

Speaker's Notes, DM Alvin Botes at the G20 High Level African Dialogue of the T20,

29 April 2025

Programme Directors, Mr El Karakasy and Ms Gopaul, AUDA-NEPAD

Your Excellency, Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Honourable Paul Mashatile;

Heads of Diplomatic Missions, Ambassadors and High Commissioners

The Director of the Institute for Global Dialogue, (IGD) Dr Philani Mthembu;

The Chief Executive Officer of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), Ms Elizabeth Sidiropoulos;

The Director of the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) Professor Siphamandla Zondi;

Distinguished scholars, policy experts and delegates;

The G20, or Group of Twenty, 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. Initially formed to promote international financial stability and economic coordination in the wake of the 1999 financial crises, 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.

In 2023, the African Union (AU) was admitted as a permanent member of the G20 during the Leaders' Summit in Delhi, India. This historic development, following the inclusion of the European Union as a regional bloc, underscores Africa's growing importance in global governance and provides the continent with a unique opportunity to influence the world's most powerful economic agenda-setting body. 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, themed "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability," is not only a call for cooperative global action but a platform for Africa to reshape its engagement with the global community.

South Africa assumes the G20 Presidency at a critical historical juncture. The world is navigating what many have termed a 'polycrisis'—a convergence of overlapping global challenges including inequality, debt distress, climate shocks, geopolitical instability, food insecurity, and digital exclusion. These are not abstract global threats—they are lived realities for millions across Africa. With less than five years remaining before the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is growing concern over the backsliding on global commitments. As highlighted by the UN, only 12% of SDG targets are currently on track.

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. 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. The presidency will promote a people-centred, development-

oriented G20 that fosters inclusive economic transformation rather than economic dominance by the few. The G20 operates through two primary tracks: the Finance Track and the Sherpa Track. The Finance Track focuses on macroeconomic issues, financial stability, debt sustainability, taxation, and infrastructure financing. The Sherpa Track, on the other hand, covers broader developmental and sectoral policy discussions on employment, education, digital transformation, climate change, gender equality, health, and more.

The T20 Africa High-Level Policy Dialogue at a moment when our continent's voice is not only being amplified in global forums, but is helping to alter the global governance architecture. South Africa's G20 Presidency in 2025, captured in our theme: "Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability" is a unique value proposition to the rest of the world to change the economic and financial architecture of global governance institutions. Your deliberations today are integral to that effort.

The T20 brings some of Africa's finest thinkers to the table, ensuring that ideas forged encapsulates state and non-state policy considerations from the African continent at a substantive level and not merely as a sub ordinate consideration. Our task is clear: transform the African Union's historic admission as a permanent G20 member from symbolism into substance—through coherent positions, credible analysis and consistent advocacy. Engagement groups such as the T20, W20, C20, Y20 and Labour 20 are the heartbeat of the G20. They translate lived experience into evidence-based policy and give legitimacy to global decisions.

For Africa, your work is vital in confronting debt vulnerability, accelerating digital transformation, securing fair trade and unlocking climate-resilient development. As we debate, let us keep sight of the broader struggle for African agency. We do not assert ourselves out of resentment, but out of conviction that the world needs Africa's ideas and resources if it is to overcome inequality, conflict and ecological crisis. And as we champion inclusion, let us make it gender-responsive and fair to future generations: women and children still bear the heaviest burdens of poverty and climate stress.

South Africa's foreign policy—rooted in Pan-Africanism, human rights, international law, peaceful resolution of conflict, multilateralism, international solidarity and non-alignment—will use this G20 Presidency to press for a more just financial architecture, equitable access to development finance, food-energy-water security and a value-adding transition in critical minerals.

With the above in mind, It is now my privilege to introduce a leader whose commitment to strengthening the African Agency in the G20 is unequivocal.

A Pan Africanist leader of thought.

Please join me in welcoming the Leader of Government Business, the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Honourable Paul Mashatile, to deliver the keynote address.

I thank you.