

Statement by Minister R O Lamola at the Second G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, "The United Nations at 80: reaffirming peace as a path to sustainable development", New York, USA, 25 September 2025

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Honourable Ministers of Foreign Affairs of G20 Members,
Honourable Ministers of Foreign Affairs of invited Guest Countries,
Honourable Fellow Foreign Ministers of UN Members and permanent observers,
G20 Sherpas and Sous-Sherpas,
Heads of Invited International Organisations,
Distinguished guests,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me once again to welcome you all to the Second G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting under South Africa's Presidency of the Group. It is both an honour and privilege for South Africa to be hosting this meeting here at the United Nations Headquarters, as it celebrates the 80th Anniversary of its founding.

80 years since its establishment the United Nations remains most central in the collective global efforts towards addressing global challenges and threats to peace and security, addressing poverty and under-development and ensuring the protection of human rights.

Let me from the onset state that for South Africa, the United Nation General Assembly, with its universal representation where every country participates on an equal footing, is and will always remain the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, in every sphere, including in global economic governance. We acknowledge the complementary role of the G20 in these efforts.

Honourable Ministers,

South Africa's Presidency of the G20 is centred on the Theme of "Solidarity, Equality Sustainability", which is premised on the belief that only in collaboration, partnership and cooperation can we address the collective challenges facing the world.

The theme of today's meeting; "The United Nations at 80: Reaffirming peace as a path to sustainable development", is one that encapsulates the spirit, purposes and principles of the UN Charter and what it represents; cooperation, dialogue, prosperity and solidarity. This is a concept to which we as the global community must aspire and where the G20 together with the United Nations must take collective action.

In an international environment plagued by the ills of poverty, inequality and under-development, rising geopolitical tensions and increasing conflicts, environmental devastation, escalating trade tensions, and growing threats to multilateral cooperation, we must work together to ensure our aspirations of a peaceful and prosperous society.

Peace and development have always been interdependent, without peace there can be no sustainable development, similarly, investments in economic development and inclusive growth can contribute to a more peaceful environment.

As the global community, investment in peace and collective collaboration are crucial necessities for growth, stability and sustainable development.

For societies, livelihoods and economies to thrive, the shifting global dynamics must be met with more and not less global cooperation, revitalised multilateralism, enhanced efforts in addressing inequalities, and increased investments in inclusive sustainable development, where no one is left behind. These collective actions are essential in fostering lasting peace and stability.

History has proven, more than once, that a fair, transparent and inclusive rules-based international order is an essential requirement for economic stability and for sustained growth. Multilateral cooperation is our only hope for overcoming unprecedented

challenges, including slow and uneven growth, rising debt burdens, persistent poverty and inequality.

We must foster international cooperation for a peaceful world towards sustainable development. We need to strengthen cooperation and rebuild trust in multilateralism.

Excellencies,

If our collective goal is to achieve sustainable development, the G20 together with United Nations must be in sync and complimentary in its actions and efforts towards a more prosperous world and addressing our shared challenges. We must work together to shape a more inclusive and sustainable global economy.

In order to do this, among others,

(i) We need more robust multilateralism and a renewed commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Trust in multilateral institutions has dwindled due, in part, to not delivering on inclusive and sustainable growth for all.

((ii) The global financial system must be made fit for purpose; to change the current trajectory in financing sustainable development, including by ensuring debt sustainability for low-income countries.

((iii) We must address challenges in the multilateral trading system, ensuring that it is inclusive, predictable and governed by a rules-based system.

(iv) We also need to foster inclusivity and reduce inequality, if we are to leave no-one behind.

(v) Lastly, we need to adhere to and uphold international law, towards a more stable and fair international order.

These are only some of the efforts we need undertake. As the G20 and the United Nations, we need to seize every opportunity to raise ambition and harness collective action for a peaceful and prosperous world.

As I conclude, let me reiterate that South Africa's upcoming G20 Leaders' Summit will send a clear signal that the G20 stands united behind a stronger UN at the centre of multilateralism and we will endeavour to take steps to resolve global challenges while strengthening international relations and cooperation within a rules-based system.

I will now hand over to the Members of the G20 to deliver their interventions, starting with the Troika (Brazil and thereafter the United States of America), followed by G20 Members in English alphabetical order, and invited Guest countries also in alphabetical order.

Honourable Minister Mauro Vieira, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, you have the floor.

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