

T20 High-Level Recommendations

Communiqué Presented to the G20 South Africa

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Preamble

Guided by the priorities of South Africa's G20 presidency, the T20 South Africa Organising Committee (OC)¹ has invited a wide range of experts and institutions to engage and develop ideas and solutions to pressing global challenges, with an emphasis on voices from Africa and the broader Global South. The T20 South Africa has focused on high-impact, solutions-driven and implementation-focused policy recommendations. This document provides a synthesis of task force statements, which will be published in full on the South Africa T20 website².

Key Recommendations



1. Trade and Investment

1.1. Empower the WTO to preserve and reform the multilateral trading system: The G20 should empower the WTO by strengthening the WTO Secretariat and making additional financial resources available. The decision-making process should also be made more flexible. This will help advance and incorporate pro-development plurilateral agreements, such as the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement, into the WTO Framework.

The dispute settlement system needs to be reformed to strengthen deliberative processes and preventive mechanisms, in the interim building on the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA).

¹ The T20 South Africa Organising Committee is composed of the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) associated with UNISA, the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC), University of Johannesburg.

² See www.t20southafrica.org

The Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) should be reviewed to provide predictable, long-term market access for services and flexible rules of origin for goods for Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The G20 should build consensus and momentum to the 14th Ministerial Conference of the WTO (MC14) around the GSP reform.

1.2. Promote a coordinated approach to regional trade cooperation that harmonises physical, social, and digital infrastructures and standards, and promote interoperability of trade systems to reduce asymmetries: The G20 should support coordination across its working groups on strengthening regional integration initiatives, for example those focused on intra-African trade and economic transformation. The G20 should address intra- and inter- country asymmetries through people-centred investment financing and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), including energy transmission and transport networks, digital and social infrastructure.

1.3. Promote industrial and investment policy to support a just and green transition and economic growth through value chain integration, and the transfer of innovative technologies: The G20 should support the creation of shared data and traceability systems. The rules of trade and investment should provide space for countries to pursue value-addition and technology transfer with instruments and incentives that are time-bound and transparent. The G20 members should uphold their commitments to use subsidies only for permissible development objectives.

2. Digital Transformation

2.1. Drive efforts to fund the production of standard and new statistics and analysis necessary for evidence-based digital policy: The G20 should drive efforts to fund the production of digital statistics and analysis necessary for evidence-based policy, which is crucial for addressing foundational digital inequalities. Such inequality undermines the potential of emerging technologies (such as AI systems) to address planetary problems.

2.2. Align with global governance efforts to support the development of enabling national and regional integrated data governance frameworks: The G20 should support the development of enabling national and regional integrated data governance frameworks that are holistic, rights-promoting, equitable and just. Data governance is a cross-cutting issue that will require the review of existing institutional arrangements that are not fit-for-purpose for this dynamic and complex environment. Data governance is required not only to safeguard citizens from harms associated largely with privacy protection and personal data but also to redress the uneven distribution of opportunities associated with advanced data-driven technologies and systems, such as AI, and in the deployment of DPI to enable more equitable digital inclusion.

2.3. Extend earlier G20 endorsements of the role of Digital Public Infrastructure in development with commitments to ensuring a ‘people-first’ and whole-of-society approach to digital public

infrastructure and emerging technologies: The design and implementation of technologies remain uneven, exclusionary and unequal. The G20 should play a leading role in advocating for global forums on digital technology for sustainable development, focusing on achieving more sustainable and inclusive digital futures. This includes a shift in process towards realising more participatory data governance and incorporating offline, multilingual and assisted options.

3. Financing for Sustainable Development

3.1. Facilitate overhauling of the IMF's governance model: The G20 should promote efforts to find a global agreement on quotas with radical progress in the next review. In particular, no individual country should have veto power. The G20 should support a revision of the current quota formula that takes into account potential financial vulnerability and eliminates variability from the quota formula, opening space to increase the weight of a blended GDP variable.

3.2. Promote efforts to build a multi-currency International Financial Architecture (IFA): The G20 should initiate a task force to study the methods and modalities for promoting the use of local currencies at the international level in trade and finance. This includes support for the development of multi-currency cross-border payment systems, swap lines between diverse countries, loans from Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) in local currencies and regional arrangements for payments in local currencies.

3.3. Take actions to bring down the cost of capital: The G20 should support a revised IMF Debt Sustainability Framework (jointly with the World Bank in the case of the framework for Low Income Countries) that incorporates assets created by debt; the costs of climate change and biodiversity collapse; and accounts for policy actions and investments to mitigate those vulnerabilities. The G20 should support efforts to increase concessionality in MDB financing (e.g. more grant donations, extending maturities to 50 years, grace periods of at least 10 years, etc.). The G20 should encourage credit rating agencies to enhance the transparency of their rating methodologies and models and give due consideration to local economic conditions in the countries that they are rating.

3.4. Take proactive measures to enable predictable and fast debt resolution: The G20 should promote and utilise, both in their own debt contracts and those of MDBs, debt swaps and contractual clauses, such as climate, debt pauses and other force *majeure* clauses to help countries deal with liquidity challenges. The G20 should also commission an independent feasibility study for a new debt resolution mechanism to replace the G20 Common Framework that, taking into account the work being implemented by the IMF and the World Bank, and the outcomes of the FfD4 in Seville, Spain, enables debtor countries to make fresh starts.

3.5. Expedite work on the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation: The G20 should endorse the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation (UNFCITC) as the Global Forum and advance binding rules for transparency, equity and wealth taxation. In addition, the G20 should promote efforts to strengthen capacity in the Global South.

4. Solidarity for the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

4.1. Finance SDG Gaps through a Reform of the Global Financial System and the Promotion of Progressive Fiscal Policies: The G20 should coordinate actions to curb income and wealth concentration – particularly through the implementation of a global wealth tax and its inclusion in the UN Tax Convention – and champion reform of the MDBs and financial institutions reform to improve the access of vulnerable countries to finance and to reduce harmful global spillovers by focusing on the prioritisation of comprehensive debt relief, including debt-for-SDGs, debt-for-nature and debt-for-social investment swaps. National governments must expand fiscal space through progressive taxation to strengthen public investment in sustainable development and develop a model legislative framework for parliamentary oversight.

4.2. Operationalise the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty and Build Equitable Food Systems: The G20 must monitor and evaluate the operationalisation of the Global Alliance which involves mobilising all countries to join the Alliance and support the development and implementation of concrete national action plans with clear, measurable milestones, especially in low- and middle-income countries. To uphold the right to food for all, the G20 must leverage its economic and political influence to address the inequitable distribution of food and access, promote health and sustainability in food systems, and implement equity-driven reforms at local, national, regional and global levels, including the development and implementation of measures to tackle food price volatility, market concentration and dietary diversity, while fostering accountability in supply chains and incentivising climate mitigation and nutritious crop production through taxation, labelling and local food governance initiatives.

4.3. Strengthen Social Protection Systems to Reduce Inequalities: The G20 should, through knowledge sharing and international cooperation (including delivery of the Second World Social Development Summit action plan), promote a comprehensive restructuring of social protection systems, including social protection floors, to ensure universal access to social services, healthcare, education, early childhood development, gender and age responsive care and support systems, continuous education and technologies to respond to the challenges and seize the opportunities brought about by digitalisation and climate action. Social protection must especially support populations exposed to environmental risks and armed conflicts, aligning with just transition goals.

5. Accelerating Climate Action and the Just Energy Transition

5.1. Promote value addition and fair benefit-sharing in critical mineral value chains for equitable green industrialisation: The G20 Critical Minerals Governance Framework currently being developed should promote value addition and fair benefit-sharing in critical mineral value chains for equitable green industrialisation. It should mandate the appropriate ex-ante consideration of social and environmental impacts and safeguards and their monitoring throughout the life cycle of critical minerals. The G20 should promote the negotiation of balanced regional – rather than bilateral – agreements to reduce risks, broaden benefits and enhance equity and accountability. In addition, partnership agreements related to critical minerals should be made publicly available. The G20 should endorse a credible global mining standard (building on existing initiatives) and help capacitate producer countries to capture value from their mineral endowment, as well as for implementation and monitoring.

5.2. Champion comprehensive ‘whole-of society, whole-of-economy’ just transition taxonomies, and exercise political leadership in UNFCCC negotiations to secure concrete outcomes and the means of implementation for just transitions at global and local levels: The G20 should lead on local, national, regional and international just transition policies and taxonomies in line with a ‘whole-of-government, whole-of-society’ approach that pursue, among others, poverty alleviation, social equity and resilience, gender equality and economic empowerment. To foster the delivery of concrete, outcome-oriented progress, the G20 should also promote the use of practical, data-driven and implementation-orientated monitoring frameworks. In addition, strengthened South–South and North–South collaboration, alongside enhanced regional integration, should underpin inclusive governance frameworks for just transitions, particularly by supporting skills development, capacity-building and the transfer and co-development of technology.

5.3. Deepen G20 engagement on insurance to enhance resilience and disaster risk response: The G20 should significantly increase and accelerate climate adaptation and just transition finance, and their appropriate consideration across processes (Baku to Belém Roadmap, FFD4). This should include enhancing the availability and affordability of insurance, including reinsurance, to address disaster protection gaps, in close coordination with the insurance sector (possibly through an Insurance20 engagement group), including through *inter alia* the development of climate risk templates and methodologies and capacity building on risk modelling.

5.4. Integrate climate and biodiversity nexus solutions with bioeconomy principles within G20 agenda: The G20 should integrate climate and biodiversity nexus solutions with bioeconomy principles within the G20 agenda on sustainable finance, food systems and energy transitions. This

should include concrete implementation pathways, financing that is new, additional and complementary, and integrating multilateral commitments, monitoring and reporting.



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