedented challenges ranging from artificial intelligence's disruption of legal practice to the escalating threats of climate change and cybercrime. Over four days from 2 to 5 September 2025, prominent jurists engaged in intensive dialogue aimed at forging collaborative solutions to these shared challenges, establishing the J20 as a crucial forum for the global judiciary.

Inside the summit: architecture of dialogue

The summit's agenda was strategically organised into four comprehensive sessions, each targeting fundamental aspects of judicial work in the modern era. The first session

tackled *Advancing Judicial Independence and Accountability: Preserving the Rule of Law and Reinforcing Judicial Security in an Evolving Global Landscape*, establishing the foundation for all subsequent discussions by reaffirming the non-negotiable principles of judicial autonomy.

The subsequent sessions progressed to examine the most pressing contemporary issues: *Balancing Artificial Intelligence Innovation with Fundamental Freedoms in Judicial Systems*, *Climate Change Justice through Judicial Collaboration*, and *Combating Cybercrime: Strengthening Cross-border Judicial Cooperation*. This thoughtful structure



This spirit of shared purpose and mutual respect may ultimately prove to be the most enduring legacy of the 2025 J20 Summit —a renewed commitment to justice as both a national imperative and a global collaboration.

near real-time speech-to-text transcription, document translation into multiple languages, and multilingual searches across court judgments. These advancements enable litigants to access court documents in their home languages while helping legal teams identify relevant precedents more efficiently.

However, judicial leaders also sounded strong notes of caution regarding the significant risks accompanying AI integration. As with the well-documented problem of AI hallucinations in legal research, transcription and translation applications require a strict “human-in-the-loop” approach, with lawyers remaining vigilant against omissions and confidently presented inaccuracies. Cultural and technical subtleties, including dialects, idiomatic usage, and specialised legal terminology, are often misunderstood by AI models, potentially disadvantaging speakers of indigenous languages.

The summit featured critical analysis of different AI approaches, contrasting the fluency of generative AI tools like ChatGPT with the more predictable, transparent cognitive machine translation tools often better suited to specialised legal documents. Participants emphasised that regardless of the technology deployed, the legal profession must maintain rigorous standards for accuracy and fairness, with professional translators possessing subject-matter expertise remaining essential to the process.

Climate justice: a judicial imperative

The climate crisis emerged as another central focus of the summit, with Constitutional Justice Arsul Sani of Indonesia delivering a powerful address on *Climate Change Justice through Judicial Collaboration: An Indonesian Perspective*. He emphasised that climate change represents a fundamentally global and transnational issue that demands coordinated judicial response.

Justice Sani noted that Indonesia is already experiencing significant impacts from climate change, including rising temperatures and sea levels. He argued compellingly that climate justice cannot be achieved if the burden of addressing these challenges is distributed unfairly, particularly as vulnerable populations

disproportionately bear the consequences. His presentation reinforced the essential role of judicial institutions in developing coherent approaches to climate litigation and sustainable development.

“Judicial collaboration is a necessity,” Justice Sani declared. “This J20 Summit in Johannesburg can serve as a historic milestone in advancing global judicial cooperation to promote climate justice for the benefit of present and future generations.”

Judicial independence in a changing world

The foundational principle of judicial independence received sustained attention throughout the proceedings. Judge President Nkomo Mabindla-Boqwana of the Western Cape Division of the High Court reflected on the value of comparing challenges across jurisdictions, noting that “indeed, judges have the same challenges across the board.”

She further observed that the summit highlighted how fortunate South African judges are to operate under a constitution that allows them to “express ourselves in our judgments in a manner that truly shows independence where other countries do not have that.” This comparative perspective enriched discussions about preserving judicial autonomy amid increasing political and social pressures worldwide.

The conversations acknowledged that while judicial independence remains paramount, it must be balanced with appropriate accountability mechanisms. Participants shared insights on maintaining this equilibrium in different political contexts, recognising that the specific manifestations of judicial independence may vary across systems while its core principles remain universal.

Cybercrime: the borderless challenge

In an increasingly interconnected world, cross-border cybercrime has emerged as a particularly complex challenge for judicial systems. The dedicated session on this topic fostered rich exchange regarding innovative approaches to judicial cooperation in investigating and prosecuting cybercrimes that transcend national boundaries.



allowed for deep exploration of each topic while recognising their interconnections in modern jurisprudence.

The participatory nature of the summit was highlighted by Justice Jody Kollapen, who reflected that “the life of a judge is a lonely life, but it’s been wonderful here to really just interact with colleagues from all across the world. Different jurisdictions, but more importantly, to really be exposed to different areas of the law that are new, innovative and provide enormous challenges to us.”

Artificial intelligence: promise and peril in equal measure

Perhaps no subject generated more intense discussion than the integration of artificial intelligence into judicial systems. The summit provided a crucial platform for examining both the transformative potential and significant risks of artificial intelligence (AI) in legal practice. As highlighted in summit discussions, AI technologies offer remarkable opportunities to transform linguistic exclusion into inclusion—a development of particular significance for multilingual societies across Africa and beyond.

When designed for local contexts, AI can dramatically improve access to justice through

Discussion leaders emphasised that effectively combating cyber threats requires enhanced collaboration between judiciaries worldwide, including mutual legal assistance, information sharing, and capacity building. The unique complexities of digital evidence preservation, jurisdiction determination, and extraterritorial enforcement were examined, with participants recognising the urgent need for harmonised legal frameworks to address these challenges.

Justice Kollapen captured the sentiment of many participants when he noted that artificial intelligence, cybercrime, and climate change “are challenges that run across different jurisdictions and therefore the ability to interact with other colleagues, to commonly confront these difficulties and to try and forge common solutions, mindful that we function in different jurisdictions has really been refreshing.”

The Johannesburg legacy: forging future collaboration

Beyond the formal sessions, the J20 Summit facilitated important bilateral meetings that promise to extend its impact well beyond the event itself. Most significantly, Indonesian Constitutional Court representatives led by Justice Arsul Sani held productive talks with Chief Justice Mandisa Maya and Deputy Chief Justice Dunstan Mlambo of South Africa’s Constitutional Court

Both parties agreed to strengthen institutional cooperation, including exchanging information and landmark decisions. Justice Sani observed that “several decisions of the South African Constitutional Court are frequently referenced by academics and litigants in cases before Indonesia’s Constitutional Court,” specifically citing the

Doctors for Life decision on meaningful public participation in the legislative process and the Grootboom decision on fulfilling economic and social rights.

In response, Chief Justice Maya expressed interest in establishing a formal memorandum of understanding between the Indonesian and South African courts, with discussions on the draft agreement planned through subsequent virtual meetings. This institutional relationship builds on long-standing connections between the two courts, including previous visits by South African Chief Justices to judicial events in Indonesia

A new chapter for global justice

The 2025 J20 Summit in South Africa represented far more than a diplomatic formality. It marked the emergence of an essential platform for collective problem-solving among the world’s foremost judicial minds. As participants returned to their respective jurisdictions, they carried with them not only enriched perspectives but also concrete frameworks for addressing the defining challenges of our time.

The Office of the Chief Justice of South Africa earned widespread praise for executing a flawlessly organised event that balanced substantive dialogue with genuine relationship-building. Judge President Mabindla-Boqwana captured this sentiment, noting that “it was a tall task, but they managed to pull it off.”

Perhaps most importantly, the summit demonstrated that despite different legal traditions and political contexts, the world’s judiciaries face remarkably similar challenges. By creating space for open exchange and collaborative thinking, the J20 Summit has established a promising foundation for a more

coordinated, effective global response to the complex justice issues of our rapidly changing world.

As Justice Kollapen reflected, “I’ve learned a lot in this last two days. I’ve made new friends and I’m sure that’s the same feelings that many who’ve arrived here would articulate, but more important than that, I think people have just loved being in South Africa and experiencing the South African warmth, the hospitality and spring is in the air.”

This spirit of shared purpose and mutual respect may ultimately prove to be the most enduring legacy of the 2025 J20 Summit—a renewed commitment to justice as both a national imperative and a global collaboration.

By creating space for open exchange and collaborative thinking, the J20 Summit has established a promising foundation for a more coordinated, effective global response to the complex justice issues of our rapidly changing world.



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South Africa's labour movement champions justice, dignity, and economic transformation at the 2025 L20 Summit

The summit represented not only a gathering of South African trade unions but a reaffirmation of international solidarity, democratic unionism, and the urgent need for a global agenda prioritising justice, dignity, and equitable economic transformation.

The South African labour movement, represented by its four major federations—the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA), the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU), and the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU)—concluded the 2025 Labour 20 (L20) Summit with a collective and resolute voice. Convened alongside the G20 Employment Working Group meeting and Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting, the summit brought

together trade union leaders from around the globe to articulate a workers' agenda centred on dignity, decent work, and democratic economic transformation.

Held against a backdrop of global turmoil, the summit addressed the converging crises facing workers: spiralling inequality, persistent unemployment, rising authoritarianism, accelerating climate devastation, and weakening public services. Delegates emphasised that in the Global South, these challenges are compounded by debt, limited state capacity, and the enduring legacies of

colonial exploitation. In unison, the federations asserted that “the working class will not pay for the failure of a system rigged against them,” underscoring a commitment to reclaiming economic justice and equity.

The summit highlighted that over 60% of workers worldwide remain trapped in informal and precarious employment. Delegates called for a comprehensive formalisation agenda, including labour law reform, strengthened labour inspections, ratification of all International Labour Organization (ILO) instruments, and inclusive social protection

systems. As organisers affirmed, “Informal workers are workers. Their rights are not negotiable.” Trade unions were positioned as central actors in implementing these reforms, ensuring that decent work is no longer a privilege but a universal right.

Delegates stressed that climate action devoid of worker justice is a contradiction. Africa’s transition to low-carbon economies must be public, inclusive, and rights-based, rather than dictated by private interests or neo-colonial extractive models. Summit participants demanded that climate finance reach local communities, rather than being absorbed by debt repayments or corporate greed, while urging rich nations to pay their historical debts to support a just transition in the Global South. Public investment, social dialogue, job guarantees, and adjustment strategies were identified as essential pillars for sustainable green industrial policy.

The L20 Summit critiqued contemporary trade regimes as privileging profit over people, highlighting the consequences of weaponised tariffs and unregulated globalisation. Delegates called for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to embody a just trade system grounded in solidarity, enforceable labour rights, regional industrial policy, and a continental minimum wage vision. Trade unions, they asserted, must have a permanent role in negotiations and oversight, ensuring youth access to decent work and preventing the exploitation of Africa’s youngest population.

Delegates condemned the global debt crisis and called for mechanisms that redistribute wealth equitably. Proposals included a global wealth tax, automatic debt cancellation for education, health, and climate purposes, and an end to conditionalities that undermine state institutions. Summit participants argued that fiscal systems must serve communities rather than capital, as “no transition will succeed

without the expansion of fiscal space and the redistribution of wealth.”

The summit reaffirmed commitments to closing the gender labour participation gap and investing in youth employment, entrepreneurship, and digital infrastructure. Delegates stressed the urgency of ending the feminisation of poverty and ensuring that women’s unpaid care work is recognised and supported. Legislative protections against gender-based violence and greater investment in the care economy were highlighted as critical for building a just and inclusive economy.

As the digital economy reshapes labour, the summit condemned the exploitation of platform workers and the threat of algorithmic surveillance. Delegates demanded legal recognition for platform workers, union rights, social protection, fair wages, and transparency in algorithmic management. They further called for international standards ensuring digital infrastructure remains public, democratic, and accountable to labour.

The summit did not shy away from geopolitical issues. South African labour leaders, alongside global allies, condemned Israel’s military assault on Palestine, describing it as genocide and calling for decisive international action. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) planned increase in military expenditure was similarly criticised, with delegates emphasising that genuine security derives from decent work, functioning public services, and human dignity rather than weapon stockpiles.

The 2025 L20 Summit concluded with a powerful message: the working class must reclaim power across workplaces, national bargaining structures, global supply chains, and policy arenas.

A call to action

The 2025 L20 Summit concluded with a powerful message: the working class must reclaim power across workplaces, national bargaining structures, global supply chains, and policy arenas. Delegates sent a clear warning to governments represented at the G20: the era of polite promises is over. The future, they asserted, “must belong to the many, not the few.”

The summit represented not only a gathering of South African trade unions but a reaffirmation of international solidarity, democratic unionism, and the urgent need for a global agenda prioritising justice, dignity, and equitable economic transformation. 🇱🇲



THE VALUE OF THE OCEAN TO OUR GLOBAL SOCIETY

The world faces many challenges, much of it driven by geopolitical tensions, but we cannot let go for one minute the importance of our ocean, for society, for our health, our livelihoods and our future.

By Tamaryn Morris and Nicole du Plessis
Co-chairs of the Ocean20 Social Engagement Group

The Ocean20 (O20) South Africa social engagement group is only in its second year of official recognition, following Brazil's inaugural Oceans20 project with initiation through both the Indonesian and Indian presidencies in 2022 and 2023 respectively. Our Brazilian colleagues made great strides in synthesising global recommendations of how we should be managing our ocean resources for sustainable use and development into the future. How do we make use of our ocean to support our societies, yet still provide efficient protection to ensure our ocean is healthy and resilient? In no way is this an easy task and requires the whole of society to do this work.

We are taught at school that the ocean covers more than 70% of the Earth. We also know from shared human experience that the ocean is a source of transport for ships carrying over 80% of global trade annually, amounting

to more than 11 billion tonnes. The ocean is a source of food, with fish a globally important source of animal-based protein to more than 3.3 billion people. And the ocean is a source of joy, through tourism and spending time at the beach. Yet, most people are unaware of the value of the ocean in their daily lives. Our weather and climate are directly influenced by the ocean, driving rainfall patterns resulting in floods and droughts in extreme instances. A warm ocean surface intensifies tropical storms in both duration and longevity, increasing impacts to coastal communities, but also inland communities, as we have seen with flooding in Mozambique, Malawi, Eswatini and the northern regions of South Africa when Tropical Cyclone Freddy directly impacted Mozambique in February and March 2023. The raw power of this storm, the longest-lived tropical cyclone in recorded history globally, caused over US\$480 million worth of damage to the Western Indian Ocean region.

The ocean directly influences almost every single social engagement group under the G20. Through Women20, we have produced a policy brief highlighting the value and role

of women fishers to their communities and South Africa's economy. One of the outputs from Ocean20 is the establishment of the Early Career Ocean Network for South Africa (ECON-SA), which looks to bring together the various early career ocean professional networks, both for Marine Science and Maritime Studies, and provide a secretariat home, able to connect networks to funders and opportunities, while keeping the unique identities of the networks themselves. This strives to progress the objectives of Youth20 by providing mechanisms for the youth engaged in these fields to find support and hopefully jobs. Ocean20 further took ocean careers inland, showcasing to youth in Mbombela how they could get involved with careers within the ocean space. The ocean is not only for those living along the coast, and inland communities need to feel connected in terms of their human existence, but also the potential of jobs within a Sustainable Ocean Economy (SOE).

An SOE has the potential to enhance the economy of South Africa and the region if properly managed and developed. The Global Ocean's economic output, if it were a country,

Most people are unaware of the value of the ocean in their daily lives.

The ocean directly influences almost every single social engagement group under the G20.

would rank fifth in the world, behind the United States of America, China, Germany, and Japan, and was valued in 2020 at US\$2.6 trillion with an annual growth rate of 2.8%. The ocean economy is becoming increasingly central to global transitions in trade, infrastructure, energy, climate resilience, food security and regenerative tourism. A strong, large and innovative SOE will be necessary to support the transition to green economies as demand increases for decarbonised shipping, green port infrastructure, offshore renewable energy, and sustainable food systems. Enablers such as effective policy and legislation, with clear sector plans and considerations of the SOE in development plans, will play an important role in facilitating this transition. Accelerating sustainable ocean finance requires a structured and coordinated approach that integrates regulatory clarity, financial innovation, and long-term institutional support. Effective action must align public and private capital, scale market-based solutions, and institutionalise ocean finance within the global financial system. High-level recommendations around financing the SOE are available through our Ocean20 Briefing Note section of our website.

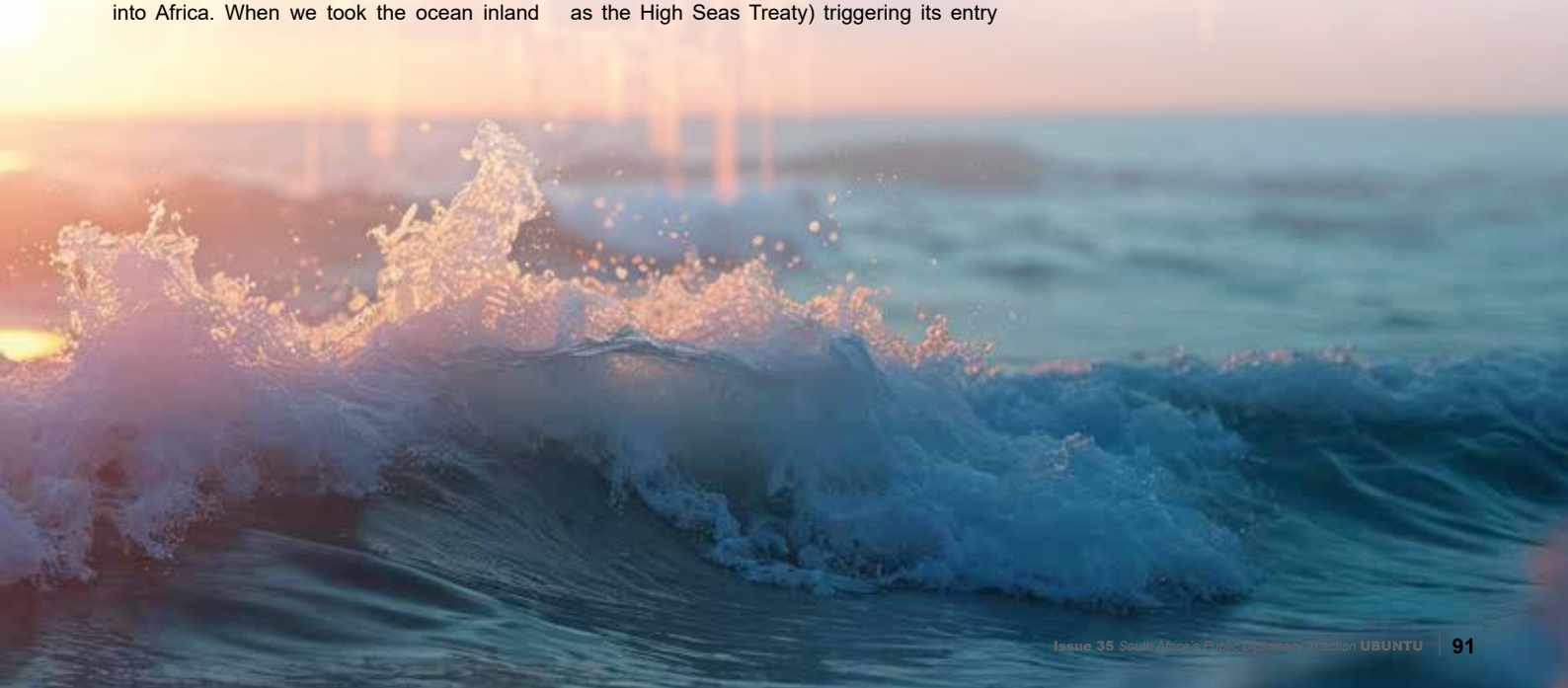
Over and above the briefing notes and our engagements at a global level to put these recommendations forward to the leaders, Ocean20 South Africa also chose to look inward as to how we could develop Ocean Actions—on the ground projects for the benefit of society in South Africa and into Africa. When we took the ocean inland



to Mbombela, we asked the question, how does the ocean impact society? How does it affect communities raising cattle or crops or living along river systems and directly impacted by weather and climate — floods and droughts — all influenced by a changing ocean. And how much do these communities know of their influence on the ocean through rivers and watersheds? We looked to develop and showcase accessible sensors and technologies for coastal communities to acquire their own data to understand their environments but also support data acquisition for local and regional scientists to understand ocean health, influences on coastal dynamics and potential changes thereof and how these influence sea level rise, food security and extreme weather events.

2025 is the year of the ocean! We saw incredible advances with over 60 countries ratifying the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement (also known as the High Seas Treaty) triggering its entry

into force on 17 January 2026. This landmark agreement establishes a legal framework to protect marine biodiversity on the high seas, which covers most of the world's Ocean, by enabling the creation of marine protected areas and setting rules for environmental impact assessments and the fair sharing of marine genetic resources. Well over 100 country officials also attended the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3), driving the awareness of the value and importance of the Ocean at the highest levels of global leaders. But we need to see this awareness continue and strengthen. The world faces many challenges, much of it driven by geopolitical tensions, but we cannot let go for one minute the importance of our ocean, for society, for our health, our livelihoods and our future. Without a healthy and resilient ocean, nothing we hope to achieve through the G20 or any of its social engagement groups will be successful. 🌊



G20 delegates visit state-of-the-art astronomy facility in the Karoo

"The SKA is more than a scientific endeavour; it's a driver for socio-economic transformation, and a catalyst for developing the next generation of scientists, innovators, and engineers."

As South Africa celebrated Heritage Day on 24 September 2024, the nation's rich cultural heritage was complemented by a showcase of its scientific excellence when Group of 20 (G20) delegates from over 30 countries gathered in the Northern Cape for a glimpse of the world's most sensitive radio telescope ever built, the MeerKAT and the Square Kilometre Array-Mid telescope. The tour to the site was a collaboration between the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) and the SKA Observatory (SKAO). The visit underscored the power of research to transform communities and South Africa's growing leadership in frontier science.

DSTI Director-General, Dr Mlungisi Cele, delivered the keynote on behalf of Minister

Blade Nzimande, reminding guests that Africa is both the cradle of humanity and a rising force in global knowledge production.

"The SKA is more than a scientific endeavour; it's a driver for socio-economic transformation, and a catalyst for developing the next generation of scientists, innovators, and engineers."

Through sustained government investment, the project has created more than 8 800 jobs in the region, channelled millions of rands into small local businesses, and trained over 300 artisans in Carnarvon. Ninety percent of the staff in the Northern Cape facilities are drawn from surrounding communities to ensure that world-class science leaves a tangible local footprint. "This is not just about telescopes," Dr Cele said. "It is about human potential."

Astronomy has long been a strategic priority for South Africa, deployed as a tool of science diplomacy and innovation. MeerKAT, already among the most powerful radio telescopes in the world and the world's most sensitive radio telescope, has produced more than 500 scientific publications. Its successor, SKA-Mid, is now under construction and promises to expand the country's role in probing cosmic origins.

Yet, as Dr Cele stressed, ambition extends beyond discovery. The project continues to support the next generation of scientists and innovators through investments in education, including more than 1 700 bursaries with a 90% graduation rate, robotics programmes for schools, and early childhood development initiatives. Astro-tourism is being cultivated





through a new visitor centre that links science to sustainable local enterprise.

Ultimately science should remain grounded so that it can drive impact in communities. Prof. Jessica Dempsey, Director of the Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy, described the SKA as “probably the most diverse global experiment” ever attempted, not only in its science but in its model of cooperation.

This SKAO is a global enterprise that brings together countries from five continents, including Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Their roles span financing, operations, engineering, design and computing capacity, as well as infrastructure and science leadership. Together, these nations pool resources and innovation to drive breakthroughs in astronomy

and technology while strengthening local and international capacity.

“Science is one of the last universal bridges we all share,” said Prof. Dempsey, emphasising how collaboration across borders allows nations to pool wisdom and extend opportunities to young researchers worldwide. For Prof. Dempsey, the project’s true return on investment is seen in the small and medium businesses exposed to cutting-edge technology, in young women inspired to pursue science, and in the commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion that ensures communities see themselves reflected in leadership. “If we close the gender gap in science,” she said, “we would inject US\$5 trillion dollars into G20 GDP [gross domestic product] by 2030.”

Local impact remains central. Dr Lindsay Magnus, Director of SKA-Mid, reflected on the responsibility to “be generators of information” rather than mere consumers. “South Africa must be an active player in the global technological and innovation landscape,” he said. Dr Magnus believes the project’s success will be measured as much in social legacy as in scientific breakthroughs.

“We intend to be in this community for the next 50 years,” he said, highlighting ongoing support for schools and early development programmes. Plans are in place to expand the project and stretch operations far into the future. Dr Magnus emphasised that the project must continually uplift the communities hosting it.

Prof. Michele Dougherty, Executive Chair of the UK’s Science and Technology Facilities Council, poignantly captured the international scope of the SKA. She returned to her country of birth to witness its role in shaping global astronomy. For her, projects like the SKA embody the spirit of exploration that has always defined humanity.

“By pulling together people from across the world, you always get the best outcome,” she reflected. “We are explorers. What we are doing with SKAO is getting an understanding of our universe, and it sets the scene for future exploration.”

Prof Dougherty has vast experience and expertise in space exploration technologies. She was the Principal Investigator for the magnetometer instrument on NASA’s Cassini spacecraft from the Cassini-Huygens mission launched in October 1997. These are giants on whose shoulders’ projects like SKA stand.

At its heart, the SKA is a framework for global cooperation, a training ground for young talent, and a direct contributor to social and economic development in one of South Africa’s most remote provinces. It is also an experiment in sustainability, with partners seeking ways to make large-scale research infrastructures carbon-neutral and embedded in the community.

Science has the power to bridge divides, inspire new generations and deliver lasting impact. The world-class SKAO project is reshaping lives on the ground. As humanity comes together to answer some of the oldest questions regarding humanity’s place in the cosmos, it is crucial to keep science at the centre of the communities it seeks to benefit. ▮



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Bridging nations through democracy: South Africa welcomes the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit

The G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit reaffirmed its place not just as a diplomatic fixture, but as a moral compass for governance in an increasingly fragmented world.

Amid the tranquil beauty of Kleinmond's coastline, leaders from the world's largest economies gathered at the Arabella Hotel in Cape Town for the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20). Representing President Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's Minister of Justice and Constitutional

Development, Mmamoloko Kubayi, delivered a compelling address that underscored the moral and democratic imperatives facing parliaments in a world defined by uncertainty and transformation.

This year's P20 Summit—an assembly of legislative leaders from the G20 countries—served as a call to action: a plea for parliaments

to work together in advancing solidarity, equality, and sustainability across borders. As Minister Kubayi reminded delegates, the P20 stands as a unique platform for collaboration, not merely a gathering of states but a congregation of ideas—one where the voices of the people can influence the direction of global governance.



"We meet at a time when our world is beset by problems on a number of fronts," she noted, reflecting on the intersecting crises of conflict, climate change, digital disruption, and global health emergencies. Yet within this complexity lies opportunity—the chance for parliaments to become active architects of hope.

The enduring role of parliaments

Minister Kubayi's address drew attention to the central, often underappreciated, role

This year's P20 Summit—an assembly of legislative leaders from the G20 countries—served as a call to action: a plea for parliaments to work together in advancing solidarity, equality, and sustainability across borders.

of parliaments as the institutional anchor of democracy. Representation, she explained, lies at the heart of their mandate. Across the world, legislative bodies are becoming more reflective of their societies, with growing participation by women, youth, persons with disabilities, and minorities—an encouraging shift documented by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

But representation is only the beginning. Parliaments, she emphasised, are also responsible for crafting the legal frameworks that turn international commitments into lived realities. From enacting laws that align with the Sustainable Development Goals to ensuring national budgets reflect a government's pledges, these institutions give life to the ideals expressed in global treaties.

Beyond debate chambers and oversight functions, parliaments are the "bridge between citizen and state"—a phrase that encapsulated the human spirit of the Summit. They are where national destinies are negotiated and where democracy finds its daily expression.

A commitment to solidarity and inclusion

The Minister drew inspiration from the Brasilia Joint Statement on Parliaments for a Just World and a Sustainable Planet, which affirmed the G20's shared commitment to people-centred governance. Equally, she celebrated the outcomes of the P20 Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, where gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting were identified as key strategies to achieving equality.

Minister Kubayi praised the emphasis placed on women's participation in global climate action—a discussion that, she observed, reflects the broader need for inclusive and sustainable development. "We need to pursue sustainable development in our respective countries first and foremost," she said. "For many, global solidarity is far removed from their everyday realities of access to employment, health care, education and to a decent quality of life."

This grounding in reality gave her message its poignancy. Rising inequality, populism, and xenophobia—especially between and within nations—pose threats to the spirit of cooperation that the P20 seeks to embody. In response, she urged parliaments to rebuild public trust and ensure that democracy delivers tangible results for citizens.

Reinforcing democracy through participation

A notable feature of this year's summit was its focus on broadening citizen participation in parliamentary processes. For Minister Kubayi, this represents not just a procedural necessity

As South Africa hosted this gathering of global legislators, it offered not only a venue but a vision: that democracy, in all its diversity, remains humanity's most powerful instrument for shaping a just and sustainable future.

but a democratic renewal. "It is incumbent upon us as parliaments to bring our institutions closer to the people," she said, reaffirming South Africa's belief that governance must be both inclusive and accountable.

Fifteen years since the first informal consultations that gave rise to the P20, the forum continues to evolve as a vital bridge between global commitments and national realities. Its endurance reflects a growing recognition that parliaments—more than any other institution—stand at the intersection of international aspiration and local implementation.

From hope to action

Minister Kubayi's closing words carried both optimism and urgency. She called upon delegates to ensure that the resolutions adopted in Kleinmond translate into meaningful, measurable change—"to give practical meaning to solidarity, equality and sustainability."

In this spirit, the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit reaffirmed its place not just as a diplomatic fixture, but as a moral compass for governance in an increasingly fragmented world. As South Africa hosted this gathering of global legislators, it offered not only a venue but a vision: that democracy, in all its diversity, remains humanity's most powerful instrument for shaping a just and sustainable future. ▮



ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: SOUTH AFRICA'S VISION AT THE SAI20 SUMMIT

The SAI20, by fostering collaboration among the world's audit institutions, helps build the accountability architecture needed for collective action.

In June 2025, South Africa proudly hosted the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI20) Summit—a landmark event held under the G20 framework and, for the first time, on African soil. The summit brought together heads of national audit institutions, ministers, and global governance experts to discuss how accountability, infrastructure, and skills development can drive inclusive and sustainable growth.

Addressing this distinguished gathering, Deputy Minister of Finance Dr David Maseko reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to integrity, cooperation, and development—not just for the nation, but for the entire African continent. His remarks captured the spirit of a moment that was both historic and deeply symbolic: Africa stepping forward as a full partner in shaping global economic governance.

With South Africa assuming the G20 Presidency—the first on the African continent—the SAI20 Summit

represented more than a technical meeting of auditors. It was a statement of intent: that Africa is ready to lead global conversations on transparency, equity, and sustainable progress.

"We have a unique opportunity to leverage this presidency to advance the African agenda," Dr Maseko said, recalling President Cyril Ramaphosa's declaration that South Africa would use this moment to place the development priorities of the African Continent and the Global South firmly on the G20 agenda.

This commitment aligns with South Africa's long-standing belief that inclusive multilateralism must serve as the foundation of global governance. For Dr Maseko, the SAI20 Summit was an opportunity to reaffirm

that accountability was not merely a technical exercise—it is an act of justice, ensuring that development reaches those who needed it most.

In a period marked by economic turbulence, geopolitical tensions, and trade fragmentation, Dr Maseko called for renewed faith in multilateralism. Citing the outcomes of the G20 Finance Ministerial meetings earlier in the year, he noted that low-income countries continued to bear the brunt of global instability.

"The world needs a better commitment to multilateralism, a rules-based global

The SAI20 Summit was an opportunity to reaffirm that accountability is not merely a technical exercise—it is an act of justice, ensuring that development reaches those who need it most.

trading system, and renewed efforts to restore cooperation,” he said. “Only by working together can we foster stability and shared prosperity.”

The Deputy Minister's remarks echoed a growing consensus among G20 members: that global challenges—from climate change to debt distress—cannot be solved by nations acting alone. The SAI20, by fostering collaboration among the world's audit institutions, helps build the accountability architecture

needed for collective action.

Infrastructure as a foundation for growth

Infrastructure, one of the summit's two thematic priorities, lies at the heart of South Africa's national development agenda. As Dr Masondo explained, “Infrastructure is not merely a policy priority; it is a precondition for dignity, productivity, and resilience.”

South Africa has embarked on one of its most ambitious infrastructure investment programmes to date, designed to modernise the country's energy, logistics, telecommunications, and water systems. Recognising the fiscal pressures facing many emerging economies, the government is seeking to mobilise private capital to complement public investment, ensuring that essential projects move forward despite constrained budgets.

Dr Masondo highlighted that Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) played a vital role in ensuring that infrastructure projects delivered value and integrity. “The audits—both financial and performance—contribute to our ability to raise funding from

development finance institutions and private sector partners,” he said. “Investors rely on the credibility of audit reports to assess the soundness of governance and the efficiency of resource deployment.”

This transparency builds investor confidence and ensures that every rand invested in infrastructure works harder for citizens. “Auditing strengthens our ability to exercise oversight,” he added, “so that infrastructure investment not only happens, but delivers value for money, reduces the risks of corruption, and accelerates progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.”

The Deputy Minister also shared how South Africa was modernising its approach to auditing. “Our audits are becoming more data-driven. Our project governance frameworks are being tightened. And our focus is shifting from reactive assessments to ►►



preventative, risk-based auditing—aligned to the full lifecycle of infrastructure delivery.”

Such reforms, he noted, were already showing results. Projects to revitalise ports, upgrade digital networks, and expand renewable energy capacity were underpinned by strengthened governance and oversight. These measures were not only improving service delivery but also enhancing public trust in government institutions.

Bridging the global skills gap

The second focus area of the SAI20 Summit, which is “Collaborative and integrative efforts for a future-ready workforce”, reflects a shared global concern: how to prepare citizens for an economy transformed by technology, sustainability imperatives, and shifting labour demands.

Education and skills development, Dr Masondo noted, were not isolated policy areas. They form the backbone of inclusive growth. Yet, to be effective, they required systems that were accountable, adaptive, and responsive to evidence.

Here again, Supreme Audit Institutions have a pivotal role to play. Through their audits, SAIs can identify where education systems are falling short, where resources are misallocated, and where interventions yield the greatest impact. In South Africa, the Auditor-General’s office provides insights that help policymakers understand whether skills programmes are achieving their intended outcomes.

“Through the work of our national audit office, we gain foresight—the ability to

anticipate and plan for emerging needs as they are articulated in audits,” Dr Masondo explained. “This ensures that our education and skills development initiatives evolve with the demands of the economy.”

By applying evidence-based auditing to the skills agenda, nations can bridge the gap between education policy and the labour market reality, building a workforce ready to drive sustainable economic growth.

From audit to foresight: the evolving role of SAIs

In his closing remarks, Dr Masondo reflected on the transformation of Supreme Audit Institutions from traditional watchdogs into strategic partners in governance. “They are not only monitors of government spending,” he said. “They are providers of insight, foresight, and enabling oversight.”

This evolution from compliance to collaboration, positions SAIs as catalysts for public sector innovation. Their work informs smarter policymaking, strengthens citizen trust, and reinforces democratic accountability.

The SAI20, he emphasised, was an essential tributary of the G20 system. Its deliberations flow into broader global discussions, including those linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 9: building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialisation, and fostering innovation.

By strengthening audit institutions and fostering cross-border collaboration, the G20 is laying the groundwork for more transparent, inclusive and resilient societies.

Dr Masondo concluded his remarks with a gesture of characteristic South African warmth. Welcoming delegates once more to the land of Nelson Mandela, he invited them to return, not only as partners in governance but as friends who had experienced the beauty, resilience and optimism of South Africa.

“I hope you come back again with your friends and family to explore and enjoy our country,” he said. “South Africa stands ready to work with all of you—in solidarity, equality, and sustainability—as we build a better world for all.”

This evolution from
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SAIs as catalysts for
public sector innovation.
Their work informs
smarter policymaking,
strengthens citizen
trust, and reinforces
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Positioning Africa within the global Startup20 dialogue

The communiqué we will submit in the months ahead will not only capture these recommendations but also carry a message to the world: that the age of exclusion must end, and the age of inclusive innovation is here.

By Boitshoko Shoke, Content Lead for the Secretariat, SU20 and Research and Impact Manager, 22 On Sloane; and Kizito Okechukwu, Head of Secretariat, SU20 and Executive Head, 22 On Sloane

The Startup20 (SU20) Engagement Group is still in its infancy, yet it has already demonstrated why its existence matters. Established under India's G20 presidency in 2023, SU20 South Africa was created to bring the voices of startups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) into the heart of global policy dialogue. As a member of the G20 family, the engagement group was given a bold mandate to ensure that startups and MSMEs have a voice in global policy discourse and that innovation is recognised as a central pillar of economic transformation rather than an afterthought. Its journey, and ours as the secretariat at 22 On Sloane, has been marked by both challenges and moments of profound inspiration.

In South Africa, as the first African nation to host and lead SU20, this mandate carries historic significance. Institutionalising a new engagement group is not a purely technical exercise; it is a profoundly human endeavour. It requires navigating complex organisational challenges while forging trust where none existed and weaving together perspectives from cities such as Tokyo to Berlin, Seoul to Buenos Aires. In doing so, the recommendations we develop must hold meaning across vastly different contexts, reflecting both local realities and global aspirations.

From the outset, SU20 has recognised that no engagement group can operate

in isolation. Collaboration with other G20 Engagement Groups, such as the Business 20, Youth 20, Women 20, and others, has been critical. Building these synergies ensures that entrepreneurship is not treated in isolation but is integrated with broader priorities such as trade, inclusion, sustainability and digital transformation.

This collaborative vision was echoed by Minister of Small Business Development of South Africa, Stella Ndabeni, who addressed delegates at the SU20 Midterm Engagement with both urgency and hope: "We must ensure that startups and MSMEs are not seen as peripheral, but as the very architects of our shared economic future." The importance of SU20 lies precisely in this. It is a bridge between the informal and the formal, between the local and the global, and between present struggles and future possibilities. In building this bridge, we remind the world that economic growth divorced from inclusivity cannot be sustainable, and sustainability divorced from entrepreneurship cannot be transformative.

South Africa's hosting of SU20 is not merely national pride; it is of continental significance. For the first time, an African nation is not just present but leading in shaping the global entrepreneurship agenda. This coincides with a historic moment: the African Union's admission as a permanent member of the G20. What does this mean for Africa? It means that the youngest continent on earth, home to the fastest-growing youth population and the

The importance of SU20 lies precisely in this. It is a bridge between the informal and the formal, between the local and the global, and between present struggles and future possibilities.

future labour market of the world, now has a seat at the table where the rules of the global economy are being rewritten.

At the centre of this work are the SU20 Task Forces, each with a mandate that addresses both the urgency of our time and the needs of entrepreneurs: finance and investment, inclusion and sustainability, foundation and alliances, market access and trade, and, in a uniquely South African contribution, township and rural entrepreneurship. The challenge lies in developing recommendations that resonate universally. A financing framework for an American fintech must not exclude a South African informal trader. This has required convening diverse voices and managing tensions with care. This global balancing act is what gives SU20 both its complexity and significance. For Africa, these Task Forces are more than policy structures; they are platforms for designing practical solutions to urgent realities such as youth unemployment, inequality, and the continent's need to build sustainable economic pathways.

This carries weight when we consider Africa's socio-economic context. With over 60% of its population under the age of 25, the continent holds the world's youngest labour force, a demographic dividend that can

drive growth if it is channelled into productive opportunities. Yet without deliberate policies, this same reality risks becoming a liability through unemployment and exclusion. At the same time, Africa is on the frontline of global sustainability challenges, where food insecurity, energy transitions and the effects of climate change are daily realities.

The centrality of MSMEs to this vision cannot be overstated. A 2021 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, *Navigating the Storm: MSMEs Financial and Digital Competencies*, highlighted that MSMEs represent about 90% of all businesses across 39 surveyed countries, spanning both G20 and non-G20 members. In high-income G20 economies, they contribute around 50% of private sector gross domestic product (GDP), while in emerging and developing economies, formal MSMEs account for up to 40% of national income. The figure is even higher when informal enterprises are included. These numbers reinforce why MSMEs must

remain at the heart of policy design, because their growth, resilience and digital readiness directly shape national and global economic trajectories.

This context directly informs the recommendations that SU20 has developed, highlighting not only the needs of African startups and MSMEs but also their relevance to the broader G20 agenda. Our policy recommendations are designed to ensure that policies are both globally coherent and locally meaningful, recognising that the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in various communities are mirrored, in different forms, across other



G20 economies. Guided by this principle, the five SU20 Taskforces have each put forward targeted recommendations that seek to remove systemic barriers, unlock new opportunities, and embed entrepreneurship at the centre of the G20 agenda.

The Finance and Investment Taskforce calls for a Global Startup Investment Tax Incentive Framework to harmonise tax policies and unlock private capital for early-stage ventures, particularly in underserved markets. Building on this, the Trade and Market Access Taskforce recommends a Startup Passport Framework to ease cross-border operations in G20 nations.

The drive for inclusivity is carried forward by the Inclusion and Sustainability Taskforce, which calls for green finance to support MSMEs and marginalised enterprises, linking entrepreneurship to climate resilience, food security and energy transitions. Similarly, the Foundation and Alliances Taskforce propose a Digital Infrastructure and AI Innovation Alliance to expand access to technology, enhance research collaboration and close

the digital divide that limits participation by startups in emerging markets.

Finally, South Africa's unique contribution through the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Taskforce emphasises the importance of integrating local enterprises into global value chains, positioning them as vital drivers of inclusive growth and innovation. Taken together, these recommendations reflect SU20's ambition to influence the G20 policy agenda by demonstrating that entrepreneurship, when supported with the right tools and frameworks, is a powerful lever for sustainable and inclusive economic transformation.

Looking ahead, our recommendations will speak clearly to three urgent imperatives. First, the need for innovative financing instruments that extend beyond traditional debt and equity, ensuring capital flows to high-potential but under-resourced ventures. Second, the expansion of global and regional market access, through digital platforms and inclusive trade frameworks that bring MSMEs into global value chains. Third, the

institutionalisation of entrepreneurship policy as a permanent fixture within the G20 agenda, ensuring continuity across presidencies.

The communiqué we will submit in the months ahead will not only capture these recommendations but also carry a message to the world: that the age of exclusion must end, and the age of inclusive innovation is here. ¶

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South Africa's T20 Presidency: A blueprint for inclusive global collaboration

The T20's mission is to bring together a global network of experts, academics, and think tanks from both G20 member countries and beyond to provide rigorous, evidence-informed recommendations linked directly to the G20's agenda.

Amid rising geopolitical tensions, the traditional mechanisms of global cooperation are being tested as never before. This year, we have witnessed violent conflicts, humanitarian crises, escalating climate disasters and a fraught global economic landscape marked by increasing trade protectionism. In this context, South Africa's G20 presidency was more than a diplomatic rotation; it was a crucial stress test for multilateralism.

The Think 20 (T20) engagement group, the “ideas bank” of the G20, played a pivotal role in this. Steered by a trio of leading South

African think tanks—the Institute for Global Dialogue, the South African Institute of International Affairs, and the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation—the T20 provided intellectual support to G20 South Africa, helping it chart a more cohesive path forward for the bloc amid rising fragmentation.

The T20's mission is to bring together a global network of experts, academics, and think tanks from both G20 member countries and beyond to provide rigorous, evidence-informed recommendations linked directly to the G20's agenda. As the fourth and final presidency in a succession of Global South

G20 presidencies, the South African G20 presidency had a clear goal. The T20 South Africa's mandate was to help it “consolidate and sustain” the progress made by Brazil, India, and Indonesia on issues critical to the Global South. The G20's priorities under South Africa's presidency were strategically aligned with those of its three predecessors, focusing on a strong developmental agenda that included disaster resilience, debt sustainability for low-income countries, financing for a just transition and harnessing critical minerals for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

The T20 also dovetailed its efforts with the G20's agenda, using its five task forces to focus on these priorities:

- Trade and Investment
- Digital Transformation
- Financing for Sustainable Development
- Solidarity for the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Accelerating Climate Action and the Just Energy Transition

Under South Africa's leadership, the T20 set about to amplify the voices of the Global South. A powerful marker of this commitment



to inclusivity was the approach to task force leadership and co-authorship. By actively seeking to balance expertise from the Global North and Global South, the T20 built genuine consensus and legitimacy, ensuring that its policy recommendations reflected diverse, on-the-ground realities.

The five task forces have produced a body of work that is rigorous and highly responsive to the pressing needs of our time, overseeing the production of 110 policy briefings authored by experts from across different regions. These contributions are reflected in the T20 Communiqué, which outlines high-level recommendations for the G20. Beyond the communiqué and policy briefs, the T20 published shorter commentaries throughout the year. These documents offer in-depth perspectives and draw on valuable lessons from various countries.

Some of the significant policy recommendations put forth by T20 South Africa include:

- **Closing the SDG financing gap:** The T20 suggests that the G20 should lead reforms of the global financial system and advocate for progressive fiscal policies. This includes implementing a global wealth tax, reforming financial institutions to better assist vulnerable nations, and championing comprehensive debt relief.
- **Strengthening the World Trade Organisation (WTO):** To reform the global trading system, the G20 should empower the WTO by increasing its funding and making its decision-making more flexible to help pass pro-development agreements. Additionally, the dispute settlement system should be reformed, potentially using the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA) as a model.
- **Developing integrated data governance:** The T20 calls for the creation of national and regional data governance frameworks that are comprehensive, rights-promoting, equitable and just.

- **Addressing debt sustainability:** The T20 proposes compelling ideas on debt sustainability, lowering the cost of capital and reforming the international financial architecture.
- **Reforming social protection systems:** To reduce inequality, the T20 recommends a comprehensive restructuring of social protection systems.
- **Building stronger food systems:** The T20 advocates for a more integrated governance approach that incorporates urban agriculture, stronger regulation of food companies, and market support for smallholder farmers to encourage fair competition.
- **Promoting equitable green industrialisation:** This includes promoting value addition and ensuring fair benefit-sharing in critical mineral value chains.
- **Just transition and political leadership:** The G20 should lead on just transition policies at all levels, from local to international, by adopting a “whole-of-government, whole-of-society” approach to pursue poverty alleviation, social equity, gender equality and economic empowerment.

In addition to the task forces, the T20 Advisory Council, drawn from South African and international think tankers and academics with deep expertise on the G20, has promoted “out-of-the-box” thinking on issues on the G20 agenda. They have also provided a series of strategic notes that have armed the South African G20 presidency with fresh perspectives.

The legacy of South Africa's G20 and T20 presidency will not be confined to a single communiqué, however. We believe the T20 South Africa process has created a two-fold impact. Firstly, on a domestic level, the T20 presidency has yielded a lasting dividend: a stronger collaboration between South Africa's research and think tank community and its

government. The extensive body of research and consistent stakeholder engagement has built up capacity to address national challenges with the same intellectual rigour and collaborative spirit that defined the G20's work on the world stage. The recommendations from the T20 are also relevant to ongoing national processes in South Africa and other G20 nations. For instance, the work of T20 Taskforce 5 on critical mineral value chains is directly linked to the development of the G20 Critical Minerals Framework, a key policy output of the South African G20 presidency and a significant policy process across Southern Africa and the African Union.

Second, and perhaps more significantly for the G20 itself, the T20 South Africa presidency has provided a blueprint for global collaboration. It has demonstrated that think tanks from the Global South can lead policy discussions/processes with expertise and authority, showcasing a model of inclusive knowledge sharing that must endure. As South Africa prepares to pass the G20 baton to the next host, the value of a robust and independent T20 cannot be overstated. We hope this model of intellectual collaboration and cross-regional dialogue will be sustained and built upon by the incoming United States presidency and beyond, regardless of the political headwinds. The global challenges ahead demand nothing less than a continued commitment to solidarity and shared wisdom. ¹³

This article first appeared on www.t20southafrica.org

The T20 South Africa
presidency has provided
a blueprint for global
collaboration.



01

Trade and
Investment



02

Digital
Transformation



03

Financing for
Sustainable
Development



04

Solidarity for the
Achievement
of the SDGs



05

Accelerating Climate
Action and the Just
Energy Transition



Cities as catalysts for global change: South Africa hosts the **2025 Urban 20 Mayors Summit**

The Urban 20 (U20) is the Group of 20's (G20) official engagement group for cities and the only engagement group led by government officials. Since 2019, the U20 has been shaping city diplomacy outcomes. By providing city leaders with a platform to influence global decision-making on the world's most pressing challenges, the U20 ensures that urban priorities on issues like climate action, social inclusion, sustainable local economies, and housing are directly informing the G20 agenda. This year's cycle proudly took place in South Africa—marking its first time on African soil.

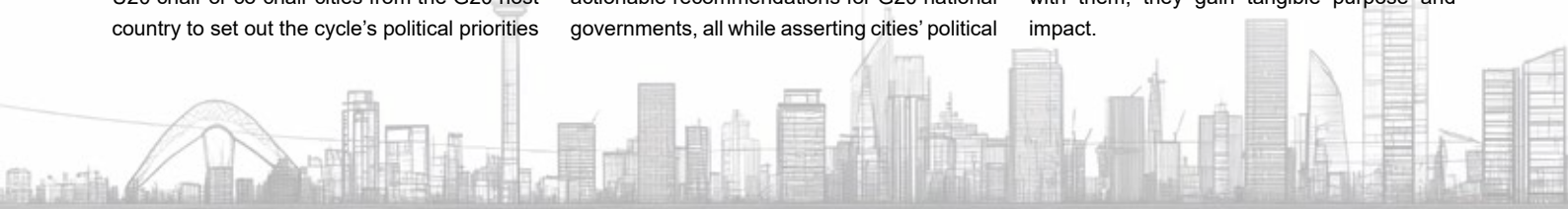
Each year, the U20's permanent co-conveners—C40 Cities and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)—work with the U20 chair or co-chair cities from the G20 host country to set out the cycle's political priorities

and regional partners, lead negotiations with the G20, and finalise the handover of the U20 Communiqué to the G20 Presidency.

The Communiqué is a one-of-a-kind political document that represents the global urban perspectives on G20 discussions. It is the result of months of debating, knowledge-sharing, and negotiating between cities, working towards key solutions and calls for action that can meet the pressing needs of millions of urban residents. In this way, the Communiqué is evidence of city diplomacy at work: when cities from around the world come together to discuss priority challenges, they realise their shared obstacles and opportunities for action. This process works by translating shared local realities into actionable recommendations for G20 national governments, all while asserting cities' political

authority and strength as delivery partners in the G20 and other multilateral fora.

It is clear that cities are no longer simple witnesses to global change—they are indispensable partners to national governments and international organisations, playing an essential role in driving and shaping a more resilient, sustainable, and people-centred urban future. Urban centres are where our human story unfolds: places of innovation, economic dynamism, and community life. With more than half of the world's population already living in cities, they have become critical engines and sites of opportunity for translating lofty international goals into real, lived change. Without cities, national strategies risk remaining abstract; with them, they gain tangible purpose and impact.



At the same time, cities face immense financial pressures that limit their ability to plan ahead, respond to crises, and meet their residents' growing needs. Nowhere is this challenge more pressing than in Africa, where rapid urbanisation is set to raise city populations by nearly a billion people by 2050. Accordingly, this year's U20 Communiqué reaffirmed previous years' call for strengthening cities' resourcing to advance G20 priorities. It particularly calls on G20 governments to recognise cities as essential partners in addressing global challenges and to embed them structurally in decision-making processes across the UN and other multilateral bodies. This means partnering with cities to accelerate the 2030 Agenda, deliver on the Paris Agreement, and ensure multilevel collaboration in climate action, resilience planning, and sustainable development. National strategies should integrate city perspectives through mechanisms such as Voluntary Local Reviews, just transition plans, and contributions to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

U20 cities also call on G20 governments to support local governments in driving transformative policies across a range of urban priorities: fostering sustainable local economies and fair labour conditions, also in the context of a just transition; ensuring equitable access to affordable, safe, and climate-resilient housing; adopting inclusive human mobility and displacement strategies; and co-developing national care plans to strengthen health, food security, and social protection. Additional priorities include advancing sustainable mobility systems, bridging the digital divide, and establishing a human-centred artificial intelligence (AI) governance framework that upholds rights, combats disinformation, and protects communities. Together, these actions allow cities to deliver inclusive growth, resilience, and justice while helping renew multilateral cooperation.

Moreover, this year's Communiqué includes the central call for G20 governments to recognise cities as essential delivery partners in actioning inclusive outcomes on the ground. Relatedly, in order to deliver, the Communiqué also calls on national governments to empower their cities with increased access to direct, urban financing in a global context

where local governments remain insufficiently recognised within the global financial system.

Several months ahead of the Communiqué's launch, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville advanced this same point among its public and private sector participants: there is a strong case for increasing subnational finance, multilevel governance, and inclusion-focused urban investment. Soon, in Belem and Doha, COP30 and the Second World Summit for Social Development will continue advancing the conversation, marking thirty years in their respective, related work toward climate action and the global social contract.

Within this context of convenings, this year's U20 Mayors Summit in Johannesburg (12 to 14 September) marked a milestone in integrating local perspectives—particularly ones from the Global South—into multilateral debates. Taking place two months before the G20 Leaders' Summit, the convening strategically positioned cities to assert their priorities on inclusive growth, food security, equitable housing, climate action, sustainable mobility, and the digital transition. The summit has also strategically followed the super cycle of G20 cycles' model of being hosted by BRICS countries: Brazil's presidency in 2024, India's in 2023, and Indonesia's in 2022. These presidencies emphasise the social agenda, with South Africa in particular focusing on strengthening disaster resilience and response, ensuring debt sustainability for low-income countries, finance mobilisation, and inclusive growth—under the crosscutting themes of solidarity, equality and sustainability.

Earlier in the year, the 2025 U20 Sherpa Meeting in Tshwane (12 to 14 June) served as the building block for writing up these priorities in the U20 Communiqué and was hosted in parallel to the African Mayors Assembly. This convergence of meetings allowed cities to engage with and integrate the voices of over 30 other African mayors throughout the process. The value of such convenings has become especially important in the global backdrop of intense polarisation and weakened multilateralism, within which the U20 represents how city diplomacy can build common ground. More specifically, the U20 brings forward cities' priorities on finance, inclusion, climate, and urban development, and calls for the renewal of multilateralism. Ensuring accessible and scalable financing

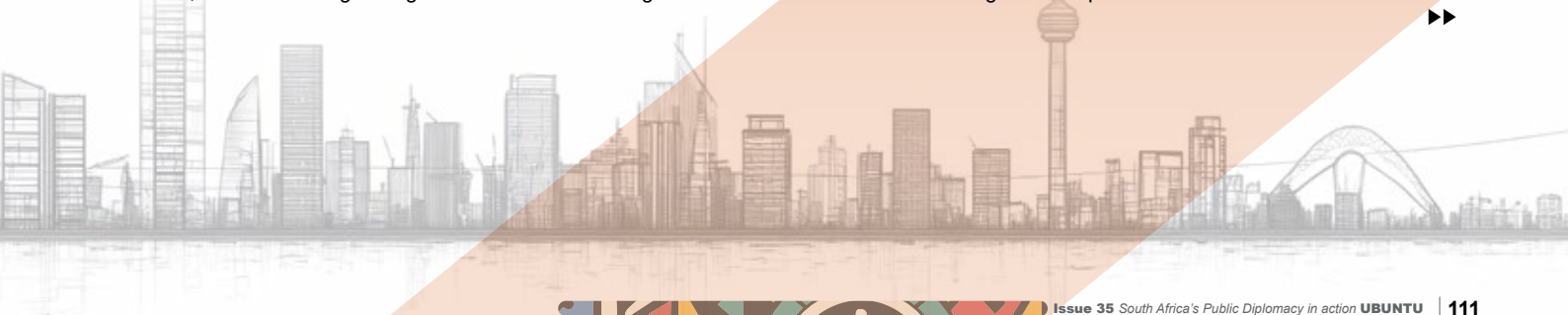
Urban centres are where
our human story unfolds:
places of innovation,
economic dynamism,
and community life.

for local services and infrastructure, centring care-centred approaches to policymaking, and enabling a just, green transition, are at the core of this work.

Given this year's Communiqué uniquely focused on centring the Global South, particularly African, city voices, it is grounded in the concept of Ubuntu, which frames collective solutions and mutual responsibility as central to sustainable development and social cohesion: "I am, because we are."

On the U20 process, Jan van Zanen, Mayor of The Hague and UCLG 2025 President, said: "The U20 provides a unique platform for cities to collectively engage with the G20 process, ensuring that urban perspectives and solutions are part of the global policy agenda. Through the U20, cities across the world are forging common ground around shared challenges and policy priorities — from care, access to finance, housing, and human mobility to climate action. The work done by our networks (UCLG and C40) within the framework of Urban 20 responds to our century-old commitment to city diplomacy and peacebuilding. I am certain this work will enhance the capacity of G20 countries to shape a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future."

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the 2025 Mayors Summit, Mayor of Freetown and Co-Chair of C40 Cities, Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, said, "The U20 summit hasn't been a talking show: every single one of the priorities that have been listed in the U20 Communiqué speaks to the specific issues that our residents face, that citizens around the world face. It reinforces our positions as cities, gives direction and provides central governments with an opportunity to incorporate into their agendas more clearly the work that our cities are doing. As C40 Cities, we are committed to ensuring that this Communiqué continues to be amplified because what it contains is what



the world needs in order for us to strengthen multilateralism and show that we are renewing our global collaboration in addressing pressing issues.”

Dada Morero, Executive Mayor of Johannesburg and 2025 U20 Co-Chair, said, “The city of Johannesburg has always been a city of bold solutions, of courage in the face of challenges. And what we have witnessed here is exactly that spirit: cities coming together, not as bystanders to global challenges, but as drivers of real, practical change. The U20 Communiqué we have developed is more than words on a page. It is our collective voice. It is a statement that cities are not waiting for permission; we are partners, innovators, and essential actors in shaping a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future. The Communiqué carries the weight of our shared experience, our ideas, and our commitment to leave no city, no community, behind.”

Nasiphi Moya, the Executive Mayor of Tshwane 2025 U20 Co-Chair, said, “The Communiqué presented to the G20 was a blueprint for action, demanding the three pillars essential for cities like ours to succeed: genuine multilevel governance, strengthened multilateral cooperation, and most critically, the financial empowerment to deliver on

climate action, affordable housing, and quality public services.”

“From this summit in Johannesburg to COP30 in Belém, the City of Tshwane will be a relentless advocate. We are not merely participants in the global sustainability agenda; we are on the front lines, implementing it. We are ready to work with our fellow cities, national governments, and global partners to turn the resolutions of this summit into tangible progress for our people,” she added.

As we look forward to the months following the U20 Mayors Summit, it will be critical to continue strengthening the urban agenda and the advocacy of local governments in multilateral fora. The C40 World Mayors Summit, part of the wider Local Leaders Forum taking place on the eve of COP30 and part of its official programme will enable cities to bring forward the priorities shared this year. Adding to this momentum are the World Urban Forum, the UCLG Congress and World Summit, and the High-Level Political Forum with the review of SDG 11, which will continue to strengthen the process towards 2026. This is especially critical in the context of next year's G20 Presidency, hosted by the United States of America. This handover will mark a shift in priorities and test the strength of city

leadership and U20 diplomacy. Cities in the United States, already active members of the U20 and inspired by this year's South African presidency, will serve as the centre of this call for urban leadership. 🌐

The U20 Communiqué we have developed is more than words on a page. It is our collective voice. It is a statement that cities are not waiting for permission; we are partners, innovators, and essential actors in shaping a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future.



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The Global Impact of W20:

A catalyst for women's economic empowerment

As the world grapples with intersecting crises, the W20 blueprint offers a path toward solidarity, equality, and sustainable prosperity for all.

By Professor Narnia Bohler-Muller, Human Sciences Research Council, and W20 Head of Delegation and Chair; and Dr Sindiswa Mzamo, President, Circle of Global Businesswomen and W20 Co-chair

Women20 (W20) is the official engagement group of the Group of 20 (G20), established in 2015 to advise member states on steps toward the economic empowerment of women and girls. Comprising 19 nations, the European Union, and the African Union, W20 brings together women's

rights organisations, entrepreneurs, and socio-economic experts to formulate consensus-based policy recommendations that are then conveyed to G20 leaders. Over the past decade, W20 has evolved into a powerful voice within the G20, ensuring that gender equality is not merely an afterthought but a core pillar of global economic governance.

Under each G20 presidency, W20 adopts a theme and value system that align with the host country's priorities. For South Africa's 2025 presidency, W20SA operates under the defining value of Ubuntu—"I am because you are; I am because we are"—and the theme *Women in Solidarity towards Sustainable Socio-Economic Development*. The guiding principles of unity, multilateralism, mutual respect, and inclusivity shape W20's work. Its key objectives include:

- Guaranteeing the inclusion of W20 recommendations in the G20 Leaders' Declaration
- Honouring 10 years of W20 engagement with a consolidated, data-driven record of

Over the past decade, W20 has evolved into a powerful voice within the G20, ensuring that gender equality is not merely an afterthought but a core pillar of global economic governance.

past recommendations and their impact on laws and policies

- Amplifying the voices of Africa and the Global South
- Recommendation-based implementation projects (legacy projects) for mid- and long-term impact

The seeds of W20 were sown during the 2014 G20 summit in Brisbane, where leaders committed to reducing the gender employment gap by 25% by 2025. In October 2015, the inaugural W20 Summit was held in Istanbul under Türkiye's G20 presidency, marking the group's formal launch and establishing its mandate to monitor past G20 gender commitments, challenge mainstream economic thinking, and enhance the representation of women in key forums. This strategic role positions W20 as both an advocate and a watchdog, ensuring accountability and fostering transformative policies.

Over the past 10 years W20's policy recommendations have been steadily incorporated into successive G20 Leaders' Declarations. Since its inception, W20 has embedded gender-responsive budgeting and procurement policies into the G20 agenda, pushed for corporate board diversity targets and pay-transparency measures, secured commitments to expand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education and digital skills training for girls and women, and elevated the care economy as a critical pillar of sustainable development.

By delivering actionable, time-bound policy proposals, W20 fills a gap in the G20 process, aligning macroeconomic strategies with the lived realities of women worldwide and championing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality. In 2025, the W20 urges G20 leaders to act decisively across six strategic domains to unlock the full economic potential of women and girls. This is not a social agenda—it is a high-return investment strategy with the power to reshape global prosperity. The cost of inaction is measured in trillions.

1. Entrepreneurship and financial inclusion

- Up to US\$5 trillion return on investment by achieving gender parity in entrepreneurship.
- Actions: Reform legal frameworks, expand access to finance through initiatives such as We-Fi at the World Bank, and set procurement targets for women-led businesses.

2. The care economy

- US\$3.76 return for every US\$1 invested in care infrastructure.

- Actions: Invest 10% of national income in care systems by 2030, reduce the unpaid care gap by 35%, and elevate care work through fair labour standards.

3. Education, STEM and digital inclusion

- US\$5 trillion gross domestic product (GDP) boost by 2030 from closing the digital gender gap across G20 nations. Bridging the mobile internet gap in low- and middle-income countries alone could add US\$1.3 trillion.
- Actions: Fund digital literacy programmes, mandate STEM scholarships, and launch a Global AI and Gender Equality Index.

4. Climate justice and food security

- Women's leadership and participation are essential to attain net-zero and zero hunger targets.
- Actions: Ensure 50% female participation in energy value chains, recalibrate climate finance, and secure land rights for carbon market access.

5. Health equity for women and girls

- Up to US\$1 trillion annually in economic returns from investing in women's health.
- Actions: Institutionalise gender-responsive health systems, guarantee Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) access, and integrate mental health into universal coverage.

6. End Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

- Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) drains up to 3.7% of global GDP.
- Actions: Fund survivor support systems, criminalise tech-facilitated GBV, empower women in crisis leadership, and eliminate modern slavery.

W20—under South Africa's G20 presidency—has shifted from being a consultative forum to a more implementation-driven platform, with a clear focus on embedding gender equality into the G20's core economic agenda.

The W20's proposed reforms could unlock multi-trillion-dollar gains for global GDP, thereby transforming gender equity from a moral imperative into an economic imperative.

A hallmark of W20 has been its concerted effort to elevate Global South perspectives. Under South Africa's G20 Presidency, W20SA consolidates 10 years of recommendations and amplifies African expertise through the Human Sciences Research Council's leadership. W20SA's task teams integrate co-chairs from both the Global South and North as well as knowledge partners from Africa, ensuring that policy solutions are informed by frontline experiences with inequality and disempowerment. This inclusive model strengthens the legitimacy of G20 policy and underscores the importance of solidarity in achieving equitable development. ►►



Over the past six months, W20—under South Africa's G20 presidency—has shifted from being a consultative forum to a more implementation-driven platform, with a clear focus on embedding gender equality into the G20's core economic agenda. The impact has been felt in several interconnected ways:

Global policy influence

- Integration into G20 Leaders' Agenda: W20 has secured stronger commitments to ensure its recommendations are explicitly reflected in the upcoming G20 Leaders' Declaration. Global South Leadership: For the first time, the W20 is being steered from the African continent with Ubuntu as its defining value, reframing gender equality as both a moral and economic imperative.
- 10-Year Legacy Project: W20 South Africa has compiled a decade-long record of recommendations, highlighting successes and identifying gaps for the next phase of advocacy.

Evidence-based advocacy

- Launch of W20SA: The February 2025 launch in Pretoria brought together policymakers, researchers, and activists to commit to evidence-based policymaking for women's empowerment.
- Sector-specific Task Teams: Working groups have been established on entrepreneurship, care economy, GBVF, climate justice, STEM education, and health equity.
- Evidence and data-driven recommendations: The W20 has begun developing a three-year implementation project with measurable outcomes, particularly targeting climate resilience and technology strengthening led

by rural women in South Africa, Argentina and Indonesia.

Shifts in narrative and representation

- From Consultation to Co-Creation: The W20 has amplified the principle of "nothing about us without us", ensuring women—especially from rural and marginalised communities—are not just consulted but are co-authors of policy.
- STEM and leadership push: There's been a strong emphasis on getting women into decision-making roles in science, technology, and innovation, with funding models that account for career breaks and caregiving responsibilities.
- Global solidarity messaging: The theme *Women in Solidarity towards Sustainable Socio-Economic Development* has been used to connect gender equality to climate justice, food security, and economic resilience.

This year, W20 South Africa has mainstreamed greater visibility of African perspectives in G20 gender policy debates, and forged stronger cross-sector partnerships between governments, research institutions, the private sector and civil society by fostering relationships with Business 20, Youth 20, Think 20, Values 20 and Parliament 20 and served as a resource base for the Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group.

As W20 enters its second decade, its priorities are to:

- Continue integrating gender across all G20 tracks, from finance and trade to digital transformation, labour and health, ensuring a holistic approach to equality.

- Further strengthen accountability mechanisms by collaborating with civil society and data agencies to monitor progress on SDG 5 and building upon the Brisbane '25 by 25' employment gap target by adopting the *W20 Johannesburg Goals*:
 - Reduce the female labour participation gap by 35% by 2035
 - Reduce the gender wage gap by 35% by 2035
 - Reduce the unpaid care gap by 35% by 2035
- Expand stakeholder engagement to build a multilevel alliance for gender-responsive policy.
- Fast-track implementation projects in Africa and the Global South, leveraging partnerships to operationalise recommendations over three years, an example being the launching of the Rural Women project.

Through these efforts, W20 South Africa aims not only to influence G20 rhetoric but also to drive measurable change in women's lives worldwide.

Over its first 10 years, W20 has emerged as a transformative force within the G20, turning principles of gender equality into concrete policy actions. By championing economic empowerment, care economy investment, digital inclusion, violence prevention, climate justice, and health equity, W20 has reshaped how the world's largest economies approach development. As the world grapples with intersecting crises, the W20 blueprint offers a path toward solidarity, equality, and sustainable prosperity for all. ♾



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YOUTH

Youth 20 South Africa 2025: Youth Building Bridges: **Uniting for Solidarity, Championing Equality, Driving Sustainability**

The Y20 South Africa Presidency has transformed the narrative of youth engagement within the G20. It has positioned young leaders not as passive observers but as partners in shaping solutions to global challenges—anchored in solidarity, driven by equality, and guided by sustainability.

Under the historic Presidency of South Africa, the Youth 20 (Y20) engagement group has made remarkable strides in positioning young people as active architects of global governance and sustainable development. As the first Y20 hosted on African soil, the 2025 South African Presidency has demonstrated that youth are not merely beneficiaries of global policy but partners in shaping a more equitable, just, and future-ready world.

Guided by the overarching Group of 20 (G20) theme of *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, Y20 South Africa adopted

the theme *Youth Building Bridges: Uniting for Solidarity, Championing Equality, Driving Sustainability*. This framework encapsulated the spirit of South Africa's presidency anchored in social justice, human rights, and collective progress and aligned closely with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A year of youth leadership and global dialogue

The Y20 South Africa process unfolded through a series of dynamic engagements and advocacy activations beginning with

the official launch in early 2025, followed by national dialogues, international partnerships, and a vibrant pre-summit series that mobilised young leaders across the country and the continent.

These engagements culminated in the Y20 South Africa Summit, held in Ekurhuleni from 18 to 22 August 2025, convening youth delegates from all G20 member states and invited guest nations. Delegates deliberated across five thematic tracks:

- Climate and Environmental Sustainability – advancing a just transition, biodiversity protection, and equitable climate finance.
- Inclusive Economic Growth and

Our presidency has demonstrated that meaningful youth engagement must extend beyond symbolism.

Employment – promoting decent work, entrepreneurship, and social equity.

- Artificial Intelligence, Digital Innovation and the Future of Work – calling for ethical, human-centric artificial intelligence (AI) and digital inclusion.
- Meaningful Youth Engagement and Multilateral Reform – advocating for institutionalised youth participation in global governance.
- Inclusive Social Development and Fighting Inequality – emphasising gender equity, access to health and education, and support for vulnerable groups.

While consensus on a negotiated communiqué proved elusive due to divergent national priorities, the Chair's Summary provided a compelling roadmap for G20 leaders, highlighting youth aspirations for justice, inclusivity, and sustainability. Importantly, it called for the institutionalisation of the Y20 through the establishment of a Y20 Council—a mechanism that would ensure continuity, implementation, and accountability across G20 presidencies.

From the summit to the world stage: Youth at the United Nations General Assembly

In September 2025, Y20 South Africa took its message of solidarity and reform to the global stage at the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA80) in New York.

The Y20-UNGA Roundtable, convened under the theme *A Generation for Justice: Youth Leadership in a New Multilateral Era*, brought together representatives from G20 engagement groups, United Nations (UN) agencies, and youth networks to explore synergies between the G20 and the UN's development agenda.

This landmark event underscored South Africa's vision of bridging multilateralism and multistakeholderism, ensuring that young people are integrated into both formal decision-making and civic diplomacy processes.

Key voices—including the South African Permanent Mission to the UN, global youth leaders, and representatives from the Think 20, Business 20, Women 20, Civil Society 20, and Start-Up 20—joined in affirming the call for institutionalised youth participation across international governance frameworks.

The UNGA Roundtable not only amplified Y20 South Africa's advocacy but also set the stage for intergenerational partnerships, reinforcing the principle that “nothing about us, without us” must guide future global policymaking.

Diplomacy in action: The Y20 Embassy Briefing

Ahead of the G20 Social Summit, Y20 South Africa convened an Embassy Briefing in Pretoria, bringing together representatives from G20 member state embassies, invited guests, and domestic stakeholders.

This briefing served as a critical platform to sensitise the diplomatic community to Y20 South Africa's priorities, outcomes, and legacy projects. It strengthened political support for youth inclusion within G20 processes and fostered collaboration between engagement groups and embassies in advancing youth-focused initiatives.

Key objectives included:

- Increasing visibility of Y20 South Africa's priorities and processes.

- Facilitating dialogue on meaningful youth engagement in the G20.
- Introducing legacy initiatives for the institutionalisation of youth leadership.
- Building long-term partnerships for implementation, continuity, and impact.

The session demonstrated how South African youth diplomacy can bridge government, civil society, and global institutions—an approach emblematic of the country's inclusive foreign policy underpinned by Ubuntu, solidarity, and shared prosperity.

Towards the G20 Social Summit: Youth mainstreaming and institutionalisation

As preparations advance for the G20 Social Summit in November 2025, youth engagement has emerged as a defining feature of South Africa's Presidency. Through sustained advocacy, Y20 South Africa has ensured that youth perspectives are mainstreamed across the G20's social and economic agenda, reinforcing the centrality of young people in the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

At the Social Summit, Y20 South Africa will join other engagement groups—Women 20, Labour 20, Think 20, Business 20, Civil Society 20, and Start-Up 20—under the overarching call to reimagine global social contracts for equality and justice. The Y20's contributions focus on:

- Advancing youth-inclusive policy frameworks.
- Strengthening mechanisms for intergenerational decision-making.
- Establishing a Y20 Legacy Framework to support the institutionalisation of youth participation within G20 processes beyond South Africa's presidency.

This push for institutionalisation—whether through a permanent Y20 Sherpas Council or an International Advisory Council—is the most important legacy aspiration of Y20 South Africa. It signals a shift from episodic



consultation to systemic inclusion of youth in global governance.

From dialogue to action: A legacy of radical, inclusive youth empowerment

Across its engagements—launch, pre-summit, summit, UNGA, and the forthcoming Social Summit—Y20 South Africa has championed a radical inclusivity approach that ensures every voice, particularly those often marginalised, is heard and valued. This commitment goes beyond rhetoric; it is reflected in our practical structures and processes. Through Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), Task and Thematic Forces (TTFs), and extensive public engagements such as provincial roadshows and strategic partnerships, Y20 South Africa has created genuine spaces for diverse youth participation.

Our presidency has demonstrated that meaningful youth engagement must extend beyond symbolism—it must be structurally inclusive, resource-backed, and decision-orientated, ensuring young people from all walks of life actively shape the economic, social, and environmental policies that define our collective future.

The Y20 process has therefore committed to advancing three interconnected legacy pillars:

1. **Institutionalisation of Youth Participation:** Establishing a permanent mechanism within the G20 to track, monitor, and advance youth-led policy recommendations.
2. **Youth Mainstreaming:** Embedding youth perspectives across the G20 agenda, ensuring every working group and engagement track integrates a generational lens.
3. **Capacity and Network Building:** Strengthening youth leadership pipelines through a Y20 Alumni Network, fostering cross-regional collaboration, and supporting youth civic diplomacy.

These legacy pillars form part of South Africa's broader vision of "a G20 for all generations"—one that ensures the voices of youth from both the Global South and North inform a more balanced, inclusive world order.

The Y20 South Africa Presidency has transformed the narrative of youth engagement within the G20. It has positioned young leaders not as passive observers but as partners in shaping solutions to global challenges—anchored in solidarity, driven by equality, and guided by sustainability.

As South Africa prepares to hand over the Y20 to the United States in 2026, its legacy will endure through strengthened

youth institutions, global partnerships, and the continuing call for justice and inclusion in multilateral systems.

From Ekurhuleni to New York, and soon to Johannesburg for the G20 Leaders' Summit, Y20 South Africa has showcased the power of youth diplomacy in action—affirming that the transformation of global governance begins when young people are not only heard but trusted to lead.

Y20 South Africa 2025 Team:

- Chairperson: Raymond Matlala — South African BRICS Youth Association (SABYA)
- Co-Chairperson: Moeketsi Koahela — National Youth Coalition
- Sherpa: Levi Singh — SRHR Africa Trust (SAT)
- Sous-Sherpa: Koketso Margret Molefe — South African BRICS Youth Association (SABYA)
- Head Secretariats:
 - Muhammed Yaeesh Cassim — Project Potential South Africa
 - Kamvakazi Myataza — South African BRICS Youth Association (SABYA) 🇺🇸



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Table Mountain, Cape Town, Western Cape

South Africa: The Cradle of Humankind

Our rich, deep, and diverse cultures and complex history combine to create a rich tapestry of human experience.

South Africa is a country where various cultures merge to form a unique nation proud of its heritage. South Africa's biggest asset is its people—a rainbow nation with rich and diverse cultures.

The country boasts some of the world's most breathtaking scenery and features an amazing display of bird- and wildlife species, which include the Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino).

South Africa is often called "The Cradle of Humankind", for this is where archaeologists discovered 2.5-million-year-old fossils of our earliest ancestors, as well as 100 000-year-old remains of modern man.

History

The first European settlement in southern Africa was established by the Dutch East India Company in Table Bay (Cape Town) in 1652. Created to supply passing ships with fresh produce, the colony grew rapidly as Dutch farmers settled to grow crops.

South Africa's democracy was a victory over struggle and a triumph for diversity.

Our rich, deep, and diverse cultures and complex history combine to create a rich tapestry of human experience. The country's liberation from apartheid and the construction of a multiracial democratic dispensation are benchmarks for the universal aspirations of peace, freedom, equality and dignity.

Geography

As the name suggests, South Africa is located on the southernmost tip of the African continent. Endowed with a coastline that stretches 1 600 miles, vast desert plains, rich forestry and majestic mountainous terrains, South Africa's breathtaking beauty is among the most sought after in the world.

The ocean along the East and West coasts of South Africa influences the subtropical and temperate climate conditions. The interior plateaus bring a cool, wet climate in the Drakensberg region, a warm, subtropical climate in the northeast, and a Mediterranean climate in the southwest. These favourable climate conditions are perfect for travel enthusiasts.

With a surface area of 1,221,037 square kilometres (471,445 square miles), South Africa is bordered by Namibia to the northwest, Botswana and Zimbabwe to the north, and Mozambique and Swaziland to the northeast and east, with Lesotho landlocked in the southeast.

The oceans

South Africa's largest neighbours are the Atlantic and Indian oceans, which meet at the southwestern corner of the continent.

The warm Mozambique-Agulhas Current skirts the east and south coasts as far as Cape Agulhas, while the cold Benguela Current flows northwards along the west coast as far as southern Angola.

The contrast in temperature between these two currents partly accounts for important differences in climate and vegetation between the East and West coasts of South Africa.

The coastline stretches more than 3 000 km and is an even, closed one with few bays or indentations naturally suitable for harbours.

Climatic features

Although the country is classified as semi-arid, it has considerable variation in climate.

Being in the southern hemisphere, the seasons in South Africa are opposite to those of Europe and North America.

The country also falls squarely within the subtropical belt of high pressure, making it

dry with an abundance of sunshine. Although Durban (east coast) and Port Nolloth (west coast) lie more or less on the same latitude, there is a difference of at least 6° C in their mean annual temperatures.

Temperature conditions in South Africa are characterised by three main features: they tend to be lower than in other regions at similar latitudes, for example, Australia, due primarily to the greater elevation of the subcontinent above sea level; despite a latitudinal span of 13°, average annual temperatures are remarkably uniform throughout the country; and there is a striking contrast between temperatures on the east and west coasts. Owing to the increase in the height of the plateau towards the northeast, there is hardly any increase in temperature from south to north.

Temperatures above 32 °C are fairly common in summer and frequently exceed 38 °C in the lower Orange River Valley and the Mpumalanga Lowveld.

Spring: September, October, November

Summer: December through February

Autumn: March, April, May

Winter: June through August

People, cultures and languages

South Africa is a multilingual nation with 11 official spoken languages, along with South African Sign Language (SASL) recognised as the 12th official language. The spoken languages are English, isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, Afrikaans, Siswati, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

As of 2024, South Africa's mid-year population is estimated to have increased to 63.02 million, with females accounting for 51.0% (approximately 32.13 million) of the total population, according to a report released by Statistics South Africa.

South Africa's rich cultural heritage is reflected in its people, who embody a strong spirit of teamwork and collaboration in the country's socio-economic matters. This unity is deeply rooted in the philosophy of Ubuntu, which, when loosely translated, means "I am because you are."

Government system

South Africa is a constitutional democracy with a three-tier system of government and an independent judiciary.

The national, provincial and local levels of government all have legislative and executive authority in their own spheres, and are defined in the Constitution as distinctive, interdependent and interrelated.

Operating at both national and provincial levels are advisory bodies drawn from South Africa's traditional leaders.

It is a stated intention in the Constitution that the country be run on a system of cooperative governance.

Government is committed to the building of a free, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and successful South Africa.

Parliament consists of the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). Parliamentary sittings are open to the public. Several measures have been implemented to make Parliament more accessible and accountable.

The National Assembly consists of no fewer than 350 and no more than 400 members, elected through a system of proportional representation for a five-year term.

It elects the President and scrutinises the executive.

The NCOP consists of 54 permanent members and 36 special delegates. The purpose of the NCOP is to represent the interests of the provinces in the national sphere of government.

Constitution

South Africa's Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world and enjoys high acclaim internationally. Human rights are given clear prominence in the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 was approved by the Constitutional Court on 4 December 1996 and took effect on 4 February 1997.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land.

No other law or government action can supersede the provisions of the Constitution.

Judicial system

The judicial authority in South Africa is vested in the courts, which are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law. No person or organ of State may interfere with the functioning of the courts, and an order or decision of a court binds all organs of State and people to whom it applies.

The Constitution provides for the following:

- Constitutional Court

- Supreme Court of Appeal
- High Courts, including any High Court of Appeal that may be established by an Act of Parliament to hear appeals from high courts
- Magistrates' courts
- any other court established or recognised in terms of an Act of Parliament, including any court of a status similar to either high courts or magistrates' courts.

Other courts include the income tax courts, the Labour Court and the Labour Appeal Court, the Land Claims Court, the Competition Appeal Court, the Electoral Court, divorce courts, small claims courts, military courts and equality courts.

Decisions of the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Appeal and the high courts are an important source of law. These courts uphold and enforce the Constitution.

International relations

South Africa's unique approach to global issues has found expression in the concept



South Africa is a country where various cultures merge to form a unique nation proud of its heritage. South Africa's biggest asset is its people—a rainbow nation with rich and diverse cultures.



of Ubuntu. This concept informs the country's particular approach to diplomacy. This philosophy translates into an approach to international relations that respect all nations, peoples and cultures. It recognises that it is in South Africa's National Interest to promote and support the positive development of others.

South Africa therefore accords central importance to:

- its immediate African neighbourhood and continent;
- working with countries of the South to address shared challenges of underdevelopment promoting global equity and social justice;
- working with countries of the North to develop a true and effective partnership for a better world; and
- doing its part to strengthen the multilateral system, including its transformation, to reflect the diversity of nations and ensure its centrality in global governance.

By prioritising Africa and promoting its renewal, development and reconstruction, South Africa is contributing to building a better Africa, which is the central foreign policy goal of the South African Government.

After the democratic elections in 1994, South Africa ceased to be the pariah of the world; it regained its rightful place in Africa, in the United Nations and in the family of nations. South Africa emerged as a democratic country into a fundamentally transformed world with a visionary foreign policy that promotes relations with other countries.

South Africa maintains diplomatic relations with countries and international organisations through its missions abroad, and through the accreditation of countries and international organisations resident in South Africa.

The diplomatic and consular missions implement South Africa's foreign policy to enhance its international profile and serve as strategic mechanisms for the achievement of National Interest.

South Africa is a member of various regional, continental and international organisations.

Economy and investment

Dubbed Africa's economic powerhouse, the country's attractive business climate, characterised by relatively low operating costs and a robust regulatory framework, makes it an appealing destination for businesses looking to expand into the African market. Monetary and fiscal policies are key areas of interest for investors, reflecting South Africa's commitment to economic stability and growth.

As a preferred investment destination, South Africa has the largest presence of multinational companies in Africa, which leverage the

supportive ecosystem that houses the affluent consumer base and growing middle class. Furthermore, the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) enhances the country's appeal as an investment haven, as it clearly articulates and outlines strategies for post-pandemic economic recovery.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) officially commenced trading under the agreement on 1 January 2021. South Africa ratified the AfCFTA agreement in 2019, thus positioning it for wider access to new market opportunities under the agreement.

South Africa is an attractive location for foreign investors requiring access to the rest of the African continent, as they can leverage on:

- The country's well-developed industrial ecosystem and diversified economy, particularly its established manufacturing sector and value chains.
- A world-class physical infrastructure and extensive transport and logistics network, which is strongly integrated with other southern African countries, including advanced ICT infrastructure.

Other competitive advantages, such as a supportive operating environment, a favourable trade regime, sophisticated and sound financial markets, and the availability of key production inputs.

Business environment

South Africa's economic landscape is highly attractive to business investors. The country boasts one of the most advanced economies in Africa, with well-established industries in mining, finance, manufacturing, and technology. Its rich reserves of metals, including gold, platinum, and chromium, make it a global leader in the mining sector, drawing significant interest from investors worldwide. Metals consistently rank among the top export categories, highlighting South Africa's economic significance on the global stage.

As the most advanced and diversified economy in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa offers a unique and appealing investment climate that attracts businesses and investors from around the world. With a gross domestic product (GDP) of just over US\$373 billion in 2024, it is not only the largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa but also the largest on the continent, surpassing Egypt and Algeria, which recorded GDPs of approximately US\$ 347.6 billion and US\$ 266.8 billion, respectively.

The country is well-integrated into the regional economic framework, formalised by its membership in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). As a member of the World Trade Organization

(WTO), the Group of 20 (G20), and the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) association of emerging economies, the country provides a business environment conducive to growth and prosperity.

Furthermore, South Africa is the most significant ratifier of the AfCFTA, making it easier for businesses to access other African markets by using South Africa as an investment gateway.

Transport

South Africa has a modern and well-developed transport infrastructure. The air and rail networks are the largest on the continent, and the roads are in good condition. The country's ports provide a natural stopover for shipping to and from Europe, the Americas, Asia, Australasia and both coasts of Africa.

South Africa's three major international airports are OR Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg), Cape Town International Airport, and King Shaka International Airport (Durban).

There are also many regional airports, including the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport in Mbombela (Nelspruit). Gautrain is an 80-kilometre (50-mile) high-speed express commuter rail system in Gauteng, which links Johannesburg, Pretoria, Kempton Park and OR Tambo International Airport (ORTIA). It takes 15 minutes to travel from Sandton to ORTIA on the Gautrain and 35 minutes from Pretoria in Tshwane to Park Station in Johannesburg.

The Gautrain has 10 stations. Bus-, shuttle- and midibus services are available to transport passengers to and from all stations, excluding the ORTIA Station.

Mineral wealth

South Africa's mineral wealth translates into, among others, 96% of known global reserves of platinum-group metals, 74% of chrome, 80% of manganese, 25% of vanadium and 11% of gold reserves.

Mining is one of the centres of South Africa's economy. It accounts for 7.9% of GDP and employs almost 460 000 people.

Tourism and environment

One of South Africa's most compelling attractions is its breathtaking natural scenery. From vast savannahs and dramatic coastlines to the majestic Drakensberg Mountains, the country boasts an unparalleled diversity of landscapes. South Africa is also home to some of the world's most iconic wildlife, making it a premier destination for safari enthusiasts. The opportunity to witness the "Big Five"—lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and Cape buffalo—in their natural habitats is a unique

experience that continues to draw millions of tourists each year.

Geopolitically distinctive, South Africa offers both natural and cultural diversity, supporting a globally compelling tourism proposition. Bordered by two oceans—the Atlantic and Indian—South Africa occupies just 2% of the world's land area while hosting an impressive 10% of the world's plant species, 7% of its reptiles, birds, and mammals, and 15% of its coastal marine species. Additionally, the country is home to approximately 850 bird species and 300 mammal species.

South Africa's exceptional ecological richness is reflected in its nine distinct biomes, showcased across five United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites, 22 national parks, and hundreds of game and nature reserves.

South Africa's heritage sites include:

- Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa (Cradle of Humankind)
- Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape
- Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape
- Robben Island
- Cape Floral Region Protected Areas
- Vredefort Dome
- uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park
- Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites
- The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa
- #Khomani Cultural Landscape
- Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains
- iSimangaliso Wetland Park – Maputo National Park

SANParks manages a system of 22 functional national parks in seven of the nine provinces of South Africa with a total area of just over four million hectares, comprising 67% of the protected areas under state management. SANParks is recognised as a world leader in conservation and protected area management.

Biodiversity

South Africa is home to some 24 000 species, around 7% of the world's vertebrate species, and 5,5% of the world's known insect species (only about half of the latter have been described). In terms of the number of endemic species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians found in South Africa.

Marine biodiversity is also high, with more than 11 000 species found in South African waters, which is about 15% of global species. More than 25% of these species (or 3 496



species) are endemic to South Africa, many of which are threatened, especially in river ecosystems (82%) and estuaries (77%).

Communications

South Africa has a well-developed communications infrastructure. A number of cellphone providers offer national coverage and there are well-established landline phone networks. Internet and Wi-Fi are easily accessible in most urban areas.

According to Stats SA, 77,5% of South African households had at least one member who had access to or used the Internet at locations such as their homes, work, place of study, Internet cafés, or public hot spots. Access to the Internet using all available means was highest in Western Cape (89,1%)

About 40% of South Africa's population are active social media users.

Media

South Africa has a vibrant and independent media.

According to the Bill of Rights, as contained in the Constitution, everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes:

- freedom of the press and other media
- freedom to receive or impart information or ideas
- freedom of artistic creativity
- academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is the country's only public service broadcaster.

There are several private and community radio and television stations in South Africa.

Technical handling of the print media in South Africa rates among the best in the world. This is one reason why newspapers and magazines have held their own in a volatile information era, characterised by the vast development of various new forms of media-delivery platforms via the Internet.

Most South African newspapers and magazines are organised into several major publishing houses.

Health

South Africa has been well known for its medical skill since Professor Christiaan Barnard performed the first successful human heart transplant in the country in 1967. There are many world-class private hospitals and medical centres around the country, especially in the urban areas, while many state hospitals also offer excellent care, among them Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town.

Most of South Africa is malaria-free, but visitors to the Kruger National Park or low-lying parts of northern KwaZulu-Natal are entering malarial areas and should take precautions in the form of prophylactic medication.

Food

One of South Africa's unique offerings is our hearty hospitality and, of course, our hearty meals. This is, without a doubt, one of the reasons South Africa is home to world-renowned chefs, culinary excellence, and the finest wine in the world.

It has been said that South Africa is a melting pot of cultures, which is evident in the vast culinary experiences. South Africa's cuisine is a unique fusion of various external cultural influences, including Dutch, French, Malaysian and Indian flavours. Everything from pap and mogodu, to traditional Cape Malay curry and roti. Tourists visiting South Africa for the first time are always captured, hook, line and sinker.

Sports

South Africa is among a few countries that have participated in World Cups of all three major and arguably most popular sports—cricket, football and rugby.

The country has also hosted several major international sporting events, including the 1996 African Cup of Nations, the 2003 Cricket

World Cup, and the 2007 World Twenty20 Championship. In 2010, South Africa made history as the first African nation to host the FIFA World Cup. True to its world-class infrastructure, South Africa achieved another milestone in 2023 by becoming the first African country to host the Netball World Cup.

South African athletes have consistently demonstrated excellence on the global stage, earning the nation its reputation as a powerhouse in sports. The country's Olympic and Paralympic teams returned from the 2024 Special Olympics World Games in Paris with a remarkable collection of gold and silver medals. In 2022, Banyana Banyana secured victory in the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON), while the national rugby team, the Springboks, triumphed in the 2023 Rugby World Cup. This historic win made them the only rugby team to have won every World Cup final they have played in.

With an impressive collection of international trophies, South Africa stands among the most decorated sporting nations in the world. This success is a testament to the country's exceptional level of sportsmanship and talent.

Beyond national pride, the sports industry plays a significant role in boosting tourism and the economy. Annual events such as the Comrades Marathon in Durban and the Two Oceans Marathon in Cape Town attract thousands of local and international visitors, generating revenue for accommodation, food, and other services. Additionally, investments in sports infrastructure, including upgraded stadiums, have strengthened South Africa's ability to host international events, further driving economic growth. 🇿🇦

Sources: www.gcis.gov.za | Pocket Guide to South Africa 2023/2024 | www.brandsouthafrica.com | www.southafrica.net | www.statssa.gov.za





Fast Facts

HEAD OF STATE	President Cyril Ramaphosa
GOVERNMENT	Constitutional multiparty democracy, with three spheres – local, provincial and national government.
NATIONAL DAY	Freedom Day, 27 April. Freedom Day commemorates the first democratic elections held in South Africa on 27 April 1994.
POPULATION	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) estimates the mid-year population at 63,02 million people. The female population accounts for 51,0% (approximately 32,13 million) of the population.
LANGUAGES	The country is multilingual with 12 official languages, each of which is guaranteed equal status. Most South Africans are multilingual and able to communicate in at least two or more of the official languages. The languages are: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sign Language. Attention is also paid to the Khoi, Nama and San languages.
RELIGION	South Africa is a secular democracy with freedom of religion. Many religions are represented in the ethnic and regional diversity of the population. The majority of South Africans or 79,8%, are Christian.
LAND SURFACE AREA	1 219 602 km ²
CAPITALS	Pretoria (administrative); Cape Town (legislative); Bloemfontein (judicial). The Constitutional Court is located in Johannesburg.
PROVINCES	Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West and Western Cape.
CURRENCY	Rand (ZAR) – 100 cents equals one rand.
TIME	GMT +2 hours







The Southern African Large Telescope (SALT), Sutherland, Northern Cape

Beyond souvenirs:

South Africa's artists craft meaning for the G20

In offering the Big Five to the G20, South Africa is gifting the world not just objects, but wisdom—a reminder that true leadership is measured not only in power, but in memory, unity, resilience, and purpose.

South Africa will be making a lasting impression at the upcoming Group of 20 (G20) Summit, not only through its voice in global policy, but also through the unique gifts it will present to world leaders. A collective of five local sculptors has been entrusted with the task of creating sculptures of the Big Five animals, each infused with meaning, symbolism, and distinctly South African character.

Unlike souvenirs one might find at a tourist shop, these works are elevated into timeless art pieces. Each animal is carved with precision, inspired by African proverbs that capture the essence of its character. To ground the works in the land itself, every sculpture will be mounted on a unique South African stone, such as Rustenburg Granite, African Red

Granite, Belfast Granite, marble, and olive green granite, adding an unmistakable sense of place and authenticity.

The project was spearheaded by renowned sculptor Angus Taylor, whose Dionysus Sculpture Works (DSW) studio in Pretoria is known for both technical mastery and mentorship of emerging talent. Taylor himself sculpted the rhino, but he stresses that the commission is bigger than one artist's hands.

"This project is about community, about mentoring, and about giving. The G20 gifts are not meant to be objects that gather dust; they are meant to carry meaning. The Big Five are metaphors in themselves, and when you add the African maxims that inspired us, you get something layered, something profound," he explained.

Taylor explained that the sculptors first worked on pieces three times larger than the final product, then used digital scanning to reduce them to a smaller, practical scale suitable for gifting heads of state. This approach allows artists to study the animals in greater detail on a large format before refining them into the smaller versions, ensuring accuracy, presence, and proportion.

He stressed that while technology helps with scaling, the true essence of the work lies in the human touch. Every fingerprint, tool mark, and hand movement remains visible in the final sculptures, carrying the struggle, effort, and intentionality of the artist. For Angus, this is what gives handmade art its energy and authenticity, a quality that technology alone cannot replicate.

He praised the sculptors' commitment to their craft, noting that years of dedication often come without financial certainty, yet result in works that are both magnificent and deeply meaningful.

Malose Pete – The Elephant

For Malose Pete, who hails from Ga Matlala, Limpopo, sculpting the elephant was not just a commission but a continuation of his artistic journey. His work has often returned to the elephant as a subject, drawn by its scale, wisdom, and presence.

"The elephant is part of who I am as an artist. I didn't have to think twice when I chose to sculpt it. It's quite strange because I've done drawings and paintings and screenshots of elephants' way before I even knew this project was coming. For me, it speaks to memory, to wisdom, to a kind of patience that we as people often forget," he said.

Pete anchored his piece in the well-known proverb: "*When two elephants fight, the grass suffers.*" He explained that this was not only about the weight of power but also about responsibility. He said it was also fitting given the current dynamics and geopolitical space.

"The proverb reminds us that conflict at the top impacts everyone else. Leaders must be careful about how their actions ripple through the world."

Theophilus Rikhotso – The Buffalo

Also, from Limpopo in a village of Bungeni Njhakanjhaka, Theophilus Rikhotso found his inspiration in the buffalo, an animal he associates with unity and protection. His studio is filled with references to nature, and he says the buffalo felt like a natural extension of his practice.

"The buffalo is about solidarity. You'll never see one standing alone. There is a saying I thought about as I worked: *A lone buffalo has no strength.* They survive; they thrive only because they stand together. For me, that speaks to the kind of unity Africa and the world need right now," he said.

Together, these sculptures form more than a collection of animals. Each is layered with proverb, memory, and artistry; each is grounded in South African stone; and each reflects the hand and heart of an artist with a story to tell.

Rikhotso sees his sculpture as a call for cooperation, a quiet reminder that strength is always collective.

Victor Nkuna – The Leopard

For Victor Nkuna, sculpting the leopard was deeply personal. His own path into art was unconventional, shaped less by formal training and more by persistence, resilience, and self-discovery. He connected that to the leopard's proverb: *"A leopard never loses its spots."*

"For me, that's about staying true to yourself. The leopard is adaptable; it can be in the mountains, in the bush, in the city but it never loses its identity. That is how I feel about myself and about South Africa too. No matter what changes, you hold on to who you are."

Nkuna's leopard carries both grace and quiet power, a reflection of his belief that authenticity is itself a form of strength.

Dikeledi Maponya – The Lion

Maponya approached her lion through the lens of maternal power and restraint, drawing inspiration from the proverb: *"Lions that lack gathering, assembly, unity are less effective than a limping buffalo."*

"It means that without unity and collaboration among strong lions and strong comrades, even something as small or as menial as a quick task will remain incomplete," she explained.

Her sculpture captures not only the fierceness of the king of beasts, but also the quiet authority of the mother lion a balance of majesty and responsibility. She chose to sculpt a lioness rather than a male lion, to highlight the overlooked but vital role of female lions.

"In their community, the females are the ones ensuring survival. They do the heavy lifting, they hunt. The best, most vicious hunters in that community are the lionesses."

Beyond the animal itself, Maponya sees her work as a mirror for African heritage and leadership values.

"It's very important that it's not just a gift. We're hoping that in it, each spirit or personality of these animals can reflect the African spirit, African tenacity. These are animals that defend themselves, that thrive in their own communities, with their own ways of doing things. We hope that some of these positive aspects can rub off on leadership as a whole," she said.

Being part of G20

For the artists, being part of the G20 gift project was more than just a commission—it was a chance to grow, learn, and collaborate in a space led by one of South Africa's most respected sculptors.



These sculptures will not be available anywhere else. They are reserved exclusively as presidential gifts for the G20, tokens that carry South African artistry, heritage, and storytelling into the halls of global power.

Rikhotso expressed his excitement: "I was so excited to hear that I'd be working with Angus. For me, it was an honour because I've always admired his work and his way of art making. I was very fortunate because when I was doing my BTech, we had an opportunity to do my Work-Integrated Learning here, so I started seeing his processes, and I fell in love with the craft of wax casting and how it leads to the final product."

Pete described the experience as surreal: "Geez, I think I'm still coming into that reality. It hasn't really settled in. What has settled is that I'm producing work from Dionysus Sculpture Works. It's one of the places I've admired for a long time, and now I'm here working in it. I'm still acclimatising to that."

Maponya reflected on the sense of community Angus has built: "This little community that Angus is building... he's created a small world, a community of sculptors. It's not just about him. Everyone here is so talented and professional at what they do, which makes you want to step up your own game. The most rewarding part is seeing excellence play out in such a professional setting."

Nkuna, a self-taught artist, said the project was both humbling and affirming: "I felt

honoured and lucky to be involved in this project. I never believed it at first, when I compared myself with the other artists who went to school, and here I am, just a self-taught artist. It really humbles me."

A gift with a soul

Together, these sculptures form more than a collection of animals. Each is layered with proverb, memory, and artistry; each is grounded in South African stone; and each reflects the hand and heart of an artist with a story to tell.

Taylor summed it up simply: "We didn't want to give something you could buy off a shelf. These sculptures are exclusive—they carry the heritage, identity, and philosophy of South Africa into the spaces where the world's most powerful decisions are made."

These sculptures will not be available anywhere else. They are reserved exclusively as presidential gifts for the G20, tokens that carry South African artistry, heritage, and storytelling into the halls of global power.

As the world's leaders prepare to gather, South Africa's contribution stands apart. Each sculpture, rooted in stone and proverb, is more than a gift, it is a piece of Africa's soul.

In presenting them, the country offers not just artistry, but a reminder that culture, wisdom, and identity endure long after summits end.

In offering the Big Five to the G20, South Africa is gifting the world not just objects, but wisdom—a reminder that true leadership is measured not only in power but also in memory, unity, resilience, and purpose.

PROFILES

Angus Taylor

Born in Pretoria in 1970, Angus Taylor is widely regarded as one of South Africa's leading contemporary sculptors. A graduate of the University of Pretoria, he was awarded the institution's Alumni Laureate in 2005 and continues to teach and advise at both the University of Pretoria and Tshwane University of Technology.

Taylor is celebrated for his monumental works that draw from the materials of his immediate environment—Belfast granite, red jasper, and the orange earth of Johannesburg—combining traditional South African craft techniques with bold, contemporary forms. In 1997 he founded Dionysus Sculpture Works, a dynamic studio where he not only produces his own pieces but also casts works for prominent artists like Deborah Bell and Norman Catherine, while mentoring the next generation of sculptors. For Taylor, handmade sculpture carries an irreplaceable energy, every fingerprint and tool mark a record of human effort and intention.

Theophilus (Theo) Rikhotso

Hailing from the rural village of Bungeni in Limpopo, Theophilus Rikhotso first



discovered his artistic talent at the age of eight, inspired by his self-taught uncle. His passion for art eventually led him to complete a BTech in Fine and Applied Arts at Tshwane University of Technology, majoring in sculpture.

Rikhotso describes art as a vehicle for expressing his thoughts, memories, and everyday life experiences. Growing up in the countryside offered him endless opportunities to observe the rhythms of nature—birds, animals, and landscapes that continue to inspire his work. He is also deeply attuned to social, economic, and political realities, which often shape the narratives of his sculptures. For him, joining this G20 project was both an honour and a continuation of his lifelong journey of learning, particularly under the mentorship of Angus Taylor, whose processes in wax casting and bronze sculpting first captured Rikhotso's imagination during his studies.

Malose Pete

Born in Limpopo in 1989, Malose Pete is a sculptor and painter whose career blends academic practice with an active exhibition record. He earned his BTech degree in 2011 from Tshwane University of Technology, where he now teaches part-time. His talent has been recognised through numerous awards, including accolades from the ABSA L'Atelier Art Competition, the Sasol New Signatures, and the Sanlam Portrait Awards.

Pete's work has been exhibited in joint and solo shows across South Africa, from Trent Gallery to The IS Gallery in Franschhoek. He has also been commissioned for private and public works. Being part of the G20 project still feels surreal to him; working at Dionysus Sculpture Works—a studio he long admired from afar—has challenged and elevated his craft. He sees this experience not only as an artistic achievement but also as a moment of professional growth and inspiration.

Victor Nkuna

Victor Nkuna is a self-taught South African sculptor whose work is defined by handcrafted precision and an intimate connection to his materials. Using mediums such as paper, tile cement, and glue, he has produced an array of striking figures, from animals like dogs and hares to human forms, including likenesses of Nelson Mandela.

Nkuna speaks of his career with humility, often comparing himself to formally trained peers. Being selected for the G20 gift project was a profound honour, one he admits he never expected. For him, the opportunity reflects not just recognition of his skill, but also the validation of a journey forged outside the traditional academic path.

Dikeledi Maponya

Dikeledi Maponya is a multidisciplinary fine artist, academic, and arts administrator whose career bridges studio practice and arts management. She holds a BTech in Fine Art from the Durban University of Technology, where she specialised in fine and studio art.

Her creative work includes drawing and fine art, but she is equally known for her contributions to education and the arts ecosystem through roles with institutions such as the KwaZulu-Natal Society of the Arts (KZNSA) Gallery. In this project, Dikeledi brought her academic and artistic depth into the sculptural arena, approaching her lioness piece with a keen sense of symbolism and heritage. She has described working at Dionysus Sculpture Works as stepping into a community of excellence—one that challenges her to push her own boundaries while honouring the traditions and responsibilities of African storytelling through art. ∞

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Wave breaking along the Durban coastline, KwaZulu-Natal

Celebrating South Africa's UNESCO World Heritage Sites

In 2024, South Africa added two more United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites to its already impressive list, further enriching its global heritage standing. These additions underscore the country's deep cultural and historical wealth, offering new perspectives on the development of human behaviour and the profound relationship between people and their environment. As South Africa's register of World Heritage Sites is expanded, these destinations provide valuable insights into the origins of modern societies and their interactions with nature. Today, South Africa boasts a total of 12 exceptional and unique World Heritage Sites that contribute to the country's remarkable legacy.

1. Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa

Situated northwest of Johannesburg, the Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa are internationally recognised for their significant role in understanding human evolution. Encompassing 47 000 hectares and famously referred to as the Cradle of Humankind, this region features numerous limestone caves and fossil-bearing sites.

The Sterkfontein Caves, for instance, yielded the iconic 2.3-million-year-old "Mrs. Ples" fossil, while the "Taung Child," discovered in 1924, was found at the Taung Skull Fossil Site. The Makapan Valley, another component of this World Heritage Site, contains remains dating back 4.5 million years. These unique environments have preserved an extraordinary archive of early hominid fossils, making the

region a cornerstone for scientific exploration into our ancient past.

2. Robben Island

Located just off the coast of Cape Town, Robben Island holds immense historical weight. It was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 due to its role in South Africa's turbulent political history. Over the centuries, it functioned as a leper colony, military post, and most famously, a maximum-security prison during the apartheid era.

Nelson Mandela spent 18 years of his imprisonment here, becoming a global emblem of resistance against injustice. The remaining structures from the 20th century are powerful reminders of human endurance and the triumph of democracy over racial oppression. Today, Robben Island stands as a symbol of resilience and a monument to the enduring struggle for human rights.

3. iSimangaliso Wetland Park

Stretching along KwaZulu-Natal's coastline, iSimangaliso Wetland Park is a natural wonder that earned its UNESCO designation for its ecological richness and scenic beauty. Covering over 239,000 hectares, the park is home to an extraordinary mix of habitats—from coral reefs and sand dunes to wetlands and estuaries.

Its dynamic environments host an impressive variety of wildlife, including migratory whales, nesting turtles, and countless bird species. Lake St Lucia's changing salinity and the unique coastal interplay between tropical and subtropical climates further enhance its biodiversity. This blend of ecological diversity and natural spectacle positions iSimangaliso as a globally significant conservation area.

4. Maloti-Drakensberg Park

Shared by South Africa and Lesotho, the Maloti-Drakensberg Park boasts breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage. Encompassing 249,313 hectares, it features towering basalt cliffs, expansive grasslands,



and over 690 San rock art sites containing more than 35,000 images.

Beyond its cultural significance, the park is a sanctuary for unique ecosystems, including alpine wetlands and rare plant and bird species. The park's stunning terrain and environmental diversity highlight its ecological and aesthetic value, securing its status as a vital UNESCO World Heritage Site.

5. Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape

Spanning parts of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana, the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape preserves the legacy of one of Southern Africa's earliest and most influential kingdoms. Nestled at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers, the Kingdom of Mapungubwe flourished from 900 to 1300 AD as a major centre of trade with regions as far as China and India.

Archaeological remains, including palatial structures and settlements, provide deep insights into the kingdom's complex social systems and its eventual decline, influenced by environmental challenges. The site is a rich source of historical and cultural knowledge, earning its rightful place among UNESCO's distinguished listings.

6. Cape Floral Region Protected Areas

At the southern tip of Africa lies the Cape Floral Region, a biodiversity hotspot home to nearly 20% of the continent's plant species—many found nowhere else. The region's unique fynbos vegetation, adapted to Mediterranean climates and periodic fires, supports a vibrant ecosystem teeming with endemic plants and specialised pollinators.

This protected area's exceptional biodiversity and ongoing evolutionary processes have earned it global recognition. Its ecological richness and distinctiveness justify its listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

7. Vredefort Dome

Located roughly 120 km southwest of Johannesburg, the Vredefort Dome marks the site of the world's largest and oldest known meteorite impact. Formed two billion years ago, this geological structure spans a 190-km radius and represents the most powerful energy release known to have affected Earth.

Despite erosion over time, the dome's layered rock formations remain remarkably intact, offering rare insights into ancient geological and planetary processes. The Vredefort Dome is invaluable to scientists and geologists alike, revealing crucial information about Earth's formative history. ►►





8. Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape

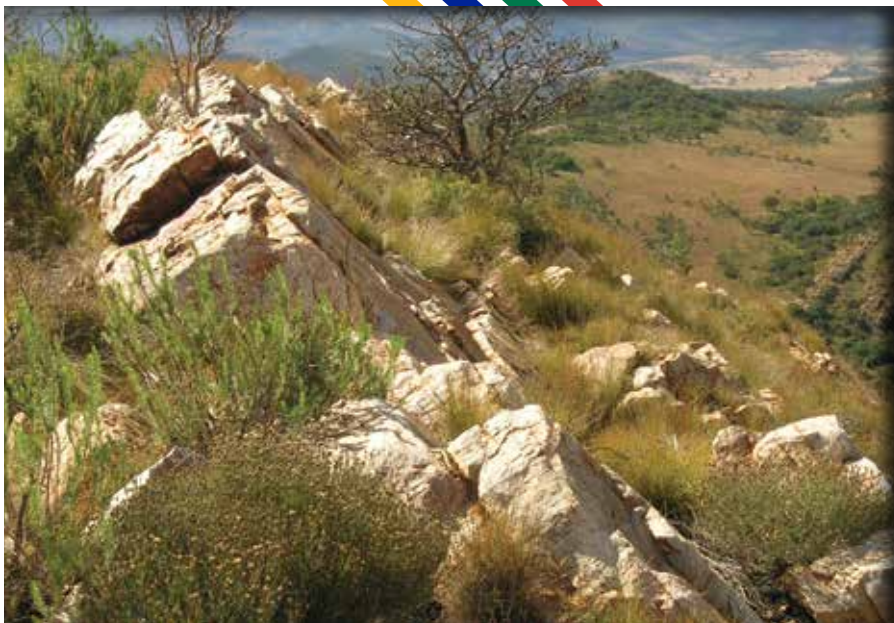
The Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape in the Northern Cape embodies the intricate relationship between people and nature. For over 2,000 years, the semi-nomadic Nama people have practised seasonal pastoralism in this arid yet biologically diverse region.

Their sustainable land-use methods have helped maintain the fragile ecosystem of the succulent Karoo biome. The landscape, characterised by its stark mountains and volcanic outcrops, showcases the enduring harmony between traditional knowledge and environmental stewardship, offering a living example of cultural continuity.

9. #Khomani Cultural Landscape

Situated in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, the #Khomani Cultural Landscape offers a unique window into the ancient lifeways of Southern Africa's first peoples. For more than 20,000 years, the #Khomani San have thrived in this desert region, mastering survival through detailed knowledge of local flora, fauna, and resource use.

The preservation of their language, traditions, and environmental understanding makes this site a cultural treasure. It continues to reflect the depth of human adaptability and the profound connection between indigenous communities and their environment.



10. Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains

The Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains, located in northeastern South Africa, are among the world's oldest geological formations. Dating back between 3.6 and 3.25 billion years, these ancient rocks provide rare evidence of early Earth conditions, including atmospheric development, plate tectonics, and early life forms.

Their well-preserved volcanic and sedimentary layers offer scientists unparalleled insight into the Earth's early history. The site's global significance in understanding our planet's geological evolution is reflected in its UNESCO designation.



11. Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites

In 2024, UNESCO recognised a collective of fourteen historic sites across South Africa that commemorate the nation's fight for justice and reconciliation. Together, these sites capture key moments in South Africa's liberation history. They also celebrate the values of non-racialism, Ubuntu, and human dignity, encapsulating the enduring legacy of

Nelson Mandela and the broader struggle for democracy.

The Legacy Sites include 14 locations: 11 in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria in Gauteng, two in the Eastern Cape, one in the Free State, and one in KwaZulu-Natal. Key sites include the Union Buildings in Pretoria (the official seat of government), the Sharpeville Site (the location of the massacre of 69 people protesting the unjust Pass Laws), and The Great Place at Mqhekezweni, where Mandela lived as a young man. Other significant locations include Walter Sisulu Square in Soweto, where the Congress of the People met in 1955 to sign the Freedom Charter, and Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, the site of imprisonment for famous political activists, including Mahatma Gandhi, Winnie, and Nelson Mandela, now the seat of the Constitutional Court of South Africa.

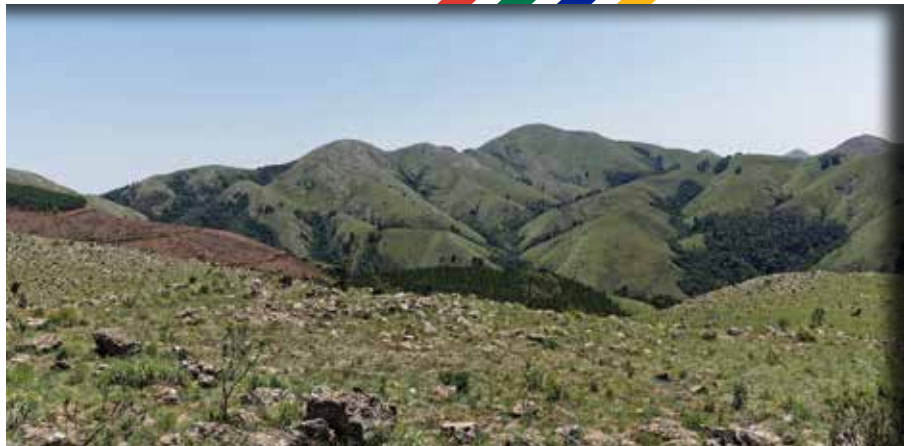
12. The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa

Newly inscribed in 2024, this World Heritage Site includes locations such as Diepkloof Rock Shelter, Sibhudu Cave, and the Pinnacle Point Site Complex.

This site comprises three locations: the Diepkloof Rock Shelter and Pinnacle Point Complex in the Western Cape, and Sibhudu Cave in KwaZulu-Natal. As of August 2024, you can visit both locations in the Western Cape, while the third location in KwaZulu-Natal is not yet open to the public. The province is working to ensure that visitors can access it soon. According to UNESCO, these locations “provide the most varied and best-preserved record known of the development of modern human behaviour, reaching back as far as 162,000 years.”

Diepkloof Rock Shelter, Pinnacle Point Complex, and Sibhudu Cave are key sites forming part of “The Cradle of Human Culture,” an inter-provincial initiative aimed at informing the public of South Africa's rich culture and heritage through a journey of discovery. This initiative traces how Homo sapiens began to innovate culturally, socially, and behaviourally. Artefacts discovered at these sites—including advanced tools, ochre use, and symbolic engravings—reveal the intellectual and cultural growth of early Homo sapiens. These findings greatly enhance our understanding of human development and adaptation, securing the sites' status as essential to the story of humanity. ¹

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South Africa's provinces:

A world in one country

South Africa has been aptly described as a microcosm of the world, a place where civilisations meet. With its spectacular views, stunning wildlife and unbeatable biodiversity in contrast with its bustling modern cities and vibrant economy, South Africa is often described as “a world in one country.”

The country has more than 290 conservation parks. It is home to almost 300 mammal species, about 860 bird species, and 8 000 plant species. The annual sardine run is the biggest migration on the planet.

South Africa boasts 12 world heritage sites and seven different biomes. It is considered the cradle of humankind and boasts 40% of all hominid finds on Earth. The country has a lot to offer in the form of places of interest and varying forms of amusement.

South Africa has nine provinces, which vary in size. The smallest is tiny and crowded Gauteng, a highly urbanised region, and the largest is the vast, arid and empty Northern Cape, which takes up almost a third of South Africa's total land area.

Each province has its own Legislature, Premier and Executive Council. The country has common boundaries with Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, while Mozambique and Swaziland lie to the north-east. Completely enclosed by South African territory in the south-east is the mountain kingdom of Lesotho.

EASTERN CAPE

The Eastern Cape, lying on the south-eastern South African coast, is a region of great natural beauty, particularly the rugged cliffs, rough seas and dense green bush of the stretch known as the Wild Coast.

In the Eastern Cape, various floral habitats meet. Along the coast, the northern tropical

forests intermingle with the more temperate woods of the south.

The province is serviced by airports situated in Gqeberha, East London, Mthatha and Bhisho.

The Eastern Cape, at 168 966 km², is South Africa's second-largest province after the Northern Cape, taking up 13,9% of the total land area.

The province has a population of more than seven million people, the majority of whom speak isiXhosa, followed by Afrikaans and English.

It is a region of great natural beauty, particularly the rugged cliffs, rough seas and dense green bush of the Wild Coast. The region has remarkable natural diversity, ranging from the dry, desolate Great Karoo to the lush forests of the Wild Coast and the Keiskamma Valley; the fertile Langkloof Valley, renowned for its rich apple harvests; and the mountainous southern Drakensberg region at Elliot.

The province is home to a number of higher education institutions, including Rhodes University, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the University of Fort Hare and the Walter Sisulu University of Technology.

It has airports in Bhisho, East London, Mthatha and Gqeberha. It also has two major harbours in East London and Gqeberha, respectively.

Agriculture, fisheries and forestry

The fertile Langkloof Valley in the south-west has enormous deciduous fruit orchards, while sheep farming predominates in the Karoo.

The Alexandria-Grahamstown area produces pineapples, chicory and dairy products, while coffee and tea are cultivated at Magwa. An olive nursery has been developed in collaboration with the University of Fort

Hare to form a nucleus of olive production in the Eastern Cape.

The coastal areas receive good summer rainfall and have a moderate climate, becoming more subtropical to the north-west, which makes them particularly suitable for forestry.

The basis of the province's fishing industry is squid, some recreational and commercial fishing for line fish, the collection of marine resources, and access to line-catches of hake.

Industry

There are two industrial development zones: the West Bank in East London and Coega, near Gqeberha, which includes the deepwater Port of Ngqura.

The metropolitan economies of Port Elizabeth and East London are based primarily on manufacturing, the most important being automotive manufacturing. The province is the hub of South Africa's motor industry. With its ability to link throughout the economy, the government has identified the automotive industry as a key growth sector. Other important sectors include renewables and green industries, forestry and timber processing, pharmaceuticals, plastics and chemicals, capital goods and tourism.

FREE STATE

According to the Stats SA's Census 2022 and mid-year population estimates of 2024, there were over three million people in the Free State on about 129 825 km² of land. The main languages spoken are Sesotho, Afrikaans and isiXhosa.

The Free State has wide horizons and blue skies, farmland, mountains, goldfields and widely dispersed towns.

It lies in the heart of South Africa, with Lesotho nestling in the hollow of its bean-like shape. Between the Vaal River in the north and the Orange River in the south, this immense rolling prairie stretches as far as the eye can see.

Mangaung, comprising Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, has established institutional, educational and administrative infrastructure. With Bloemfontein being South Africa's judicial capital, the province houses the Supreme Court of Appeal. Important towns include Welkom, Sasolburg, Odendaalsrus, Kroonstad, Parys, Phuthaditjhaba, Bethlehem and the charming village of Clarens, situated in the rolling foothills of the Maluti Mountains.

Some of South Africa's most valued San rock art can be found in the Free State. Other tourist attractions include the Golden Gate National Park, the annual air show in Bethlehem, the Cherry Festival in Ficksburg

and the Fauresmith International Endurance Ride equestrian event.

The annual Mangaung African Cultural Festival, known as Macufe, is hosted in partnership with the Tourism Authority and the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State.

The Vredefort Dome, 10 km in diameter, is a World Heritage Site.

Agriculture

Agriculture dominates the Free State landscape, with cultivated land covering 32 000 km² and natural veld and grazing 87 000 km² of the province. Field crops yield almost two-thirds of the gross agricultural income of the province. Animal products contribute a further 30%, with the balance generated by horticulture.

Mining

The National Development Plan has intensified the mining potential that still exists in the goldfields region of Matjhabeng in the Lejweleputswa District as a job intervention zone. The De Bron-Merriespruit Gold Project and the Bloemhoek Gold Project are included as potential development projects in the scope of work of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission.

The province has 12 gold mines, producing 30% of South Africa's output and making it the fifth-largest producer of gold in the world. Gold mines in the Free State also supply a substantial portion of the total silver produced in the country. Uranium occurring in the gold-bearing conglomerates of the goldfields is extracted as a by-product.

The Free State's gold reef of more than 400 km stretches across the province from Gauteng. South Africa's largest gold mining complex is Free State Consolidated Goldfields, with an area of 330 km².

Bituminous coal is mined and converted to petrochemicals at Sasolburg.

The province also produces high-quality diamonds from its kimberlite pipes and fissures, and the country's largest deposit of bentonite is found in the Koppies district.

Manufacturing and industry

The Maluti-a-Phofung Special Economic Zone is the Free State's share of the logistics and industrial corridor. The Vehicle Distribution Centre was established in partnership with the German Bremen Logistics Group, which committed R60 million towards this project. The Harrismith Food Processing Park forms part of the broader development initiative.

The Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme forms part of Eskom's capital expansion programme. This energy infrastructure project is located

on the border of the Phumelela and Maluti-a-Phofung local municipalities in the Free State and the eMnambithi Local Municipality and the uThukela District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

Sasol South Africa, the largest producer of synthetic fuels on the sub-continent, remains a key role-player in the Free State economy.

GAUTENG

The mid-year population estimates of 2024 show that Gauteng remains the most populous province—with close to 16 million people, which translates to 25,3% of the population. Gauteng contributes 33,9% to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) and is also one of the biggest contributors to the continent's economy.

Gauteng accounts for the bulk of all employees' remuneration in the country, at 47,7%, and is responsible for 50,4% of all company turnover in South Africa. Financial and business services, logistics, manufacturing, property, telecommunications and trade are some of the province's most important economic sectors.

It is the business heart of South Africa, but it is also the shopping mecca of Africa, with 60% of tourists from the rest of the continent citing shopping as their reason for visiting the province.

The population of close to 16 million people has the highest per capita income level in the country. The province blends cultures, colours and first- and third-world traditions in a spirited mix, flavoured by a number of foreign influences.

Most overseas visitors enter South Africa via OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg.

The City of Johannesburg is the capital of the province. South of Johannesburg lies Soweto, the most populous urban residential area in the country, with a population of more than a million. Some 50 km north of Johannesburg lies South Africa's administrative capital, Pretoria. The magnificent Union Buildings, which overlooks the city from Meintjieskop, represents the official seat of the South African Government and houses the offices of the country's President.

The industrial area of Rosslyn and the townships of Soshanguve and Ga-Rankuwa are situated north of Pretoria. Cullinan, which is well known for its diamonds, and Mamelodi lie to the east. To the west lies Atteridgeville.

Other important Gauteng towns include Krugersdorp and Roodepoort on the West Rand and Germiston, Springs, Boksburg, Benoni, Brakpan and Kempton Park on the East Rand. Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging

in the south of the province are major industrial centres, while Heidelberg, Nigel and Bronkhorstspuit, to the east, are of agricultural importance.

The University of Pretoria is the largest residential university in South Africa, while the University of South Africa is believed to be the largest correspondence university in the world. Other universities include the University of Witwatersrand and the University of Johannesburg.

The province also has several other tertiary educational institutions, such as universities of technology and further education and training colleges. Gauteng is also home to leading research institutions such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Agricultural Research Council, the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute and the Human Sciences Research Council.

Manufacturing includes basic iron and steel, fabricated and metal products, food, machinery, electrical machinery, appliances and electrical supplies, vehicle parts and accessories, and chemical products.

All major gold and diamond mining houses have their headquarters in Johannesburg, the biggest being Anglo American and De Beers.

Technology

More than 60% of South Africa's research and development takes place in Gauteng.

The CSIR is one of South Africa's leading science and technology research, development and implementation centres. Located in Pretoria, the CSIR's research and development areas include biosciences; the built environment; information and communications technology; materials science and manufacturing; natural resources and the environment; mineral resources; space technology; nanotechnology and synthetic biology.

The Innovation Hub in Pretoria is Africa's first internationally accredited science park and a full member of the International Association of Science Parks. Its community has become a regional centre of innovation and knowledge creation, linked to the fast-moving world of global interconnectivity, and is made up of small, medium and micro-enterprises and multinational companies, employing over 1 000 people.

Industry and agriculture

A large area of Gauteng falls within the so-called "Maize Triangle."

The province is an integrated industrial complex with major areas of economic activity in three subregional areas, namely the Vaal Triangle; the East, West and Central Rand; and Pretoria. Johannesburg houses the

Johannesburg Stock Exchange Limited, the largest securities exchange in Africa.

KWAZULU-NATAL

The mid-year population estimates of 2024 show that KwaZulu-Natal has a population of more than 12 million (19.5% of the total population). It covers an area of 94 361 km².

The province is one of the country's most popular holiday destinations. It includes South Africa's lush subtropical east coast, stretching from Port Edward in the south to Mozambique in the north.

The Drakensberg Mountain range stretches the entire length of KwaZulu-Natal's western boundary. The Drakensberg forms the boundary between South Africa and the mountain kingdom of Lesotho and offers some of the country's most awe-inspiring landscapes.

Within the area is a vast 243 000-hectare sweep of basalt summits and buttresses; this section was formally granted World Heritage status in November 2000 and was renamed uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park.

The summer-rainfall coastal regions are hot and humid, with a subtropical climate. The Midlands area is drier, with extremely cold conditions in winter and snow on the high-lying ground. In the north, the subtropical strip extends around Swaziland to the edge of the escarpment.

Visitors can enter the province through the King Shaka International Airport at La Mercy, north of Durban, or use the extensive national road network. There are also two major harbours—the Port of Durban, which is one of the busiest in Africa, and Richards Bay, which is an important coal-export harbour.

There are several nature reserves, including the Royal Natal National Park, Giant's Castle and the Kamberg Nature Reserve.

Tertiary institutions of learning in the province include the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Durban Institute of Technology.

KwaZulu-Natal is the only province with a monarchy specifically provided for in the Constitution.

Industry and agriculture

KwaZulu-Natal has a diverse industrial sector, with major industries having developed around the Port of Durban.

Major industries in the province are agriculture, forestry, aluminium, petrochemicals, automotive manufacturing, steel production, plastics and packaging, paper and board manufacturing, and a range of industries associated with imports and exports through the ports of Durban and Richards Bay.

The coastal belt is also a large producer of subtropical fruit and sugar, while the farmers

in the hinterland concentrate on vegetables, dairy and stock farming.

Another major source of income is forestry in the areas around Vryheid, Eshowe, Richmond, Harding and Ngome, which is also known for its tea plantations.

Limpopo

South Africa's northernmost province shares borders with Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana, making it the ideal gateway to Africa. Named after the Limpopo River that flows along its northern border, the province is rich in wildlife, natural beauty and historical and cultural treasures.

It has a population of more than six million people and covers an area of 125 754 km².

The province is linked to the Maputo Development Corridor through the Phalaborwa Spatial Development Initiative, which is a network of rail and road corridors connected to the major seaports, opening Limpopo for trade and investment. This is complemented by the presence of smaller airports in centres such as Phalaborwa and Musina, as well as the Gateway International Airport in Polokwane, the capital city, which lies strategically in the centre of the province.

The Great North Road, running through the centre of the province, strings together a series of towns such as Bela Bela, with its popular mineral spa; Modimolle, with its beautiful Waterberg mountain range; Mokopane; Polokwane; Makhado, at the foot of the Soutpansberg mountain range; and Musina, which is well-known for its majestic baobab trees. The crossing into Zimbabwe is at Beit Bridge.

Phalaborwa and Thabazimbi are Limpopo's major mining centres, while the town of Tzaneen in the picturesque Magoebaskloof is known for its tea plantations, forestry products and tropical fruit.

The province is in the Savanna Biome, an area of mixed grassland and trees, generally known as bushveld. Natural resources include more than 50 provincial nature reserves and several private game reserves. The largest section of the Kruger National Park is along Limpopo's eastern boundary, which borders on Mozambique.

Several museums and national monuments bear testimony to the ancient people and fearless pioneers who braved the unknown.

Living museums include the Bakone Malapa Museum near Polokwane and the Tsonga Open-Air Museum near Tzaneen.

Mapungubwe ("Place of the Jackal") Hill, some 75 km from Musina, is a world heritage site. It served as a natural fortress for its inhabitants from about 950 AD to 1200 AD.

Agriculture

Limpopo produces a wide range of agricultural products. The area is a potato belt and known for its superior quality potatoes for high-end markets. It also produces 75% of the country's mangoes; 65% of its papayas; 36% of its tea; 25% of its citrus, bananas and litchis; 60% of its avocados and two-thirds of its tomatoes

Other products include coffee, nuts, guavas, sisal, cotton, tobacco, sunflower, maize, wheat and grapes. In addition, more than 170 plantations produce timber.

Most of the higher-lying areas are devoted to cattle and game ranching, earning a reputation for quality biltong (salted, dried meat), which is a popular South African delicacy.

Industry and mining

Limpopo also has abundant mineral resources, making mining the critical sector of the province's economy by contributing 22% of the gross geographic product. Metals include platinum, chromium, nickel, cobalt, vanadium, tin, limestone and uranium clay.

Other reserves include antimony, phosphates, fluorspar, gold, diamonds, copper, emeralds, scheelites, magnetite, vermiculite, silicon, mica, black granite, corundum, feldspar and salt.

MPUMALANGA

Spectacular scenic beauty and an abundance of wildlife make this province one of South Africa's major tourist destinations.

Mpumalanga, which means "Place Where the Sun Rises," is home to more than five million people. The principal languages are Siswati and isiZulu.

With a surface area of only 76 495 km², it is the second-smallest province after Gauteng yet has the fourth-largest economy in South Africa.

Bordered by Mozambique and Swaziland in the east and Gauteng in the west, the province is situated mainly on the high plateau grasslands of the Middleveld. In the north-east, it rises towards mountain peaks, terminating in an immense escarpment. In some places, this escarpment plunges hundreds of metres down to the low-lying area known as the Lowveld.

The province has a network of excellent roads and railway connections, making it highly accessible. Owing to its popularity as a tourist destination, Mpumalanga is also served by a few small airports, including the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport.

Mbombela is the capital of the province and the administrative and business centre of the Lowveld. Other important towns are eMalahleni, Standerton, Piet Retief, Malalane, Ermelo, Barberton, and Sabie, which lies in the centre of one of the largest man-made forests

in the world. Mpumalanga lies mainly within the Grassland Biome. The escarpment and the Lowveld form a transitional zone between this grassland area and the Savanna Biome. The Maputo Corridor, which links the province with Gauteng, and Maputo in Mozambique, facilitates economic development and growth for the region.

Agriculture and forestry

Mpumalanga is a summer-rainfall area divided by the escarpment into the Highveld region with cold frosty winters and the Lowveld region with mild winters and a subtropical climate.

The escarpment area sometimes experiences snow on the high ground. Thick mist is common during the hot, humid summers.

Agriculture, as the backbone of the province's economy, employs 8,1% of its total workforce. An abundance of citrus fruit and many other subtropical fruit—mangoes, avocados, litchis, bananas, papayas, granadillas, and guavas—as well as nuts and a variety of vegetables are produced here.

Mbombela is the second-largest citrus-producing area in South Africa and is responsible for one-third of the country's orange exports. The Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Crops is situated in the city.

Groblersdal is an important irrigation area, which yields a wide variety of products such as citrus, cotton, tobacco, wheat and vegetables. Carolina-Bethal-Ermelo is mainly a sheep-farming area, but potatoes, sunflowers, maize and peanuts are also grown there.

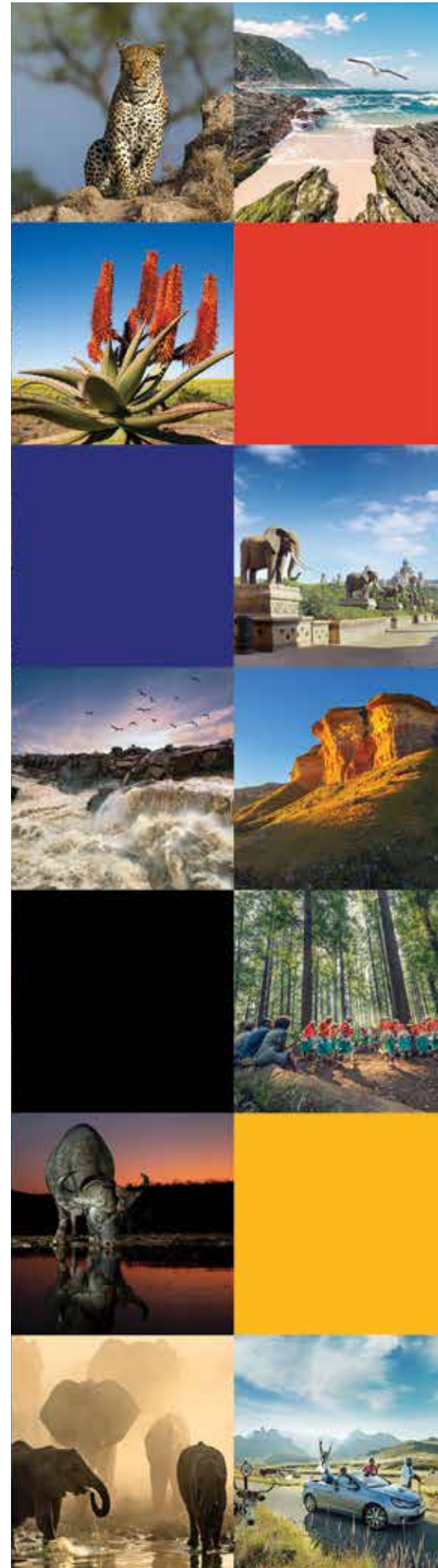
Industry and manufacturing

Most of the manufacturing production in Mpumalanga occurs in the southern Highveld region, especially in Highveld Ridge, where large petrochemical plants such as Sasol 2 and Sasol 3 are located.

Large-scale manufacturing occurs especially in the northern Highveld area, particularly chrome-alloy and steel manufacturing. In the Lowveld subregion, industries concentrate on manufacturing products from agricultural and raw forestry material. The growth in demand for goods and services for export via Maputo will stimulate manufacturing in the province.

Mpumalanga is rich in coal reserves, with eMalahleni being the biggest coal producer in Africa. South Africa's major power stations are situated in this province.

Kendal power station's cooling towers are the largest structures of their type in the world. The Kusile Power Station near Delmas, which was completed in 2016, is the country's biggest, contributing a massive 4 800 MW of electricity to the national grid.





One of the country's largest paper mills is situated at Ngodwana, close to its timber source.

NORTHERN CAPE

The Northern Cape is South Africa's largest province, taking up almost a third of the country's total land area. However, the province is sparsely populated with only about 1,3 million people on 372 889 km² of land.

About 57% of the people speak Afrikaans, while Setswana, isiXhosa and English are also widely spoken.

The last remaining true San people live in the Kalahari area, mainly along the Orange and Vaal rivers. Many fossils and San rock engravings have been found here, some of which are displayed at the McGregor Museum in Kimberley.

The province lies to the south of its most important asset, the mighty Orange River, which provides the basis for a healthy agricultural industry.

The Northern Cape borders the Atlantic Ocean in the west with Namibia and Botswana to the north and northwest, respectively. It is fringed by the Swartberg Mountain range on its southern border.

With two major airports at Kimberley and Upington and an excellent road network, the province's interior is easily accessible from South Africa's major cities, harbours and airports.

Sutherland hosts the southern hemisphere's largest astronomical observatory, the multinational-sponsored Southern African Large Telescope.

The Northern Cape is one of two sites to host the Square Kilometer Array radio telescope. Developed by scientists from 17 countries, it will be the largest and most advanced radio telescope in the world.

Among many other benefits, the province's tourism and hospitality industry is profiting from the project, as scientists and other interested parties are flooding into the town of Carnarvon.

The province has several national parks and conservation areas, including the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Ai-Ais/

Richtersveld Transfrontier Conservation Park and Augrabies Falls National Park.

The largest part of the province lies in the dry Nama-Karoo Biome, which contains a number of fascinating plants, including the elephant's trunk ("halfmens" or half-man) tree, aloe ("kokerboom" or quiver tree) and a variety of succulents. The area is well known for its spectacular annual spring flowers, which attract thousands of tourists.

Agriculture and industry

The economy of the province's Karoo region depends on sheep farming, while the karakul-pelt industry is one of the most important in the Gordonia district.

The province has fertile agricultural land, especially in the Orange River Valley. A variety of fruit is cultivated at Upington, Kakamas and Keimoes. The Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme near Warrenton facilitates the production of wheat, fruit, peanuts, maize and cotton.

Wine is also produced in the Northern Cape's Orange River wine region, which accounts for 25,6% of South Africa's Colombard vines and 10% of its Chenin Blanc. The Niewoudtville Rooibos Tea processing initiative centres on the development and economic empowerment of smallholder farmers. It is aimed at unlocking economic potential, creating sustainable jobs and increasing the skills base. The installation of pasteurisation equipment has been completed, and tea has been exported to countries such as Germany, Spain and Japan.

Mining

Mining contributes 27,6% to the gross regional domestic product.

Iron-ore mining in the north-eastern corner of the province has been expanding despite the global recession, driven largely by China's demand for steel.

Sishen is the biggest iron-ore mine in the country and its owner, Kumba Iron Ore, is engaging in a new project at Kolomela. New manganese projects are also underway.

Diamond mining, in contrast, has seen declining volumes and job losses. Diamond mining is increasingly moving away from the older mines to alluvial mining along the Orange River and its tributaries and in the Atlantic Ocean.

The province also has copper, asbestos, fluorspar, semiprecious stones and marble.

NORTH WEST

North West is bordered by Botswana in the north and fringed by the Kalahari Desert in the west, Gauteng to the east, and the Free State to the south. It is known as the "Platinum Province," owing to its wealth of this precious metal.

South Africa has been aptly described as a microcosm of the world, a place where civilisations meet.

The province has a population of more than four million people who mainly speak Setswana.

Mahikeng is the capital city and well known for the Mafikeng Siege, which took place in October 1899 during the Anglo-Boer/South African War.

Most of the province's economic activity is concentrated between Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp, as well as in Rustenburg and the eastern region, where more than 83,3% of the province's economic activity takes place.

The province has various tourist attractions, including Sun City, the Pilanesberg National Park, Madikwe Game Reserve, and the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust.

A portion of one of South Africa's 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites also falls within the borders of North West namely the Taung hominid fossil site, which has been incorporated into South Africa's Cradle of Humankind.

Mining and manufacturing

Mining contributes 23,3% to North West's economy and makes up 22,5% of the South African mining industry. The Rustenburg and Brits districts produce 94% of the country's platinum, which is more than any other single area in the world. In addition to granite, marble, fluorspar and diamonds, the province also produces a quarter of South Africa's gold.

Employment along the Platinum Corridor, from Pretoria to eastern Botswana, accounts for over a third of the province's total employment.

North West's manufacturing sector centres on the municipalities of Brits, Rustenburg, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp and Mahikeng, which together account for more than 50% of the province's total manufacturing production.

The industries in Brits concentrate on manufacturing and construction, while those in Klerksdorp are geared towards the mining industry. In the manufacturing arena, automotive parts, machinery, electronic, audio, and medical equipment are manufactured using local materials and resources.

Agriculture

Some of the largest cattle herds in the world are found at Stellaland near Vryburg, which explains why this area is often referred to as the Texas of South Africa. Marico is also cattle country.

North West is South Africa's major producer of white maize.

The areas around Rustenburg are fertile, mixed-crop farming land, with maize and sunflowers being the most important crops.

WESTERN CAPE

Situated on the south-western tip of the African continent, the Western Cape with its wide beaches and breathtaking scenery, complemented by a rich variety of cultures, historical landmarks, world-class restaurants and entertainment, is a world-famous tourist destination.

The province has a population of more than seven million people.

Cape Town, often referred to as the "Mother City," houses Parliament and is South Africa's legislative capital. The province has a strong network of higher education institutions, including the universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and the Western Cape, and has the highest adult education level in the country.

Visitors to the province can disembark at one of the province's two main airports, Cape Town International or George Airport or at the sea ports of Cape Town, Mossel Bay and Saldanha.

Table Mountain, the Cape winelands, Robben Island and the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens are among the province's most popular tourist attractions.

The Western Cape is also known for its floral diversity. The Cape Floristic Region World Heritage Site, comprising eight separate protected areas, covers an area of more than 553 000 ha stretching from the Cape Peninsula to the Eastern Cape.

The Knysna-Tsitsikamma region has the country's biggest indigenous forests.

The cold Atlantic Ocean along the West Coast is a rich fishing area, while the warmer Indian Ocean skirts the province's southern beaches.

Agriculture and fisheries

The Western Cape's sheltered valleys between mountains are ideal for the cultivation

of export-grade fruit such as apples, table grapes, olives, peaches and oranges.

A variety of vegetables is cultivated in the eastern part of the Western Cape, while the Swartland and Overberg districts are well-known as the country's prime wheat-growing areas.

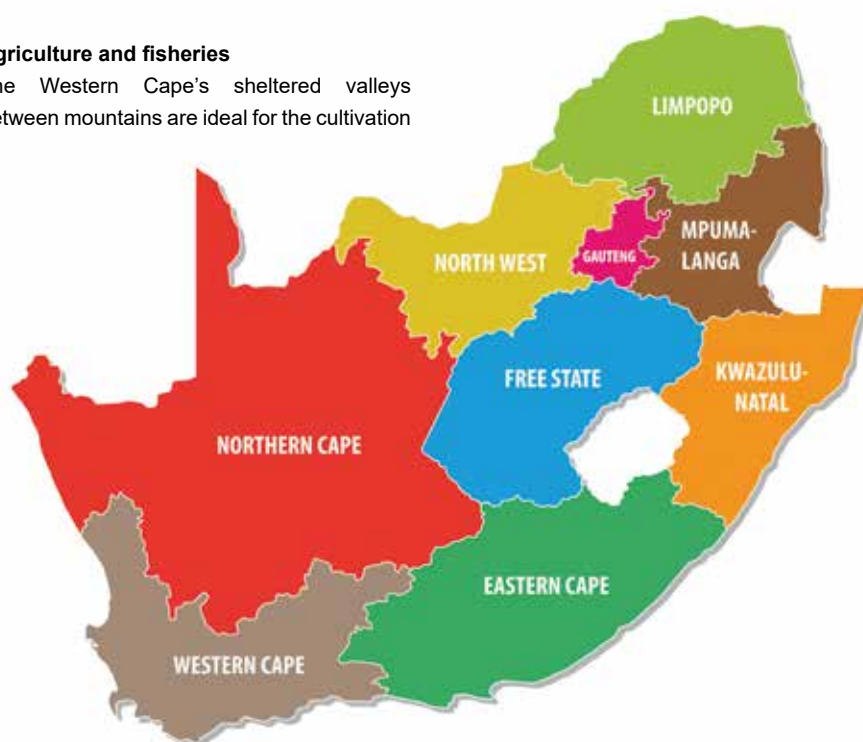
The agricultural sector is critical to the Western Cape economy, accounting for 60% of regional exports.

The Western Cape is also well known for its wine production. Some 75% of all South African fishing takes place along the Western Cape coastline. The rich fishing grounds on the west coast are protected from exploitation by a 200 km commercial fishing zone and a strict quota system. Snoek, Cape lobster, abalone, calamari, octopus, oysters and mussels are among the delicacies found in these waters.

Other exports are fruit, wine, wool and ostrich. The high quality of exports, combined with the relative weakness of the local currency, makes the products some of the most affordable high-quality exports in the world.

Industry

The Saldanha Bay Industrial Development Zone (SBIDZ) is drawing strong international interest. Saldanha Bay is strategically located to serve as a service, maintenance, fabrication and supply hub for the booming African oil and gas sector, due to the increasing number of oil rigs requiring maintenance, and their traffic flow passing from the west to the east coast of Africa. ☺



Ubuntu.

The Spirit of "I Am Because We Are"

| Ubuntu is not just an abstract idea. It is lived daily.

In a time when the world feels more divided than ever, an age-old African philosophy is quietly offering an antidote: Ubuntu. The word, found in the Nguni Bantu languages of Southern Africa, loosely translates to "I am because we are." Simple in phrasing, profound in meaning, it is a reminder that our lives gain richness and purpose through connection with others.

Ubuntu is not just an abstract idea. It is lived daily, often in the smallest gestures. It is the neighbour who shares food when someone is in need, the community that raises children together, or the warmth of treating strangers

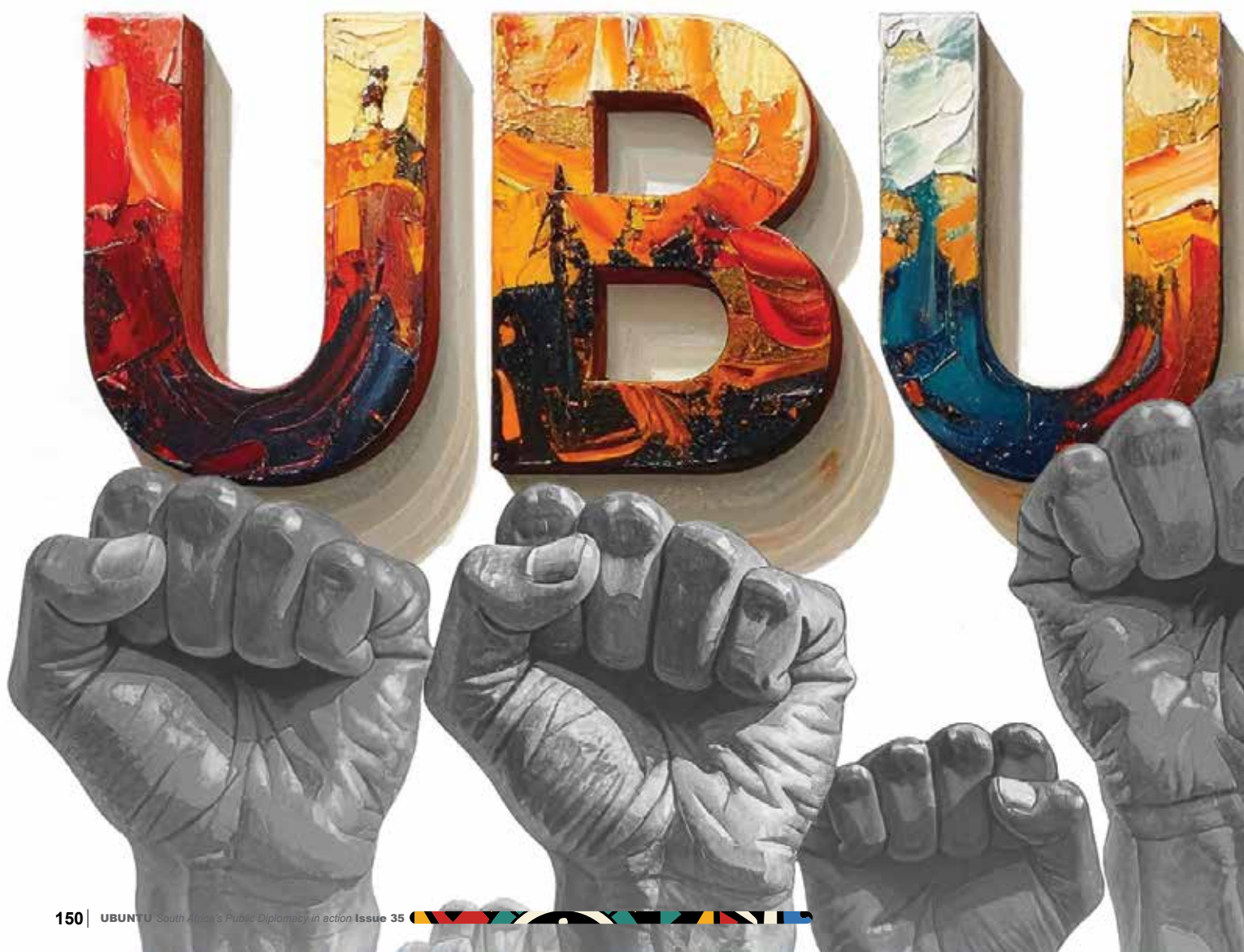
like family. It is the understanding that our humanity is intertwined—when one person suffers, we all suffer; when one person thrives, we all benefit.

For generations, Ubuntu has been a guiding principle across African societies. Village elders have long invoked it when resolving conflicts, encouraging reconciliation over rivalry. But it was during South Africa's transition to democracy that Ubuntu entered global conversations.

Leaders like Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu spoke of Ubuntu as the moral foundation needed to heal a

fractured nation. Tutu often explained it this way: "A person is a person through other persons." That spirit helped shape South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where forgiveness and unity were seen as paths stronger than vengeance.

Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president, in a preface to Richard Stengel's *Mandela's Way: Fifteen Lessons on Life, Love, and Courage* (2009), encapsulated the many interpretations by calling ubuntu an African concept that means "the profound sense that we are human only through the humanity of others; that if we



are to accomplish anything in this world, it will in equal measure be due to the work and achievements of others."

Fast forward to the present, and Ubuntu feels more relevant than ever. In workplaces, it challenges the idea of "every person for themselves" and instead champions collaboration, empathy, and shared success. In schools, it inspires learners to support each other's growth rather than compete at all costs. Even in our digital lives, Ubuntu is a gentle reminder that behind every screen name and comment is a real human being.

While Ubuntu is deeply African in origin, its message resonates universally. It echoes similar philosophies found in other cultures: the idea of mutual responsibility in Confucianism, the Golden Rule in Christianity, or the concept of interbeing in Buddhism. These parallels suggest that Ubuntu can serve as a bridge between cultures, offering a shared ethic of compassion and community in a fragmented world. In a sense, Ubuntu is a language everyone can understand, no matter where they come from.

At the heart of Ubuntu is practice, not theory. It is not about grand gestures but about how we choose to show up every day. Greeting

someone with genuine warmth. Listening without judgement. Offering help where we can. These small acts ripple outward, strengthening the bonds that make us human.

Perhaps the greatest gift of Ubuntu is that in caring for others, we discover more about ourselves. It's a philosophy that says true humanity is not found in isolation, but in the web of relationships that sustain us. In a world that often celebrates the individual, Ubuntu gently reminds us that we are, because we are together. 

www.en.wikipedia.org | www.theculturetrip.com



Ubuntu at a glance

Origin: Nguni Bantu languages of Southern Africa

Meaning: "I am because we are"

Famous Advocates: Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Core Values: Compassion, interconnectedness, respect, community

Everyday Practice: Sharing, listening, reconciling, showing dignity to others

Global Relevance: Resonates with ideas of mutual responsibility found in many cultures worldwide

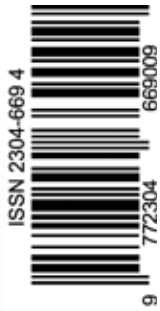
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