



Empowering Africa's Voice within the G20

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

30th - 31st October 2025 | Dakar, Senegal

Introduction

The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), AfriCatalyst, the African Union Development Agency–NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly hosted a two-day regional G20 dialogue session in Dakar, Senegal, on 30–31 October 2025. The event titled “Empowering Africa’s Voice within the G20” convened key stakeholders from across West Africa to reflect on Africa’s priorities for the G20 and examine how these priorities align with and reinforce the broader global development architecture. Given that South Africa’s G20 Presidency is drawing to a close and that parallel global processes, such as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4), have already concluded, the consultation also served as an opportunity to take stock of Africa’s engagement across these platforms. Participants assessed Africa’s contributions and achievements within processes that have been finalised and reflected on the coordination between the South African government and the African Union as the continent’s permanent members in the G20.

The event was well received, particularly because it provided space for West African stakeholders to articulate regional perspectives and ensure these views are reflected in ongoing engagements with the official G20 process. For the convening organisations, it also strengthened efforts to integrate West African voices in their official engagements with the G20 process. Participants included representatives from African governments, regional and continental institutions, civil society organisations, think tanks, philanthropic foundations, and development partners. The presence of the African Union Commission and the South African government was especially significant, as several policy recommendations emerging from the discussions were timely and relevant for consideration in the drafting of the G20 Leaders’ Declaration.

The programme followed a predominantly panel-based format, complemented by interactive discussions. This participatory approach encouraged robust engagement and generated a number of substantive interventions. This document synthesises and highlights the key messages and recommendations that emerged from this dialogue session.

“ The event was well received, particularly because it provided space for West African stakeholders to articulate regional perspectives and ensure these views are reflected in ongoing engagements with the official G20 process.

Key Outcomes

1. A Historic Chance for Coordinated Influence Is Created by Africa's Permanent Seat in the G20

Speakers confirmed that Africa's engagements in global processes have undergone a sea change with the AU's admission as a permanent member of the G20. The continent is now expected to shape the agenda and outcomes related to issues of global economic governance rather than merely being an observer. Africa must strategically use this position, according to the speakers, to coordinate regional diplomacy, establish shared priorities, and maintain advocacy that takes into account the continent's development aspirations, context and demographic importance. There was broad consensus that Africa's engagements on the global stage must translate into tangible development outcomes at the community level. To achieve this, the continent needs robust accountability mechanisms supported by clear short, medium, and long-term targets, along with regular monitoring and reporting to assess the effectiveness and impact of these engagements.

2. Importance of a Single African Voice in global engagements

There was general consensus that in order for Africa to effectively influence G20 outcomes and negotiations in other global processes (such as the Financing for Development process), policy alignment and collective negotiation

are required. Fragmented messaging impairs the ability to negotiate. It was recommended that the continent with leadership of the AUC should work towards formulate common positions on issues where there is some agreement among member states. The African common position on debt which was adopted as Lomé Declaration on Africa's Debt during the African Union Conference on Debt which was held in Lomé, Togo, from 12–14 May 2025 and later reviewed and endorsed by finance ministers and central bank officials from AU member states on 9 October 2025 was welcomed as a step towards the right direction. . Advocacy and communication on the common positions is also very critical and this requires coordination between the AU, regional organizations, national governments, and the entire civil society on the continent.

3. The G20 Presidency of South Africa Offers a Strategic Opportunity to Promote African Goals

Following successive Global South presidencies in Indonesia, India and Brazil respectively, South Africa's presidency, according to the speakers, aligns the G20 agenda with the development needs of the Global South, particularly in the areas of climate finance, financial architecture reform, and sustainable infrastructure investment. In order to ensure continuity beyond any one presidency, this opportunity should be used to formalize African

priorities within the G20 working groups across the Finance and Sherpa Tracks. Beyond its G20 presidency, South Africa will be well-advised to continue efforts to advance the priorities set for Africa. The Africa Engagement Framework established within the Finance Track of the South African presidency was identified as a key avenue for further collaboration on African priorities at the G20.

4. Global financial architecture reform must prioritise lowering the cost of capital for African countries

Participants highlighted critical and interlinked challenges undermining Africa's economic prospects, namely systemic credit rating biases, restricted access to affordable capital, and the resultant disproportionately high borrowing costs. The high cost of capital acts as a critical barrier on the continent, constraining essential investments in infrastructure development, climate adaptation, and economic transformation. Consequently, reforming the global financial architecture, specifically targeting risk assessment frameworks and Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) lending practices, is an urgent priority.

5. Strengthening institutional capacity as the backbone of Africa's global influence.

Speakers emphasised that, for Africa to strengthen its advocacy in global forums, it must first reinforce its governance and institutional frameworks. Enhancing data transparency, bolstering institutional capacity, and promoting sound public

financial governance were highlighted as essential pillars for improving the continent's credibility and leverage on the global stage. Africa's engagement in global processes must therefore be grounded in evidence-driven policymaking, fiscal accountability, regulatory coherence, and effective implementation.

Maintaining experienced staff in key positions, particularly within institutions such as the African Union Commission (AUC), was highlighted as critical for Africa's effective participation in global processes. Participants noted that some international forums are attended by political leaders who may not be fully versed in the technical issues under discussion. It was suggested that the AUC should ensure the presence of expert staff to accompany political representatives, especially on matters where a common African position exists. Retaining institutional expertise helps provide continuity, ensures a deep understanding of the issues, and strengthens Africa's influence in global engagements.

6. Africa's G20 Engagement Needs to Incorporate the Perspectives of African Financial Institutions

African development financial institutions are systemically important in the international financial system, particularly as they act as lenders of last resort on the continent. It was emphasized that the South African government and the AUC should advocate for the inclusion of African multilateral financial institutions (AMFIs) as invited international organizations at the G20. This is because AMFIs possess both the technical capacity and local context

to frame issues of debt and development finance. This can be done through invitation of the Alliance of African Multilateral Financial Institutions (AAMFI) as well as by way of continued engagement by the AUC and South African government with AAMFI in forging negotiating positions at the G20.

7. Collaboration between South African Government and AUC Key to the Continent's Global Engagements

Both the African Union Commission (AUC) and the South African government highlighted their close collaboration in advocating for African priorities across various global processes, including the South African G20 Presidency. Participants emphasized the need for a comprehensive review of this partnership to identify lessons learned and institutionalize best practices, ensuring that the momentum gained during South Africa's G20 Presidency is sustained. Coordination between the AUC and the South African government should be broadened to include other member states and regional economic communities, ensuring a more inclusive and representative approach to Africa's global engagements.

To strengthen the AUC's engagement within the G20, it was recommended that the Commission consider adopting a model similar to the G20's Engagement Groups. This would involve institutionalising distinct engagement platforms for African think tanks, businesses, women, and youth, enabling these groups to contribute to the formulation of Africa's G20 priorities and support their advocacy throughout the G20 process.

“Africa's engagements in global processes have undergone a sea change with the AU's admission as a permanent member of the G20.

Key recommendations



Boost Africa's Voice and Strategic Coordination

- To promote consistent engagement across G20 workstreams and harmonise negotiating stances, the AU should establish a Continental G20 Coordination Mechanism and implement a process for shaping a common African position on critical issues of relevance to the continent.
- Establish organised regional consultations to inform continental strategies with national priorities.
- Establish yearly G20Africa Policy Dialogues that bring together civil society, research institutions, think tanks, academia, private sector, and policymakers.
- AUC to consider adopting a model similar to the G20's Engagement Groups. This would involve institutionalizing distinct engagement platforms for African think tanks, businesses, women, and youth, enabling these groups to contribute to the formulation of Africa's G20 priorities and support their advocacy throughout the G20 process.



Promote Global Financial Architecture Reform

- Involve G20 partners in promoting fair access to development finance, which may involve changing the requirements for concessional funding to take climate and developmental vulnerabilities into account.
- Encourage the revision of credit rating methodologies to lessen bias and enhance the recognition of institutional strengthening and reform momentum.
- Encourage MDBs and regional DFIs to increase their local currency lending and risk-sharing capabilities.



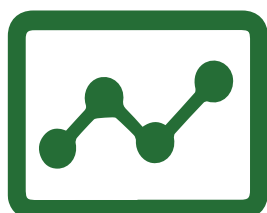
Develop Financial Resilience at the National and Regional Levels

- To increase investor confidence, debt sustainability, and transparency, public financial management systems should be strengthened.
- Increase the size of domestic capital markets, including the involvement of insurance and pension funds in long-term investment vehicles.
- Improve regional financing channels to aid in cross-border economic integration, green transition investments, and infrastructure.



Use Innovation and Knowledge to Influence Policy

- To create continent-driven policy analysis for international negotiations, invest in African research institutions.
- Establish a G20 African Policy Knowledge Hub to compile data, monitor pledges, and assist with data-driven engagement tactics.
- Provide ministries, parliaments, and DFIs with capacity-building assistance so they can efficiently oversee G20 technical procedures.



Encourage Sustained Momentum and Accountability

- Create monitoring systems to track Africa's achievements in influencing global governance decisions.
- Make sure that policy pledges result in quantifiable investment and development outcomes.
- At the AU and regional levels, uphold continuity through nonpartisan institutional leadership throughout political cycles.

“To promote consistent engagement across G20 workstreams and harmonise negotiating stances, the AU should establish a Continental G20 Coordination Mechanism.

Conclusion

Africa's expanding role in global governance featured prominently in the discussions, with participants emphasising that Africa's seat at the G20 must yield concrete development outcomes for the continent. Strengthening Africa's influence requires a strategic approach underpinned by common negotiating positions that have rigorous technical backing and strong institutional organization. Furthermore, this effort must expand beyond government circles to include a broader coalition of voices civil society, private sector partners, and development experts who can sustain advocacy and drive accountability.

